

## **The Place of Philosophy of Education and Human Nature in Security Management and National Development**

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### **Abstract**

*One of the several purposes of education is the acquisition of knowledge required to refine man in terms of behaviour and attitudes. Educational process has as one of its focuses, the affective domain, which is expected to influence man's attitudes, behaviour and character. Several works had been carried out on attitudes of man but not many had been done in the aspect of human nature as a factor that can influence moral behaviours. Philosophy comes handy in the inculcation of right moral actions as its component of axiology, through the aspect of ethics, encourages cultivation of right and good attitudes in interpersonal relations to guarantee security and development of the society. In ensuring this, understanding the nature of man as one of the contents of Philosophy of Education becomes expedient in order to find out good approaches by which the process of education can build right moral attitudes and actions in man for the purpose of securing and developing the society. This paper attempts to examine in a philosophical discourse, the place of human nature in cultivating right moral attitudes. It discusses concepts like hedonism, rationalism and virtue. This is to justify the essence of educational process as an instrument per excellence to achieve security and development aspirations of the society. The paper recommends among several others the need to structure contents of each lesson in the classrooms towards acquisition of appropriate social values and virtues that can enable learners become rational in their decision making. It also suggested that a philosophical understanding of the nature of man will enable teachers as well as school counsellors to be more effective in their professional responsibilities. The paper concludes by stating that an understanding of the nature of man and its philosophical implications will enable educators practice their profession efficiently to attain society's desired goals of secured and developed environment.*

**Keywords:** Philosophy of education, Human nature, Ethics, Security, National development.

## **Introduction**

An examination of the word 'human' describes it as a common name given to any individual of the species *Homo sapiens*. The scientist considers all living persons as members of this species. The word 'human' relates to, and involves possession of, as well as characteristics of human beings. According to the contemporary English dictionary, human being has special moral values which are partly as a result of some spiritual as well as autonomous nature he possesses. This is corroborated by Oladipo (2009) as he asserted that human beings are essentially spiritual beings, while Anyiam-Osigwe cited by Ekanola (2009) sees human person as a composite of the material and the spiritual. This shows that man has a strong link with the divine or supernatural implicitly or explicitly in how he determines his thoughts and actions. This is supported by the idealists' axiology. Offor (2009) citing Anyiam-Osigwe, sees human person been imbued by nature with certain values which when properly harnessed, can bring about and lead to the all-round development of the individual for society's progress.

Many studies had focussed on the cognitive and psychomotor domains of learning than on the affective domain in addressing moral issues in man. However, there is still prevalence of value decadence in members of the society, this has affected her development aspirations in significant ways. This study therefore examined the nature of man and its relevance in the development/cultivation of right moral values in learners through the process of education. This is with a view to produce all-round graduates from schools who will not only be competent cognitively or in learning but will also be sound in character and human relations. The spate of unending destructions perpetrated by various groups including the religious group called Boko Haram and the current assault on oil pipe lines by the Niger Delta Avengers and the likes in the Delta region of the country among several others, call for concerted efforts at ending insecurity to lives and property which are banes to development of the Nigerian society.

## **The Human Person, Nature and Philosophy**

Cranor (1975) identified at least two senses of being a person that may be important. Person in the first sense denotes those characteristics of

living entities which qualify them for inclusion in the moral community. This implies possession of facts inferring being in existence and not inanimate. For Kant, a person seems to be a living entity capable of understanding, formulating and applying categorical imperatives to one's self. In other words, an individual is adept in taking rational decisions. For Rawls, person is a human being with a conception of his/her own good and a sense of justice. Person in another sense according to Cranor denotes those character-traits and virtues which are important enough part of a human being's character or personality such that if one regards or condemns them, one is regarding or condemning the human being. Character traits or virtues like tolerance, selflessness, honesty, integrity, respect, right attitude to work and cooperation, among others, attract social approval but behaviour of dishonesty, deceit, hatred, arrogance, selfishness, destruction, among others, attract disapproval or condemnation. However, the mere possession of these traits or qualities does not translate automatically into an overt development of the individual, but it is just an indication of certain inclinations which are latent and therefore need to be activated.

