

A Contemporary Adaptation of John Dewey's Pragmatism (Instrumentalism) For Politics in Nigeria

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Abstract: The essence of education is for its recipients to employ knowledge obtained there-from to solve practical problems of their society. Yet, it has become ironical in Nigeria that both the huge expense on education and the innumerable certified persons in governance have failed to satisfactorily solve our many socio-economic and political problems, chief among which is bad governance. This sad fate has been traced to the lack of a defined philosophy in the provisions of the 2004 Nigeria National Policy on Citizenship education. This educational policy is laden with the theoretical nature of our inherited colonial authoritarian education with its oratorical and certificate overemphasis. It has failed to impart critical and pragmatic skills and values requisite for nurturing and entrenchment of democratic values among the citizenry. The result is the near war experience, loss of human lives and wanton destruction of property experienced during every political transition time in Nigeria. This, then, is where Dewey's instrumentalism comes in to fill the ideological lacuna. Our paper therefore considers the application of the implications of Dewey's instrumentalism to education as a portent tool for inculcating critical consciousness necessary for the cultivation of pragmatic and democratic values in the citizenry such that, they will be enabled to confront the challenges of democracy in Nigeria politics.

Keywords: Instrumentalism, Pragmatism, Education, Democracy, Politics

1. Introduction

Nigeria adopts representative democracy as her political system hence, the economic woes of the country are more often than not blamed on the era of military rule. However, good governance necessarily requires sound educational preparation hence, education constitutes mankind's greatest concern right from his prehistoric years. Recorded civilization started in Egypt and Babylonia and brings with it a new system of education based on writing and the creation of complex social institutions based on records. The rise of Greek civilization revolutionizes the concept of education. The growth of the Greek new way of life and philosophy enhances the development of education along the lines of study - programmes and new teaching methods. Greek philosophy exercised a profound influence on education. The development of explicit educational theories by philosophers becomes the great outcome of the New Greek education. All early Greek philosophers had great passion for philosophical enquiry, which became their object of study. The Ionian philosophers namely; Heraclitus, Parmenides and Democritus transpose empirical ideas into the then novel speculations about the world. It is during this period that Socrates comes to the scene as a great teacher whereas, other Sophists practiced their scholarship. The Sophists developed an individualistic and humanistic philosophy of society in which they asserted that

man is the measure of all things. However, it is Plato, who through *The Republic* gives the world a classic insight into the study of educational philosophy. Plato's book is an idealized interpretation of how a society should be governed and how education can be used primarily to bring about a just society. *The Republic* brings about a re-awakening in the study of educational theory, which also brings the emergence of educational philosophers.

There are three great periods of educational theory in the history of European education namely; The Greek Period, the Renaissance and the Reformation. Each of these periods has its own line of thought and those who were associated with it. Obviously, the history of education has been enriched by the contributions of great thinkers of these different periods, who brought to the discipline their ideological conceptions. Thus, we have idealism, realism, humanism, pragmatism, reconstructionism, behaviourism; existentialism among others. In any case, it appears that modern philosophy of education drew its inspiration from the philosophy of positivism, espoused by a French Philosopher, Auguste Comte. "Positivism is an offshoot of Immanuel Kant's philosophy by which he held the view that human reason is competent enough to attain certitude only with regard to the knowledge of phenomena" (Smith, 1976, p.iv). Comte makes it clear that philosophy should deal only with the positive data of sense experience, thus it is an off-spring of empiricism, which is based on observable data or phenomena. Positivism also rejects speculations based on ultimate origins. Now, the tendency to base knowledge chiefly on sense experience gives rise to pragmatism, which developed in the late 19th century, as a result of the struggle against the dominance of metaphysics at that time. Throughout the first quarter of the 20th century, pragmatism held sway in America exerting influence on the study of Law, Political science, Social theory, Art, Religion and Education. The key advocates of this philosophy are Charles Sanders Pierce (1839-1914), William James (1842-1910) and John Dewey (1856 - 1952). The later contributed prominently in expounding the philosophy of pragmatism and in giving direction towards its application to education.

