

Ogundowole's Self-Reliancism and Its Pedagogical Implications for Africa

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Abstract

Most of the nations in the geographical continent of Africa are yet enjoy self-reliance after many years of their freedom of independence from their colonizers. In a bid to tackle this problem, Prof Ogundowole of the University of Lagos, Nigeria, proposed a philosophy called "Self-reliancism". The concept Self-reliancism loyally advocates creativity, which is the crux of the theme of innovative minds, and self-employment for self-dependent. The current chalk and talk method prevalent in many African schools cannot help to achieve this marvelous vision. The paper, therefore, calls for reasonable justification in pedagogy, which deals with teaching methods. The paper advocates for teaching techniques that are child-centered and practical oriented. The aim of this paper is to factually review an in-depth study of the philosophy of self-reliance and the proper teaching methods necessary for its targeted achievement. The work is a qualitative research, and the philosophical methods used are hermeneutics and phenomenology. "Education is a universal human need"—F.H.Hayward.

Keywords: Ogundowole, Self-reliance, Self-independent, Pedagogy, Teaching methods, African development.

Introduction

Bertrand Russel opines "Education is the Key to the new world". After several years of independence, many nations in Africa are yet to stand on their own capability. They still depend seriously on their colonizers and Western countries for survival. They keep patronizing these "big countries," increasing their economies, while they (Africa) dwindle. For instance, if you go to British and American schools and hospitals, they are populated by Africans, who pay heavily to have befitting education and services. Go to markets in Africa; what you would see are foreign goods. How many countries in Africa produce cars, Aeroplanes, and tangible goods. Even when they do, their products are looked at as sub-standard, making consumers go after 'foreign.' Presently, the survival of many African nations is largely dependent on Western countries. Development is also far from many African nations that they are still referred to as 'third world,' a very insulting and marginalizing nomenclature. Prof Ogundowole of the University of Lagos, Nigeria, therefore comes up with a philosophy for the liberation of Africa from such neo-colonialism, imperialism, and underdevelopment. It is a philosophy called Self-

Reliancism. What is self-reliancism? What type of teaching method can be adopted in schools to achieve this vision?

This is because, the chalk-talk methods currently in use in many schools in Africa have failed us. This is what we tend to tackle in this paper. Let us begin with a short exposition of Ogundowole's self-reliancism.

Prof. Ogundowole's Self-Reliancism

Self-reliance means depending on one's efforts and abilities. Self-reliancism is a philosophy that advocates deliberate efforts to be self-reliant, self-dependent, and struggle against the subjugation of any kind (Eromosele, 2018). It means a pursuit to freeing society from challenges of development. These challenges bring about awareness of 'lack,' which leads to a kind of internal contradictions, which can either be resolved positively or negatively. When resolved in a positive way, it leads to development. Capturing the role of these internal contradictions in the development of human society, Ogundowole (1988) writes:

It is very much a characteristic of human societies that they breed unexpected contradictions and conflicts. Contradictions and conflicts generate new awareness

and very often lead to ways of doing things. It is not infrequent that the new phenomena ensuing gradually from that process are more or less unperceived long after they have been finally established in reality (p.42).

Here, he adopts Marxist dialectic materialism that society moves by the law of struggle, a kind of movement from thesis to antithesis, and then to synthesis, which is a new way of doing things. Ogundowole identifies two socio-economic ideologies operating in many societies in this contemporary era, which are capitalism and socialism. These led vast many African states to many social, political and economic problems and backwardness. These problems put them in direct conflict with the system, with which most of them are much associated with, which is capitalism. This situation has generated a third ideological orientation-Self-reliancism.

Prof. K. Ogundowole defines self-reliancism as the urge for self-reliance, self-defense in the face of unfathomable forces which tend to suppress oppression that tends to keep one in perpetual subjugation. "It is a feeling and need generated by the instinct of self-preservation inherent in the human beings in conjunction with interaction of the person's lives and acts" (p.46). The circumstance which satisfies the people of the new state with the spirit of self-reliance impels upon them to attempt, in fact, to do everything possible by themselves, using all available resources and skills to achieve self-realization. These circumstances have a long direct link with colonialism and now neo-colonialism, where the new states depend on Western countries for almost everything. Self-reliancism, therefore, demands dedication, confidence, originality, inventiveness, and creativity, which are necessary for self-realization, without which, it is difficult to achieve independence, social development, rapid progress, and also be able to combat successfully imperialism and neo-colonialism.

Pedagogical Implications and Impacts of Self-Reliancism

Pedagogy can be defined as "the study of teaching methods" (Hornby, 2015:1135). What kind of teaching methods should be adopted in schools in Africa to achieve this self-reliant? We know that the growth and development

of any nation depend on her education. If education is not pragmatic, the nation will never grow. It is on this pedestal that we seek the type of teaching method that will prepare African students to be creative, innovative, self-employed, self-reliance, and be agents of socio-economic development.