Plato as an idealist expects the human person to exhibit the highest hierarchy of character traits because of his believes that man possesses the natural capacity for right behaviour. This highest hierarchy of character traits according to Plato is the 'good', likened to the sun that illuminates all other ideas (Cornford, 1969). Although, the 'good' may vary in perspectives but can be described generally as the outcome or the end of a pursuit or endeavour, which is usually desirable and acceptable in the society. Thus, virtuous actions producing happiness will consist of the 'good' that a human person should exhibit in the society.

Scholars generally identify humanity (that is, what makes man distinctively a being and sets him apart from all other animal species) with two closely related aspects of rationality. One is the capacity to set ends and the other, the capacity to be autonomous. Both of them are capacities to be a moral agent, which implies that man should be capable of personally and independently identifying goals desirable, perhaps without major influences from any one. These set goals are expected among others to satisfy positive human as well as societal yearnings and aspirations. In other words, the human person, who is a 'form' should

be a rational being who is expected to perform actions which show the better or best aspects of human character in all endeavours. This serves the good ends, and that makes man distinct from other creatures.

A rational action is especially distinguished by the power of selecting what is good and relevant to social goals at each point in time. By relevance, it means whatever is of positive value for the development and progress of individuals and society at large both now and in the future. In other words, relevance has to do with the utility or usefulness of any idea, attitude or action towards the attainment of generally acceptable goals of individuals and society. Several options are usually available or at man's disposal at every point of decision or action by which man thinks on issues and works out through choice of actions and decisions that best benefit him and the community at large. A rational person is therefore an individual who habitually shows ability to apply to particular situation, knowledge of general rules which he has laid down himself on the basis of his experience and insight (Ginsberg, 1939).

With regards to general rules, this is applied consistently and without bias. That is, without the agent being carried away by irrelevant consideration(s) therefore, the capacity to exhibit the 'good' as a form will be the ability to be autonomous and be self-legislating, self-governing, through one's rational will by recognising what counts as a moral obligation as well as develop the capacity to freely resolve to act in accordance with moral laws because they are self-imposed by one's own reason based on society's accepted norms and practices. In essence, these moral principles, according to Kant's arguments, must be categorical imperatives. That is, they must be rational requirements to which the human person is unconditionally subjected to, regardless of whatever inclinations, interests, goals or projects in mind (Meroyi, 2013). All these characterised the human person and makes him worthy of inclusion in the moral community.

### **The Human Nature**

Arguments have been raised as to whether man actually possesses nature that promotes and/or influences his actions or not. In other words, questions are raised as to whether the quality of man's actions can be related to nature, bearing in mind that societies demand acceptable

actions; actions that are of value. In response to this, Kurtz (1951) cited in Meroyi (2013) identified the naturalist theory of human nature, and this controls man in relation to his actions. Life has its own tendencies and intrinsic end but man is expected to reveal his ends and provide the conditions which will enable him fulfil them. The Stoics agree that man must live in accordance with nature. This means that human nature participates in the natural scheme of things. Nature has been described as the force(s) that control the phenomena of the physical world independently of human volition or intervention (Encarta dictionaries 2009). Aquinas refers to nature when he gives a kind of definition of virtue as the force through which a human being can follow its impulse with full energy he has (Munoz, 1996). The naturalist theory of human nature is invariably concerned with the descriptive search for basic laws of motivation which are simply the basic needs of life that drive man than just the ends.