Be that as it may, this paper specifically aims at drawing lessons from Dewey's pragmatic thoughts and educational prescriptions and adapting same for effective nurture of democratic values among Nigerians. Dewey's philosophy is usually known as instrumentalism or experimentalism and this is reflected in his educational theory by its emphasis on the importance of learning by doing. This present paper therefore identifies as a delimiting problem to democracy namely, the lack of a defined philosophical ideology behind Nigeria's National Policy of citizenship education and suggests that Dewey's instrumentalism could serve as not only a veritable educational weaponry to fight various societal, socio-economic and political maladies associated with bad governance, which arise consequent upon ignorance of democratic values and requirements but also as a dependable formulae for actualization of the much harped about "democratic dividends". This study therefore seeks to achieve this through identification and exposition of the meaning of the concepts of pragmatism, education, democracy and finally, instrumentalism in Dewey's philosophy, before drawing the implication of the latter (instrumentalism) for Nigeria.

2. Clarification of Concepts

For the purpose of clarity of thought and understanding, we will attempt definitions of the key concepts of pragmatism, democracy, education and instrumentalism.

- (a) **Pragmatism:** Pragmatism is derived from the Greek word, “Pragma” meaning action from which our words “practice” and “practical” come. It is first introduced into philosophy by Charles Sanders Pierce in 1878 and specifically refers to a method which tries to interpret each notion by tracing its respective practical consequences (Pojman, 2011). Pragmatism is also the doctrine which holds that thoughts or ideas have value only in terms of their practical consequences, and that results are the sole test of the validity or truth of one’s beliefs (Websters, 2004). John Dewey reformulates his version of pragmatism and calls it Instrumentalism, which is a theory of the general forms of conception and reasoning. For him, truth is warranted assertion. Pragmatism today, is seen as ability to serve desired purpose – ability to be put to practical use. In other words, it says “if it works it is good, if it does not work, it is bad” (Uduigwomen, 1995, p.41). In line with Blackburn’s definition, pragmatism as used here is to be understood as a belief that the meaning of a doctrine is the same as the practical effects of adopting it (2005).
- (b) **Democracy:** Etymologically, the word democracy is derived from two Greek words – “demos” meaning majority of people, and “kratos” referring to rule or authority. A combination of both “demos + kratia” would come to mean rulership by the majority of people. *The New International Websters Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language* accordingly defines democracy as “a theory of government which in its purest form, holds that the state should be controlled by all the people, each sharing equally in privileges, duties and responsibilities and each participating in person in the government: as in the city state of ancient Greece, (2004, p. 341). According to Appadorai (2004), Democracy may be described as a system of government under which the people exercise the governing power, either directly or through representatives periodically elected by themselves. Raphael has it that, democracy is a doctrine of “do it yourself”. (1976, p. 142). Its ethical foundation embodies such concepts as fairness, equality, liberty, representative government, freedom, justice, civic responsibility, political participation, rule of law, franchise etc. It is in this later sense of Raphael that democracy will be understood in the context of this paper. Howbeit, democracy is only one way among many of doing politics, which refers to the activities surrounding governance of an area or country.
- (c) **Education:** There are myriad definitions of education as there are different educational theorists. According to Frankena (1995), education consists of cultivating certain dispositions and these include skills, abilities, knowledge, attitude, beliefs, values and character. Ottoway sees education as a phenomenon that is concerned with the development of personality (2013). Education for Thompson and Hickey is the institutionalized process of teaching cognitive skills and transmitting the process from one generation to the next generation (2002). Education has variously been understood to refer to the shaping of behaviour or modification of an individual for adequate adjustment and the intentional transmission of something worthwhile in a morally acceptable manner. Now whatever else education may entail and whatever other ideas it may espouse, it is concerned with the transmission of knowledge and knowledge is

acquired both for the love of it and in order to make it minister to our needs and problems. It is in that sense that the word education will be employed all through this paper.

- (d) **Instrumentalism:** Instrumentalism holds that a scientific theory is to be regarded as an instrument for producing new predictions or new techniques for controlling events, but not as itself capable of literal truth or falsity (Blackburn, 2008). John Dewey (1922) tags his version of pragmatism, instrumentalism or experimentalism referring to a theory which maintains that cognition consists in forging ideal tools or instruments with which to cope with a given situation. This implies that the mind would be seen as an instrument for realizing purposes; for instrumentalism holds that truth is an instrument used by human beings to solve their problems. Dewey strongly believes in knowing through critical inquiry and basing evaluative judgment on pragmatic verification. Since our work is on John Dewey, his meaning of instrumentalism will be adopted all through this work.

