

Indoctrination as a Methodology of Social Enlightenment in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The science or the art of acquiring knowledge has various approaches to its credit. There are arguments and counter arguments from scholars, sociologists and psychologists as to which is the best method of achieving this goal. Many have made different analysis as well as opinion on the system of knowledge acquisition. For effective knowledge acquisition, the approach to transmission becomes crucial. It is in view of this, that this work is set to analyze the disposition of indoctrination as a methodology of social enlightenment in Nigeria. This study highlights among others the desirability and undesirability of using indoctrination as a methodology of social enlightenment in Nigeria. Consequently, indoctrination is observed to be undesirable as it could lead to fanaticism.

Keywords: *Indoctrination, knowledge, social enlightenment, society*

INTRODUCTION

Man by nature is endowed with the quest to know and the capacity to acquire knowledge. The major channel through which man fulfils the inherent desire to acquire knowledge is through education which takes diverse forms including indoctrination. This is made easy and possible by the agents whom nature and society have put in the services of the individuals who have the natural tendencies to learn and acquire knowledge. Knowledge is acquired formally and informally. The formal has to do with the kind of training given in an academic institution (an academic institution is the embodiment of both intellectual and societal settings) where there is a laid down curriculum or programme which the teachers follow. The informal on the other hand, has no particular curriculum or programme that the teachers follow. It is a transmission of ideas which will enable the learners to equip themselves with some basic knowledge such as some historical and cultural facts, moral values, norms, ethics, character formation and acquisition of the skills that are useful to the learners. In some organizations, there are certain norms peculiar to its members. To keep new members acclimatized with these norms, they are indoctrinated to their practices and beliefs. Ajala (2009) stresses that if the social environment of the child or school is nurturing and supportive, the child will probably have a better outcome. He further posits that education is schooling in social values and capacities. Various social, cultural and economic factors greatly influence the individual's zeal to acquiring knowledge. Family as the basic unit for inculcating love, moral

and sound behavioural developments in the child lacks the tenderness with which to build the needed social foundation in the child. Therefore, the society becomes filled up with deviant characters. According to Adebayo (2012), home is the first socializing agent for children and it is the behaviours of parents that have impact on the upbringing of their children. Parents and other adults significantly influence the life of the child. Much like any other social institution, religion (used here as the formal gathering of believers in an effort to express their belief in, and relationship with, the unseen Deity) has also been seen to perform some social functions within the human society (Umoh, 2009). Although predominantly other worldly intent and orientation, religion has been known to function bifurcally in society (Umoh, 2009). According to Ogege (2009), in every society, group relationships often entail the interplay of forces in which contacts between persons in the group result in a modification of the attitudes and behaviours of those involved. Their social interaction therefore revolves around interpersonal contacts, reciprocal response and an inner adjustment of behaviour to others in the group. This form of interaction assumes a repetitive pattern and thus becomes a social process in everyday life (Ogege, 2009). Therefore, to dismiss an institution as the Marxists have attempted to do on the basis of certain negative latent manifestations, would amount to eliminating all social institutions for much the same reason (Umoh, 2009). The teachers, priests, peers and environmental factors will later influence the child for good or for evil.

Nevertheless, the greatest influence especially in the early years of the child is that of parents (Varkey, 2008). This is the thought of Varkey (2008), about the influence of authorities in the learning age of a child. Study after study has shown that there is no human institution, from politics to the family that cannot be associated with one or two negative influences as by-products (Umoh, 2009). The issue is the conception of the teacher or instructor who imparts the knowledge and the value of the knowledge that has been imparted. The aid or methodology with which the teacher or instructor adopts in imparting the knowledge depends solely on the desirability or undesirability of the process of instruction.

The methodology of social enlightenment and the evaluation of such purpose have given the stakeholders sleepless nights. What comes to mind when one considers indoctrination as a methodology of social enlightenment, are the intention, method, contents and the finalities of the didactic process. With these, one will assess the ideals, convictions and beliefs that an instructor wants to pass to the learners. The essence of social enlightenment is to impart social knowledge and give the learners the opportunities to develop the manipulative social skill, which will enable the learners to function effectively in society within the limits of their capacity. The aim of this study therefore, is to assess the desirability or undesirability of using indoctrination as a methodology of social enlightenment in Nigeria. Hence, the focus of this work is on the disposition of indoctrination as a methodology of social enlightenment, and to justify the reason of its desirability or undesirability.

INDOCTRINATION AND ITS PHILOSOPHY

The initial meaning of indoctrination is of pedagogical nature. In Latin, *doctrina* means education, science, doctrine, that can many times substitute one for another, while that of

the verb 'indoctrinate' is to provide someone with knowledge, to teach a science (Robert cited in Momanu 2012). These terms acquire meaning that allowed a semantic shift to the political ideology without losing its original meaning. According to Robert (cited in Momanu, 2012), doctrine is a set of principles stated as true that aim to guide or govern people's action, while the meaning of indoctrination is strictly related to that of pursuing: the attempt to make somebody adhere to a doctrine, an opinion, and a point of view. As a pejorative term indoctrination implies forcibly or coercively causing people to act and think on the basis of a certain ideology. According to Amadasu (2009), the African patriarchy is the old most deeply entrenched system of ideological and social discrimination.