### **Hedonism and Man**

Man is a desire-seeking or pleasure-seeking creature who may use reason to maximise self-interest or pleasure. It is known that every tendency of man is towards satisfaction of his desire. The intent of man all things being equal, is to achieve profitable goal(s) which is expected to improve his well-being. For man therefore to improve his well-being, he requires logical thinking and reasoning, which is one of his features. The reasoning involves consideration of the universal essence of man's existence which is basically to maximise pleasure. He therefore thinks about the desired end(s) and with his thinking capacity, chooses actions that ensure attainment of these pleasurable ends. Relating this with the submission on human nature as stated above, man's reasoning can naturally accept as good, everything towards which man has a natural inclination. Although, it may be argued that not all reasoning has the capacity to assist in achieving desired pleasures; nature itself may work contrary to expectations. However, efforts are usually made to curtail experiences that may obstruct attaining such pleasures since these tendencies of oppositions are not new to man. Therefore, with reason, man can maximise self-interest or pleasure.

Immanuel Kant in his imperatives argued that in seeking this pleasure, others need to be put into consideration. This means that the thinking/ reasoning capacity of man should take care of the effects and impacts of the thoughts and actions on those around which must not be to subject them to means of achieving man's pleasure rather, the reason that promotes the action must be capable of being universalised and accepted when reciprocated.

It is asserted earlier that the basic laws (natural laws) that motivates are hinged on man and influenced by his environment. This means that the environment, in which man finds himself, to a large extent, dictates and characterises what motivates and becomes his desires. The environment, through its forms/features structures man's experiences by its conceptual scheme, making it objective in its symbol. These forms/features make up information and create ideas in man, which prompts him in the direction of his actions or desire. The ideas developed, and information realised through the environment therefore, become basic articulations whereby the whole of experience become intelligible to him. What is articulated are prompted by, and (therefore) not strange to the environment. In other words, they are what the environment inspires or dictates, certain of which are considered appropriate and good for the society thus becoming values hence, their social acceptability. These socially acceptable articulations are conceived through the mind as influenced by the forces of forms generated from the surroundings (that is, environment) thus emphasising the importance of mind in man and (his) decision-making.

Since satisfaction, pleasure or happiness is the 'good' to man according to hedonism, this can also be considered as value to him. So, it can be inferred that values that is, what the society accepts as good, can be derived from the mind through man's reason and subject to the forces of the environment man finds himself. Therefore, the mind through its thinking capacity based on the influence from the environment, provides values in and for man.

### **The Human Person and Virtue**

From the foregoing, it is realized that man is capable of initiating values through his reasoning ability based on the environmental influences and

factors. Societies or environments do influence man in significant and different ways. This can be said to be one of the factors that constitute peculiarities in man. One of the major attributes expected of the human person in the society is virtue which can be described as an admirable quality of being morally good. Aristotle divides virtue otherwise referred to as excellence into two, intellectual and moral virtue/excellence. To paraphrase Cicero;

A moral community is not any collection of human beings brought Together in any sort of ways, but an assemblage of people .....

Associated in an agreement with respect to justice and a partnership for the Common good.

Generally, virtue can be seen as a character determined by a rational principle and commonly carried out by man of practical wisdom. To Aristotle, the intellectual virtue or excellence can be attained and acquired through teaching, while moral virtue comes as a result of repetitive corresponding acts. Plato categorically stated that virtue is the excellent trait for which a thing is created; for example, a knife that cuts excellently. However, moral virtue or excellence can be said to be characterised by such concepts like perfection, respect, altruism, among others. These are necessary to refine human behaviours and make him good and excellent. According, dignity to human persons in the society is an absolute and incomparable worth, just as perfection and altruism. These are very important values in the society.

### **Morality and Human Conducts**

The basis of rational actions is usually morality which involves norms of right human conduct. Goodness in conduct may be either good in themselves or good because they conform to a particular moral standard. The former implies a final value which is desirable in itself and not merely as a means to an end. In morality, some considerations other than the agent's self-interest may justify action, and can in at least some possible cases of conflict over-ride and so requires a person to act in ways that may conflict with the maximisation of his own self-interest. In fact, it is worthy adding that the world seems to be such a place where moral requirements do sometimes conflict with one's overall self-interest.