2.1 Dewey on Instrumentalism

Dewey criticizes what he calls “a spectators theory of knowledge” an inclination by empiricists to assume that thinking refers to fixed things in nature-that for each idea there is a corresponding something in reality. Knowing, he argues, does not consist in looking as the spectator does, at what is there rather, Dewey influenced by Darwin’s evolutionary theories considers the human being as a biological organism. As such, man can best be understood in relation to our environment. Despite the fact that he gave up his early Hegelian orientation, Dewey still believes that man was enmeshed in a dialectical process, specifically, a conflict in the material or natural environment. Consequently, Dewey’s grand concept is therefore experience - a concept he employed for the purpose of connecting people as dynamic biological entities with our precarious environments. All thinking according to Dewey has two aspects namely: “a perplexed, troubled; or confused situation at the beginning and a cleared – up, unified, resolved situation at the close (1943, p. 90). He christened his theory instrumentalism, which definitively put, refers to the idea which emphasizes that thinking is always instrumental in solving problems. Whereas empiricism and rationalism separate thinking and doing, instrumentalism holds that reflective thought is always involved in transforming a practical situation. ‘Knowing’, according to Dewey, may very well consist of a ‘cognitive act’ – of an activity in my mind – but the full description of knowing must include the environmental origin of the problem or situation that calls forth the cognitive act. In this way, instrumentalism differs from empiricism and rationalism (1938).

Thinking then, is not a quest for the truth as though the truth was a static and eternal quality in things rather it is the act of trying to achieve an adjustment between individual people and our environments. The best test of value of any philosophy as Dewey sees it is to ask: Does it end in conclusions which when referred back to ordinary life experiences and their predicaments, render them more significant, more luminous to us and make our dealings with them more fruitful? Instrumentalism by the foregoing, becomes a problem-solving theory of knowledge. He then built his theory of instrumentalism around a special view of human nature – the highly flexible character of man. This pragmatic philosophy by Dewey was governed by the presuppositions of science. Like science, education should recognize the

intimate connection between action and thought – between experiment and reflection. Achieving knowledge becomes a continuous process – a struggle to fashion theory in the context of experiment and thought. But if education is the key to social improvement, and if experiment is the best way to discover the instrumental means for solving problems, the question now borders on the problem of ends. How does society discover its end or the foundations of its values? Dewey examines this difficulty of relating facts to value, science to morality and in the process came up with a new theory of value.

Briefly put, Dewey's instrumentalism could be identified in the following sub themes namely: The reality of change; the essentially social and biological nature of man; the relativity of values; the use of critical intelligence, and the experimentation of ideas or concepts. Time may not suffice for a detailed discussion of all these themes in this paper. Be that as it may, for Dewey to be rightly understood, he has to be located where he belongs – a product of 20th century philosophy, which was dominated by the idea of pragmatism consequent upon two factors namely: (a) The 20th century was the period of science and technology. (b) During this period, people were more interested in the material things or benefits or practical usefulness of any activity undertaken by them. Moore's (1974) interpretation of Dewey's philosophy couches the very kernel of instrumentalism. According to him: "Dewey's general philosophical position is usually known as instrumentalism or pragmatism, the root or idea of which is that, what counts as knowledge and truth is what works, what produces satisfactory results for me in their interaction with their environment" (pp. 42-47).

2.2 Dewey on Education; Democratic Values and the National Policy of Education

Two books that almost contain all of Dewey's ideas on education are namely: "*Democracy and Education*" published in 1916 and "*Experience and Education*", in 1938. Before we delve deeper into discussing these views, it might be necessary to re-iterate it here that John Dewey's philosophy of education emerged as a result of the key features of the learning situation in which he was nurtured, as compared to the schooling in the industrial society, which came about during his lifetime. In the words of Igbokwe (2006), "Dewey was not happy with the rote learning situation, regimentation and irrelevance to life that characterized learning during the time and thus he advocated the scientific approach" (p. 50). And as Peters (2006) expatiates: "His philosophy was an attempt to introduce into this new situation, the problem solving, do it yourself method of learning of his boyhood together with the close link between learning and living and the sense of contributing to social whole permeated by shared experiences" (p. 72).