Some secular critics maintain that all religions indoctrinate their adherents, as children, and the accusation is made in the case of religious extremism. The word 'indoctrination' used to mean general teaching. To indoctrinate a person is mainly getting the person to learn something. History teaching is one area where the questions on indoctrination usually arise. Another is the religious teaching. Corroborating the views of Hornby (2005), that indoctrination is the act of forcing somebody to accept a particular set of beliefs and not allow them to consider any others; indoctrination can be described as forceful training. This implies that it does not give room for display of personal ideology as this may be at variance with that of the organization. It is a must belief.

The training is about instructions. The first of these instructions is the moral training. Children are brought up to obey moral rules. They cannot be given reasons for following these rules, for any reason that might be provided will be incomprehensible to them. So they have to make to follow these rules by non-rational means, for example, by fear of the withdrawal of their parents' care if they are disobedient. At the early stage of human development every child wants to be seen or evaluated as a child of good conduct. Nnajofofor (1984) opines that without the cooperation of mothers, teachers with all their professional eminence will have little success in the formation of the children. On the contrary, mothers may counteract and oppose the teacher instead of collaborating and lending support to their efforts. Therefore, cooperation, knowledge of one another, constant relations, unity of outlook and successive adoption are necessary for an effective and fruitful record.

Another area of interest in indoctrination comes from the controversy between child centred and traditional theory of education. One of the charges of the formal way of thinking against the latter is that the traditional teacher merely tries to implant items of information into some people's mind, without letting them discover this information themselves. The user of the information and his/her needs came into focus and research in cognitive science is applied. The new view is called the cognitive view (Dervin and Nilan, 1986). Today, the cognitive view has been criticized for not taking into consideration social and cultural contexts in studies of information needs and seeking (Capurro, 1992).

Access to relevant and up-to-date information is believed to be crucial to economic and social development (Amadasu, 2009). For some child centre theorists, any attempt the teacher makes to give children to learning is labeled indoctrination, and one is indoctrinating when one is getting children to learn up geographical fact for route reproduction, or use chalk and talk to teach algebra. Educational ethics are never against

any authority's influence, but on the evaluation of the intention, method adopted and the finalities of any didactic process. The ethics consider the interest of the learners not be forced or induced to learning certain thing which many instances are not inscribe in the curriculum of the learning process. Ethics respect the institutionalized curricula, and work against inducement. This brings to the use of brainwashing. It is sometimes said and often believed that indoctrination is a sort of process. It is a matter of breaking down established patterns of neutral activities in a man's brain and building up fresh pattern so that the man's belief becomes fixed in a new mould. What marks out the indoctrinator, therefore, is the method he uses to reach his end, that is to say, the brainwashing method. Educational ethics promote the freedom of every individual, which brainwashing in most cases in religious education, or even in national situation is a manifestation of forceful indoctrination, which has resulted to negative formations of characters.

The child should believe that 'p' is true; if and only if he has come to see that there are good grounds for believing it. This implies the intention that the child rejects 'p' if he comes to see that there are no good grounds for believing it. The philosophy of indoctrination has been inherent in nature. Man finds himself in it through his developmental process, and since man is being living in the community of persons, the life, thoughts, beliefs and convictions of those who nature has placed before him influence him. So, the philosophy is about the socialization of these human elements in nature and making choice of adoption or not. As John Paul II (1993) asserts that freedom is not only the choice for one or another particular action, it is also, within that choice, a decision about oneself and a setting of one's own for or against the good, for or against the truth, and ultimately for or against God.

Working against freedom has been considered to be negative persuasion. Those who deny that early moral education is indoctrination as long as the teacher has no intention of getting the child to believe unshakable that he ought to believe in such a way, are not really at issues with those of other people's conviction, because they define indoctrination in terms of intention. For the rest, the problem about indoctrination in morality concerns the same issue as was raised when we discuss indoctrination in history. The moral educator has to be careful that the learners do not grow up indoctrinated, in the sense that they have interjected the moral attitudes unshakable without they having intended this. The danger is more acute in moral education than in a latter learning because here attitudes are planted so early and is constantly reinforced in behaviours that may easily be held unreflecting for the rest of life.