Baier (1977) in Meroyi (2013) seeks to demonstrate that moral reasons are superior to all others. His claim is that man's very purpose in 'playing the reasoning game' is to maximise satisfactions and minimize frustrations. This purpose according to him in turn provides the criterion best serving the interests of everyone by which reasons are to be assessed as good reasons or not, and by which the hierarchy of reasons is to be established and justified. He then argued that everyone's interest is better served in a world where everyone accepts moral reasons as overriding reasons over self-interest than in a world where everyone simply follows reasons of self-interest. Thus, moral reasons become superior to, and ought to over-ride reasons of self-interest.

A more careful consideration of what Baier(1977) in Meroyi (2013) takes to be the final or overriding consideration in practical reasoning reveals that it must be moral reasons, which must be something like 'best serving person's (that is, each one's) interest'. The finality of morality however implies that one ought to act morally regardless of any non-moral considerations. Baier's argument on the other hand, makes the finality of morality contingent on 'best serving everyone's interest' as the only purpose of practical reasoning.

Apart from acting in terms of a person's own self-interest and social morality, expediency is another factor that can make one to act in specific ways. It is common to distinguish acting morally from acting expediently. For example, a reason may not compel a person to destroy or kill simply because it is wrong to do so. Moreso, he may realise the risk is so great therefore, it is in his own interest or expedient for him not to destroy or kill just as it is his social duty not to destroy or kill. However, many philosophers would insist that only in the former case does his action have moral worth; knowing personally that it is wrong to destroy or kill. In this case, he exhibits the will and deserves moral approval. But in order for the former action to be justified, for moral reasons really to be good reasons for acting, it must be expedient to act morally. Supposing an individual puts his/her life in danger for telling the truth, it will still be expedient for such a person not to tell a lie in order to stay alive. This means that the only good moral reasons are those it is expedient that is, appropriate to act on, and that moral requirements can never conflict



with the requirements of expediency. Staying alive may not portend that the situation will get better. However, a question that needs to be answered at this point is; 'how can we distinguish morality from expediency?' especially, when every case in which moral reasons and reasons of expediency apply, requires the same action.

A likely response is that the motives of the moral persons and the expedient remain different. The moral person performs the action because or for the primary reason of self-interest (Oyeshile, 2002) that is, personal well being and that it is morally right, while the expedient person performs it because or for the reason considered appropriate or serves his self-interest. According to Oyeshile, this does not signify that been moral would imply ignorance of what is expedient or vice versa. Both the moral and expedient individuals are aware of these two reasons but will choose either for reason(s) of expediency. We cannot distinguish the two in this way, for the moral person has become the expedient person. The person who acts on a moral reason only accepts that reason as a good reason or justified basis for action because it has been shown that its morality is expedient. The person's system of moral reasoning to be worthy of motivating must conform to the requirements of expediency. By this, we can no longer distinguish one person as doing something because it is morally right since though he may have the moral reason in his mind when acting, that reason only is a good practical reason for him because acting on it is expedient. This propriety of that person's believes which ultimately justifies his performing its expediency as well as morality.

We may not completely rule out the fact that a moral decision may at times defy expediency criterion. For instance, it may be moral to be honest but not expedient in certain situations, this may not make the honesty to be immoral; a man who mistakenly murdered a person may not inform a known enemy of his action for obvious reasons. Again, suppose it is moral not to use one's position to influence favour for a relation. For some people, it will be expedient to do so in order to save them the cost of an alternative, but to others, this may not be the case. The conformity of moral reason with that of expediency can be compared with that of the act utilitarian who adopts rule decision-making guide such as 'do not steal', because doing so will be more like actually to

produce the maximisation of utility in his actions than will applying the utilitarian standard case by case. As much as such rules may be effective as a decision-making guide, their adoption may not really result in a standard of rightness, or system of practical reasons justifying action, different from act-utilitarianism. Precisely, the same is true if morality is justified only if, and to the extent that, its adoption is expedient or maximally promotes one's self-interest. Thus, the adoption of morality does not produce a standard of rightness justifying action different from expediency or the promotion of one's own interest. Another question that requires an answer is; 'in what ways is expediency different from prudentialism?' A probable answer is that while the former is concerned with appropriateness of an action (appropriateness in that, actions considered rational and right which is also acceptable by the society), the latter dwells on careful management or consideration of the action especially in relation to its consequence.