Dewey, however understands education in terms of experience - the essence of which is to be found around the transitive process in which the environment acts on the individual and the individual acts on the environment. Accordingly, he defines education as intelligently directed development of the possibility inherent in ordinary experience, which also entails the continuous reconstruction or re-organization of experience which adds to the meaning of experience and which increases the ability to direct the cause of subsequent experience.

The aim of education for Dewey is the development of the learners' ability to deal with future problems that is the development of intelligence to solve problems. Education therefore seeks to develop and impart the problem-solving method. His educational principles and ideas were advanced by the Progressive Education Association in America. Instrumentalism then emerged as a revolt against the

educational practice during his time. This is consequent upon his criticism of many aspects of formal education of his day. Again, “he criticized the traditional school education as a preparation for a future adult life, the method of teaching itself, which could not motivate the pupil” (1943, p. 09). Dewey brought to birth the pragmatist idea of what the school, the curriculum, the teaching method and the role of the teacher should be. For him, the school is the extension of the home, which makes it possible for the experience of the child both at home and in the school to be related and continuous. Dewey (1943), explains that: “The school is primarily a social institution. Education being a social process, the school is simply that form of community life in which all those agencies are concentrated that will be most effective in bringing the child to share in the inherited resources of their race and to use his own power for social ends” (p. 91).

This brings to bare the fact that from Dewey’s point of view, the school is not isolated from the community. This makes it possible for the child to learn about group living and co-operative learning activity in the school. Thus the school instead of changing the society tries to reform it. With this tendency according to Dewey (1916), “The curriculum should be the social life of the society, which is to be taught as the curriculum on three criteria namely: “The Psychological dimension, the Sociological and the Logical Criteria” (pp. 100-110). This simply means that the curriculum will include the interest, problems and the needs of the child and what will promote harmony and the welfare of the state, which will be cast and arranged in their hierarchical learning tasks. Thus the contents of the curriculum will be those things that will make the child to explore and discover knowledge by himself and of course, aided by the teacher. Thus Dewey’s curriculum is the type that makes it possible for the teaching method to be child centered, which means it must take into consideration the needs, interests and ability of the child and it must involve the child in the activity by the process of learning by doing.

Growth according to Dewey, becomes the sole end of education and is realized in the area of experience. When the individual is acquiring the ability to see the relationship and inter connections between various experiences in different ways of the learning process. Dewey sees growth as the continuity of life and experience. Igbokwe (2006) asserts that for Dewey, “life means growth hence education means the enterprise of employing the condition which ensures growth, or adequacy of life irrespective of age” (p. 50). Dewey equates growth with life and sees life as development. Igbokwe quotes Dewey as concluding thus: “Our net conclusion is that life is development and that developing, growing is life. Translated into its educational equivalents this means that... The educational process has no end beyond itself. It is its own end and... That the educational process is one of continual re-organizing, reconstructing and transforming” (p. 59). No end should therefore be sought outside the educative process. As Dewey aptly captures it, “Aims are not to be thought of as being set up beforehand but are merely the results of the problem solving situations, which arise during the activities of life. They have an instrumental quality for educational process which has no end beyond itself. It is its own end” (1943, p. 117).

The role of the teacher for Dewey becomes essentially that of an organizer and moderator of the child’s learning. Thus, the principal role of the teacher is that of guiding the child’s learning activities. The teacher therefore is demanded to know the psychological development of the child, his needs and interests and what type of experiences that are of greatest use to him in the society and from this, the teacher selects learning tasks and puts them in such order that will make them to develop the ability of the child. The teacher becomes a resource person, who co-intents with the student on realities. So

Dewey's education lays more emphasis on learning by doing. The child or student has to do something. Thus for learning to be meaningful, the recipients must get involved. According to Dewey (1943),

There is no such thing as genuine knowledge and fruitful understanding except as the offspring of doing. The analysis and re-arrangement of facts, which is indispensable to the growth of knowledge and power of explanation and right of classification, cannot be attained purely mentally just inside the head. Men have to do something to things when they wish to find out something. They have to alter conditions. This is the lesson of the laboratory method and the lesson which all education has to learn (p. 118).