More so, the scope of knowledge, especially in science and technology, has increased greatly in recent years, and the ability of human beings to adapt to new information and changes in science and technology has also increased in line with this knowledge and technology explosion. Africa, therefore, needs more creative and innovative scientists and technologists who are critically minded to explore unknown areas and reconstruct knowledge, ideas, and methods of doing things in line with modern development and be able to compete favourably with other nations. If this is failed to done, African world will remain subjugated, and depend on the developed countries for survival. To achieve these, Africa should teach its students in ways that would equip them to survive in the 21st century world that is characterised by innovation and creativity. The learners should be taught in a way that would develop in them the requisite knowledge and skills for creativity and entrepreneurship, which would enable them to create employment and wealth for themselves, others and their nations. Several teaching methods that are used for classroom teaching in many schools in Africa have become obsolete. The old chalk-talk method commonly that is used by many teachers is no longer productive. This old method has failed both sectors of the graduates and the nation at large. The continents can overcome the problem of unemployable school graduates if teachers present their lessons using new teaching techniques that are more effective and appropriate. This would enable the learners to be well equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary for creativity, employable, self-dependent, and productive to moveforward the economy of the nation.

More so, modern teaching methods conformsto the best global practices in teaching and learning. The world is now a global village, and we, Africa, cannot afford to be doing things in the old dysfunctional ways that have failed to enable us to raise students that can compete favorable with others (Ogugua and Odua, 2007). Teachers, therefore, need to move away or minimize the use of

teaching method that promotes rote or memory learning to more interactive, task-based, and learner-centered methods that enhance pragmatism and productivity. This shift from the use of the traditional method of teaching to the modern methods of teaching will help us to raise graduates that can survive in the modern world of the 21st century, thus promoting national development.

Meaning of Modern Teaching Method

The modern teaching method is learner-centered and activity-based teaching method in which the learner is fully involved. This approach sees the learner as the main reason for curriculum development, and the teaching and learning. It is known as a constructivist approach, because it enables the learner to construct her/his knowledge and skills through active participation in the teaching-learning process. The teacher only acts as a facilitator or a guide, leading the pupil to achieving the teaching objectives of the topics, through his engagements in the various activities in the classroom interactions.

It encourages cooperation among the learners. As key implementers of curriculum, teachers in Africa should, therefore, adopt the modern teaching methods.

Characteristics of Modern Teaching Method

The modern teaching methods focus on the learners and how they can be helped to develop, build or construct meaningful understanding of any science-based learning or task. More specifically, the characteristics of modern teaching methods include:

1. Learner-centeredness

The new teaching method is learner-centred. It is learner-centered at each stage of its application in classroom and laboratory interactions. This implies that the learner is actively involved in the process of learning and dominates the classroom interactions. The major role of the teacher is to act as a guide and facilitator in the learning processes.

2. Task-Based or Activity-based

The new teaching method is full of activities and tasks to be carried out by the learner. Here, the teacher creates many learning activities for the learner to be engaged in during classroom interaction. By participating in these

activities, the learners are led to achieve the purpose of the teaching-learning process.

3. Resource-Based

Many instructional resources and materials are needed for effective classroom interactions. This means that the teacher should be very resourceful in providing the needed teaching-learning materials from the school or outside the school environment for meaningful learning to take place. Sometimes, the learners are required to bring some of the teaching materials from their homes.

4. Interactive in Nature

It is interactive in nature as it often involves making students work in small groups while carrying the learning tasks. This enables the learners learn from one another, as some students learn easily when taught by their peers. The learner learns develop cooperative skills and inter-personal relationship in the process learning and teaching processes

5. Integrative in Nature

It is also integrative in nature as treatment of one topic in a particular subject area enhances one's knowledge in another field. By this we mean that one topic in a particular field of study can link you to other subjects. Some topics in social studies such as safety, security, drug use, climate change, crime and crime fighting, environmental protection, food processing, food distribution and music, can be linked to other subjects like Security Studies, Basic Science, Cultural and Creative Arts, Health and Physical Education etc. In other words, it promotes interdisciplinary knowledge and versatility.

6. Peer Collaboration

It is very interesting and enjoyable as the learner associates with his peers. The learning process is not boring or monotonous to the learner at all as he sees it as part of playing with his fellow students.

Some Examples of Modern Teaching Methods

Akudolu (2012) enumerates various teaching methods and techniques, but the ones relevant to achieving the vision of self-reliance include Discussion Method, Audio/Visual method, Pictorial Representation/Photo Analysis, Out-of-the Classroom Experience/Field Trip, Enter-Educate method, Dramatization, Role Playing method, Inquiry/ Discovery method, Practical

Demonstration method, Problem-solving method, Group method, and use of Resource Person.