ADVANTAGES OF INDOCTRINATION

Asouzu (cited in Iroegbu and Echekwube, 2005) opines that the ultimate common good, the unconditioned basis of human happiness is not identical with any world immanent value. The ability, therefore, to desire it as an end in itself, can only be the property of something that has unconditioned character belonging to the imperative establishing this end. Here, the postulation of an absolute goodwill, as an integral part of our finitude in anticipation of the foundation of our being, becomes a practical meaningful and necessary assumption. The traditional advantage or reason of indoctrination of a child has been the

basis of the institution of morality. It tries to put the child on a right footing of socialization and spirituality. Ekei (2001) maintains that morality could be likened to an ocean of water which everybody is called to draw from, without prescribing a specific quantity. Everybody does not know the “specific quantity” more so does he need a certain inducer, or interest occasionally outside himself, which the “community” seems to supply. For suppose moral rules were nationally justifiable and parents tried to fix in their child’s mind the unshakable beliefs that the child should steal and lie. Is this not an indoctrinator? The notion of indoctrination is independent of the notion justifiability or otherwise of the beliefs indoctrinated.

CONSEQUENCES OF INDOCTRINATION

Indoctrination is more directly traceable to the religious, social environment and cultural context that bear harshly upon committed members of a particular group. Usually, elements of both psychopathology and of stressful social conditions may be considered. Indoctrination has to do with religious and social factors in the society. In recent time, child indoctrination is likely to be more frequently acquired from the societal norms, culture, tradition as well as religious perspective and belief. With its associated fanaticism inflicted upon the child’s personality, indoctrination neither has medical, social nor legal significance. The strong emotional impact and catastrophic aspects of each instance of forced indoctrination have serious social problems that undermine the development of the recipient.

Indoctrination may result in fanaticism and fanaticism has both a psychological and social problem. Forced indoctrination is a social crime that does not help the learner to actualise his or her dreamt status in the society because of the magnitude of the hurts. The hurts have more devastating effects on the learner. Forced indoctrination from the social situational perspective has psychological characteristics that cannot be entirely ignored; they have social antecedents such as stress and isolation. Consequently, this trend of development has negative effects on the social life of the people. For instance, when the Missionaries came to Nigeria, they were eager to promote Christianity through conversion. The African Traditional Religion believers were afraid that their conversion to Christianity would weaken the social structure and spirituality of the people. Therefore, the traditionalists did not allow any other religious belief to jeopardize the existing religion. As a result, indoctrination sets in.

According to Asouzu (cited in Iroegbu and Echekwube, 2005), for complementary reflection, every proclivity of duty is intricately related to the joy that gives legitimacy to all human actions. What this means is that for the complementary reflection, there is need to act inclined as opposed to Kant’s deontological ethics (Edema and Abam, 2009), which dispense with inclinations as part of ethical good conduct. This is important because complementary reflection lays much emphasis on the need to take all missing links of reality into equation of action. “Kant’s deontological ethics” calls for the differentiation between what is wrong from right, and for holistic development of the individual persons against selfish bias. Indoctrination which is also brainwashing, in general evaluation, has been very negative than otherwise. It appears in the following forms:

1. The use of harmful doctrines in teaching
2. To learn without understanding the essence
3. The use of education to support partisan doctrines
4. To teach starting from preconceptions
5. Making use of authority in teaching. For many religious teachers openly avow that they want their pupil to have faith, to believe in God etc. This faith must moreover be held with intensity, with passion: the belief must be rock like.
6. To teach only the positive aspect of a doctrine, and to counter the facts in order to emphasize certain doctrines. Here, ideologies are useful method of indoctrinating people. But they are not the only methods. Treat and torture might be effective in some cases. A skilful religion indoctrinator might get his class intelligently to discuss the validity of some religious argument. The subject chosen, mainly to have agreed to enter into discussion commits one to belief in ideology, belief which is reinforced by taking part in the discussion itself.
7. To inculcate hatred through training and to impose a belief using violence which necessarily lead to fanatics.
8. To emphasize a specific value during the enlightenment process while disfavouring others, and arbitrarily select part of a curriculum.

CONCLUSION

Though we know that indoctrination as methodology of social enlightenment is ‘suppression’ in the learning and developing will of every individual, one cannot deny the important, especially, in controlling the growing-up excesses of the child by the parents. The parents use it as a measure to educate the child in the ways he or she should live, especially on the ethical and civic convictions of the parents. The influence of authorities, either as teachers, religious persons, administrators, parents or instructors, in the learning process of an individual can never be removed. But the important issue here, is that the authorities of social enlightenment process should not indoctrinate the learners, especially at their childhood state, with their psychic political, emotional, religious makeup and conviction.

In a nutshell, experiences have shown that one cannot grow up without been indoctrinated one way or another, it must be done liberally, so as the individual grows up in maturity will discern ethically what he or she should learn towards development. It is instruction to give information and needed knowledge to others, especially to those who do not have them. Knowledge given in social enlightenment programmes has three basic features: information, formation and reformation. The communication of ideas, facts and information is to achieve certain goals. Facts given in information are destined to constitute the mental and personality structure of the recipient. They make him or her to behave this way or that, thereby structuring the person’s way of life. Social enlightenment is also reformation in the aspect that it helps to change already formed ways and manners of behavior. Social enlightenment thus reconstructs personality for the society in which one lives and operates.

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