The school like the home must also be a genuine community engaged in common pursuits which interests the student and to make them conscious that they are contributing partners on whose efforts something depends for the success of the whole. Dewey has it that the school cannot be removed from the community nor can it remove the child from the community to whose life the child is expected to contribute indeed. Dewey believes that the school is not only a part of the community but a community itself or a kind of a mini-community in which the child is to acquire the experience of group life and co-operative learning activity. The school and the community should be mutually tied together in the pursuance of the same goals in the interest of the larger society hence, he opines thus: "When the school introduces and trains each child of the society into membership within such a little community, saturating him with the spirit of service and providing him with instruments of effective self direction, we shall have the deepest and best guarantee of a larger society which is worthy, lovely and harmonious" (1929, p. 127).

With this, Dewey concludes that aims in education should be results of the problem-solving situations which arise during the activities of life. Education therefore should not be so uniform as to neglect the specific powers and requirements of the individual receiving the education, it must be of the individual receiving the education, it must be capable of translating into a methodology which is activity oriented. This is because according to Dewey, an aim is worthless unless it lends itself to the construction of specific procedures for its own test, correction and amplification.

Regarding democracy, Dewey submits thus: "Democracy has many meanings but if it has a moral meaning, it is found in resolving that the supreme test of all political institutions and industrial arrangements shall be the contribution they make to the all round growth of every member of the society" (1929, p. 127). From the above citation, one sieves out Dewey's belief in an intrinsic connection between the prospects of democracy and belief in the potentialities of human nature for its own sake hence, Dewey (1963), suggests that "In building democracy, we must begin with the faith that all people have the capacity to develop and exercise their own intelligence in shaping their future, for he thus denotes democracy as a state of affairs in which the interest of each in his own work is as un-coerced and intelligent based upon its congeniality to his own aptitudes (pp. 361-362). Upon this notion, freedom of all kinds is essential to democracy. As Dewey (1943) puts it "the cause of democratic freedom is the cause of the fullest possible realization of human potentialities" (p. 129). In fact for Dewey, democracy is a way of life. A society is said to be democratic if it allows individuals to air their views and to establish free consensus and based on this, there is a flow of ideas, criticisms, dialogue and appraisals of

issues in the society which can help produce a working people. Dewey believes that implicit in a democratic society is its realistic nature, that is, there is bound to be diverse cultural, political, intellectual and social differences in a democratic society because it is founded on the belief that individuals in the society have intrinsic worth and the unique capacities to become intelligent human beings.

Accordingly, Dewey opines that: “In a democratic society, all individuals are entitled to equality of treatment by law with full administration. Each one is affected equally in quality if not in quantity of institutions under which he lives and has an equal right to express his judgment” (1963, p. 363). He also recognizes that democratic societies characterized by pluralism are bound to experience conflicts in interest and values hence, such democracies require a method of solving conflict by enquiry, discussion and persuasion rather than by violence. Thus according to Dewey: “Education that best suits this kind of society must cultivate reflective thinking and critical inquiry” (1963, p. 88). It is based on this that Dewey believes firmly that the school curriculum should be socially relevant, such that it should contribute in making the student active members of a democratic society. Thus, the school should be a miniature democracy as a springboard to social progress. Education for a pluralistic democracy must be based on reflective and critical thinking.

Inferable from our discussion so far are the glaring facts that the underlying philosophy of Dewey is his belief that education is a necessity to life; which renews the individual, so that he is able to face the problems encountered by his interaction with his environment. In fact, civilized society exists because as Dewey points out, education is transmitted from generation to generation occurring as means of the communication of habits, activities, thoughts and feelings from older to younger generations. He also believes that the individual needs society as a necessary part of his learning experience and that we must guard against the school’s tendency of presenting an academic discipline that is different from life itself. Consequently, the school should provide the student with a conducive environment to learn about community life and as Kneller (2011) notes: “growth, democracy and intelligence are the inclusive and related aims of education” (p. 90). The school therefore contributes to significant change in the long run when the students are made to see the contradictions between the supposed ideas of democracy and social reality. As Raphael (1976) rightly observes: “Democracy is a doctrine of “do it yourself” (p. 143). The underlying idea of which is that of self direction and choosing for oneself which are more preferable than decisions imposed on one person by another thus, the very ethical foundation of the democratic way of life and political procedure is that it embodies such concepts like fairness, equality, liberty, representative government, freedom, justice, civil responsibility, political participation, the rule of law, franchise etc.