### **Educational Implications**

So far, the paper had enumerated the fact that human nature plays vital roles in the acquisition of social values which are necessary in ensuring good and positive relationship in the society. These social values are capable of being inculcated in learners through various subjects of the school when moral issues are incorporated into the application of the knowledge taught in classrooms. This means that the principles and practices of these social values can be carried out right from the classrooms. Human nature desires pleasures thus, man has the natural inclinations to act in good ways; this can be started or done through application of right moral actions in moral issues raised in the classrooms especially, at the end of lessons.

Since value is cognitive in nature that is, can be learnt, students are capable of reasoning out good actions through acquired knowledge. Actions of learners will therefore aim at the maximum happiness of all and to subsume everything else under this goal. These actions will encourage and promote emphasis on motive behind actions in relation to Kant's categorical imperatives. Acquiring knowledge in this manner will also make everyone in the society committed to the theory of values which stipulates practising ideals based on the ability to reason rationally

and not merely on sense perception and non-experiential factors or elements.

### **Conclusion**

One of the basis or preconditions for security and development must be social harmony and a form of individual and social discipline which can be obtained by the process of education emphasising the essence of Philosophy of Education which always look for ways out of problems, as well as understanding the nature of man in ensuring the tendencies of man to agitate for peace, security and development. According to Sogolo (1993), an individual is seen as a social and corporate being that is inseparable from his community and its communal way of life. This has positive values that are conducive to peace and harmony.

The process of education has been efficiently designed to achieve various set objectives. The failure of education process to achieve the set objectives can partly be adduced to non-adherence to efficient practice of academic trainings by educators. The 'hows' of practising the profession of teaching are being improved daily through researches but the inefficient demonstration of skills learnt during training had affected the practice of education. Understanding the nature of man and its philosophical implications will enable educators practice efficiently so as to attain desired goals which include security of lives and property as well as peaceful coexistence for national development.

### **Recommendations**

One of the essences of knowledge acquisition through the educational institutions is basically to refine characters of learners who are to become workers and policy makers for the nation tomorrow. For education and its process to achieve this, it is recommended that:

- Teachers should be intimated regularly (through retraining programmes, seminars, workshops and conferences) with the knowledge of human nature. A philosophical understanding of the nature of man will be relevant in order to achieve moral educational objectives.

- Man can acquire good virtues just as he can acquire knowledge since they are cognitive. Teachers should be able to teach virtuous characters through contents of schools subjects. This therefore calls for the need to structure contents of each lesson in the classrooms towards acquisition of appropriate social values that can enable learners become rational in their decision making which will manifest in their moral actions in the society taking into consideration the principles of human nature.
- In any academic field of study (humanity, sciences or the social sciences), it is expedient that products of our institutions become proficient in their daily endeavours through demonstration of consistent application of moral rules guided for instance by Kant's categorical imperatives of universalizing actions and reciprocating same. This will go a long way in correcting the social ills contravening the processes of security and development the country had always clamoured for therefore, driving the society on the path of achieving her policy objectives.

When educators understand, become familiar with, and aware of the human nature that can influence attitudes and actions of man, such knowledge can assist in teaching, curriculum design, methodologies and approaches to disseminate knowledge in classrooms. With the knowledge of human nature in Philosophy of Education as a course, the school counsellors can approach their duties from a more convenient point to guide their clients in the path to attaining success desired for the advancement of the individual and society at large through peaceful co-existence and security of lives and property.

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