1. Discussion Method

Lecture methods are now being replaced by the discussion method. Lecture/teacher-talk- method is teacher centered, boring and makes the child evasive in the process of learning, while the discussion method makes the child active and contributory part of the lecture. In discussion method, the teacher introduces the topic and guides the students in making contributions. At the end, he feeds them with the points omitted. He is a facilitator.

2. Audio-Visual Method

This has to do with TV, projector, and other visual aids. Put on a film to students, they will hardly forget any part of it, but tell them the story orally, many will forget it easily. What is seen is easily stored in the brain.

3. Pictorial Representation/Photo Analysis

This involves the use of pictures or photographs. In this method, the teacher brings the pictures or drawn images of what he wants them to learn to the class.

4. Out of Class Experience/Field Trip

A good teacher should not always confine his students to the classroom. If a teacher wants to teach about rock, he should take his students to the site and show them the various types of rock. Let them touch them and examine them; then they will be in a better position to tell you their characteristics. An excursion is also an example of this method.

5. Enter-Educate method

This is the use of entertainment to teach. Entertainment is any action that is very interesting. It may be music, dancing, storytelling, etc, and must be fashioned in such a way that the objective of the lesson must be achieved through it.

6. Dramatization

This means using drama to achieve a specific learning objective. For example, you want to teach a particular novel; you can select some students to act it. By watching the drama, your objective is achieved. The majority of the students will never forget the story in the novel because of the drama.

7. Role-playing Method

Role-playing technique is a learning activity in which students act in a way a character should behave based on

the issue at stake. This resembles drama but not exactly the same as it may not be a direct representation of the issue at hand but is targeted at achieving a particular objective or theme. There are two different kinds of role-play. One involves having students act as if they were components of the physical or biological systems. For example, you might have three students act as oxygen and Magnesium. First, two students hold hands and form an oxygen molecule. Then the third student being a magnesium comes and ignites a spark and separates them by force and takes one oxygen atom, and the other oxygen atom is left alone. You have demonstrated a chemical reaction. It can also be used to demonstrate ethical issues.

8. Inquiry/Discovery Method

In this method, you provide the students with the necessary data. Guide them to analyze the data and discover the truth or the knowledge by themselves. This is very important in science and can also be applied in humanities and social sciences. In teaching some scientific topics, take them to a laboratory, guide them to experiment by themselves and they will hardly forget their findings. It can also be used in social sciences as interview, observation of social activities, and behaviors serve as primary data and textbooks secondary data. Give them such assignments and guide them to find the 'things' out by themselves.

9. Practical Demonstration Method

This is different from the inquiry/discovery method. In inquiry/discovery, you lead them to discover, but in a practical demonstration, you guide and lead them to practice what you have taught them already in the class-room. You can do the practical first, they observe you and then do their own. For example, when you have taught them soap making, bring the materials, and do it practically. Let each student make the soap by himself in the laboratory, and you evaluate them. The practical part of education can also be enhanced through Industrial Training (IT) during holidays and weekends.

10. Problem Solving Method

Give them issues to solve and guide them in solving them. If you are teaching Mathematics, let them do the calculations and give you the answers. Give them the assignment to write.

11. Grouping Method

This is the act of arranging your students in groups for effective teaching-learning activities. These include group assignments, debates, group competitions, clubs, academic society, and reading groups. It helps the students to exchange views and learn from each other. It also promotes interpersonal relationships and communication.

12. Use of a Resource Person

The use of a resource person method is a situation where the guest speaker who is an expert in a particular field/topic is invited and used by the teacher to achieve effective learning among his students. Most often, the teacher also learns from the resource person invited since he is an expert or professional in that area of study. Sometimes, the guest speaker may not be a certified professional but an ordinarily skilled laborer considered an expert in that field; for example:, mechanics, carpenters, and other artisans.

“No one can do everything; but everyone can do something”

Conclusion

Prof. Ogundowole's “Self-reliancism” is very flexible and a good philosophy for Africa's educational development, but cannot be achieved without flexibility and adjustment in teaching methods used in schools in Africa at present. This is because education is the bedrock of national development. It is the ultimate need and unavoidable essentiality on education stakeholders in Africa to train their teachers on the new system of teaching and equip their schools to ensure that the vision of self-reliance is fully and satisfactorily achieved. Schools in Africa lack facilities and such situations undermine the vision of self-reliance and development. In addition to this, African

nations need to diversify their economies, give attention to industrialization which can create more employment and improve their economies, give attention to technical training and vocational education, provide capital to unemployed youths who are trained, put a restriction on foreign goods, and encourage local productions. If these are done effectively with proper planning, Africa will gloriously enjoy the fulfillment of developing process to achieve self-reliance as dreamt by Prof. Ogundowole . “Education is the transmission of Civilization” –Will & Ariel Durant.

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