The questions now arise - What democratic content has the present National policy of education and what specifically can we say is the underlying philosophy behind the national policy of education, which should instill democratic values into the child in the process of his education. A recourse into our past reveals that colonialist education bequeathed to us was suffocatingly authoritarian, theoretical and uncritical hence, it failed to impart and impact critical skills and values requisite for the development of democracy in Nigeria. Adaralegbe (1972), decries this weakness of the Nigerian education policy and submits thus:

One of our first preoccupations after independence should have been the revision and refocusing of our education system, so that it may reflect the needs and aspiration of a free people. No doubt the educational system we inherited was a good one- good that is for the country and society for which it was planned; good for England and the English society. But it was not good for us, because it neglected to take into consideration our cultural and social background, because it has tended to produce an educated class of 'pen pushers' and because it failed to lay the foundations of economic freedom by providing the manual, skills and expertise necessary for successful industrial and agricultural development (p. xvii).

As the national policy of education (Revised edition, 2004) indicates the focus or aim of the policy of education includes: a free and democratic society, a just and egalitarian society, a united strong and self-reliant nation and a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens. The fore-going principles indicate very clearly the vision of developing appropriate democratic values among the Nigerian populace - through education. However, it is obvious that there is no underlying philosophical, reflective or critical set of intellectual values for inculcating the required democratic culture or society. Our indigenous philosophers and theorists have failed to propound an articulate body of national democratic values for enhancing development in the nation. The curriculum of subjects like Social studies, Government and even Citizenship education which are meant to produce good citizens simply hold these democratic values as mere lofty ideals but the tools to pragmatically live them out is embarrassingly absent. We are talking about the philosophical fibre. Obviously, the already enunciated goals of The National Policy indicates our resolve to evolve a free and democratic society but the rub here is what do we mean by this and how is the educational system ought to help us to understand the meaning of democracy, its implications, justifications and how it relates with other principles of morality and conduct? Education as a means of initiating the younger ones into the democratic way of life should be the focus of the Nigerian system is policy. It is this yawning gap between the theory and ideal versus the practice and the real in our democratic orientation, which is due to the lack of a viable philosophical tradition for doing politics in a democratic Nigeria that John Dewey's philosophy of education is called to duty as a guide for democratic education in Nigeria.

2.3 Implications of Dewey's instrumentalism for Democratic Education in Nigeria

The educational process was undoubtedly recognized by Dewey (1916) as a potent instrument for inculcating democratic values in the citizenry hence he opines that:

Every individual becomes educated only as he has an opportunity to contribute something from his own experience, no matter how meager or slender that background of experience may be at a given time, and finally that enlightenment comes from the give and take, from the exchange of experience and ideas. The realization of that principle in the classroom. It seems to me is, an expression of the significance of democracy to the educational process without which individuals cannot come into the full possession of themselves nor take a

contribution if they have it in them to make to the social well being of others (p. 87).

Democracy for Dewey then is more than a form of government but also a purely kind of associated living and of conjoint communicated experience. The democratic society could then build up a society, where members share the wildest possible variety of interest unimpeded by any barrier of race, religion and economic disparity. Such a society which fails to incorporate in its projects and solutions of life problems, the democratic concept enumerated in the curriculum of the subjects relating to citizenship education so far, may not efficiency suffice for an ideal democratic culture to thrive in Nigeria. Regrettably, citizenship education in Nigeria at best provides what could be regarded as an artificial learning setting meant for academic promotion. For Dewey, education is life and consequently growth so that the ultimate aim of education is growth with greater knowledge of and control of the environment. This is the sole reason countries all over the world regard education as a national enterprise by which they fashion out a national educational system with certain aims in view. Socialist's states have been able through her system of education to solve issues like inequality, social discrimination, illiteracy and enhancement of social integration. Education has also been used as a veritable tool for personal development, social mobility, and inculcation of social values, norms, democratic values and competitiveness. Hence, different countries have their philosophies of education. For instance, Britain has idealism; the former USSR operates on socialism, China-communism, America-pragmatism and Nigeria – what?

Dewey's instrumentalism for instance, when applied to democratic education provides useful solution to the problems of our institutions and society. Here, social control must be done through voluntary disposition and interest, which Dewey points out must be created only by education. Dewey, believes that, full education comes only when there is a responsible share on the part of each person in proportion to capacity in shaping the aim of policies of the groups to which he belongs". The implication of this, is that educational and curriculum processes of democratic education for our citizenship education must include the features of shared experience and associated group living. For a developing nation like Nigeria, it is necessary for her to evolve or adopt a national philosophical foundation for its educational system, which the objectives and direction of its education should depend on. Along this line of thought, Dewey (1929) aligns himself and submits thus:

I believe that education is the fundamental method of social progress and reform. All reforms which rest simply upon enactments of law or the threatening of certain penalties or upon charges in mechanical or outward arrangements, or transitory and futile... by law and punishment, by social agitation and discursion, society can regulate and form itself in a more or less haphazard and chance by the way. But through education, society can formulate its own means and resources and thus shape itself with definiteness and economy in the direction in which it wishes to move (p. 157).

If education is to help for such reforms in Nigeria, it becomes quite obvious that the school system through its curriculum should be the nucleus for such reforms. The school curriculum cannot seek to limit the range of learning or be so selective as to keep the learner selectively ignorant and to inculcate in

them passive and conforming attitudes through the traditional process of rote learning or what Paulo Freire calls the Banking system of education. Against this background, knowledge acquired can be permanent if the process of acquiring it is such that it involves learning by doing, only then can today's students justify their certificates. Again, Dewey has it that the teacher's principal role is that of guiding the child's leaning activities. Thus the teacher losses the portion of an external boss or dictator, but takes on that of a leader of group activities. So if the curriculum of Social studies, Government and all other Citizenship education courses will be such that involves and encourages sharing experience, this definitely will help to foster the ability to recognize democratic problems and find solutions to them, which in turn will make for the development of intelligent and critical minded citizenry.

It is therefore plausible to argue that a school system that has tendencies to articulate the curriculum of its subject or courses along Dewey's concept of education has chances of producing democratically minded students. The implication here is that such curriculum must ensure that the co-intending students get an opportunity to escape from the limitation of the concept of democratic education, which invariably makes them passive participants in the political processes to the practical aspects of democratic principles whose merits are obvious. The foregoing reveals that Dewey's problem-solving method of learning by doing approach will bring about internalization of concepts of authority, electoral system, franchise party etc in the students thus providing a free atmosphere of interactions and dialogue. Students are enabled to explore and experience those activities that can help them develop positive approach to democratic principles and values. Hence Dewey writes: "If ideas, meanings, concepts , notions, theories, systems are instrumental to an active re-organization of a given environment to a removal of some specific trouble and perplexity then the test of their validity and value lies in accomplishing this work. If they succeed in their office, they are reliable, sound, valid, good and true. If they fail to clear up confusion, uncertainty and evil when they are acted upon then they are false" (1933, p. 156).

The above citation underscores the fact that if a given pattern of behavior helps us to remove our problems, that pattern would be regarded as effective. But if a given behavioral pattern consistently makes us to be apathetic about our social environment as it is prevalent in the Nigerian education system, we must search for a new approach. This Dewey's inspiration can help us to increase the knowledge of a greater number of Nigeria youths on democratic principles, which could help them to change our cultural pattern and social habits for an enduring democratic culture and politics in Nigeria. Dewey also argues that the school itself should be a real community exhibiting numerous shared interests and open communication – a miniature democracy. When this is understood and instrumentalized, we will discover that whatsoever will be taught in our schools must involve practical activity or practical application of the knowledge gained from theoretical constructs. Similarly, students will be allowed to use their free initiatives and native intelligence in solving practical democratic problems facing them both in the school and the society at large.

3. Conclusion

We have so far tried to explain the meanings and imports of Dewey's perspectives of education and democracy and how he weaves both into his concept of instrumentalism. Summarily put, what Dewey's Instrumentalism makes here is a case for critical examination. There seem to be an aberration in the area

of theory and practice for which the new approach tends to criticize the old system of education – The reason being that it failed to provide enough practical background and activities to attain proper intellectual, cultivation, curiosity and appreciation of the democratic values of the society. The child by Dewey’s suggestion learns by doing, he has to do something which means getting involved in order for learning to be meaningful. This lesson of practicality and experimentation must be learnt. Our suggested Dewey’s instrumentalism thesis will not also assume absolute status since it makes itself available for revision, which arises as a result of reflective and constant criticism. Dewey’s instrumentalism for pragmatic education being suggested in this paper for the purpose of democracy, becomes therefore a self refining idea – open to improvement and revision even as Nigeria politics develops.

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