PEDAGOGY FOR TEACHING AND PROMOTING SOCIAL JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA

Emmanuel Chinedu Anagwo, Ibitamuno M. Aminigo, & Douglas O. Nwaokugha
Department of Educational Foundations, University of Port Harcourt, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT: *Every state is desirous of quality and meaningful development where empowerment, emancipation and liberation of the citizens is key. Achieving and enjoying a state where empowerment, emancipation and liberation of the citizens are norms can only be possible through education especially one that is provided to citizens in their early childhood days and in an atmosphere where the fundamental human rights of the citizens and the citizens' pursuit of other socio-moral and socio-political ideals are guaranteed. An educational provision that promises the Nigerian society such value-laden ideals is one that is deep-rooted in social justice and human rights. Using the philosophical method, this paper focuses on the pedagogy for promoting social justice and human rights among early learners in Nigeria. The study is strongly anchored on the position that early and sound foundations of Nigerian learners on issues that border on social justice and human rights (individual welfare, public welfare or national interests) have potentials to challenge learners into indulging in abstract, creative and critical thinking that revolve around human welfare and the welfare of the state. The study concludes by raising pedagogical signposts through which the ideals of social justice and human rights can be inculcated in early childhood learners in Nigeria.*

KEYWORDS: pedagogy, social justice, human rights, early childhood education, early childhood learners, empowerment

INTRODUCTION

The dream and aspiration of every responsible state is to make solid investments in its human capital. What informs this policy direction is the fact that the quality of investments in the human capital of any state determines the direction and quality of development that can take place in the state. The logic, reasonableness and rationality of this is that human beings are the carriers of the genes that bubble into development, meaning that any state that is desirous of meaningful sustainable human and infrastructural development must first of all make meaningful investment in the citizens of the state.

No doubt, some states have keyed into this by making investments in their citizens through providing them educational opportunities so that the state can have a pool of administrative and managerial personnel that can oversee the effective running of the state. The ability of the citizens of the state to explore such educational opportunity positions and repositions the citizens into identifying and developing their creative faculties in readiness to responding to

moral, social, economic, political, scientific and technological challenges that may come their way. The result of the efforts of the state to provide education to the citizens or to invest in the education of the citizens of the state is to accelerate the development of the individuals and the development of their state.

In recent times, the trend in the development of citizens of states as well as the development of the state through education is best achieved when the state steps down and focuses its educational provision on learners in the age bracket of 0-5 popularly called early childhood education. It is generally recognized that early childhood education triggers in learners quick and early indulgence in the development of skills of critical and reflective thinking that among other things smoothens the transition of the learners into primary education. Nigeria is a flashpoint and a classic example of a country where the abundance of human and material resources bequeathed to her by nature has not translated into quality improvement in the quality of lives of the majority of the citizens. This development has resulted in many people concluding that the abundance of natural and human resources in Nigeria is presently a curse. The leaders, political elites and bureaucrats in Nigeria rank among the least in the whole world who do not think of possible strategies on how to initiate programmes that can be beneficial to the greater percentage of Nigerians. The leaders, political elites and bureaucrats openly loot the resources of the Nigerian state to better their lives and the lives of their in-laws, wives and their direct relatives so much that majority of Nigerians are left in merciless and pitiable conditions.

To be expected in a state where leaders, political elites and bureaucrats are insensitive to issues of welfare of the masses is the abuse and violation of the human rights of the people. Human rights abuse and violation are a common phenomenon in Nigeria and occur in a member of ways. Human rights abuse and violation of occur in Nigeria when government consciously and systematically take over the environmental resources of the various minority ethnic groups and through this way systematically worsen the already bad conditions in which Nigerians find themselves.

Human rights of minority ethnic groups in Nigeria are abused when multinational corporations in collaboration with the Nigerian state systematically pollute the environment and place the people at risk and consciously do nothing to ameliorate or improve the conditions of living of those persons whose environment have been polluted; human rights or violation occurs when there are selective application of laws or different standards for different people of Nigeria in matters of compensation for wrongs, access to information about risks and unequal protection of citizens from exposure to hazardous industrial wastes or sites and lastly human rights abuse occurs when minority ethnic groups in Nigeria knowingly and deliberately indulge in acts and behaviours that constitute human right abuse against nature and humanity out of hopelessness, frustration and insensitivity of the Nigerian state to come to their assistance.

A worrisome trend and a cause for concern is that in the face of all of these, not much has been done to sensitize and provide Nigerians the right information on what the Nigerian state can do and how social justice and the human rights can become norms that they can explore

for their continuous existence. Again as plausible as it can be adjudged right and reasonable to initiate actions and moves that can sensitize the people to challenge the state to make social justice and human rights norms, it is our strong conviction that channelling such actions or moves through early childhood education can produce the best results. This belief is anchored on the fact that whatever learning experiences that a child acquires early in life makes long lasting and durable impressions so much that the child cannot easily forget it. To this end, Nwaokugha and Ndimele (2018:29) may have said the minds of many as they write that:

In fact, it is self-evident that human beings find it impossible or extremely difficult to easily forget or discard habits and behaviours that had been norms they had acquired from infancy or childhood. As no one consciously learns to be left handed in old age, good behaviours that support and promote social justice that children learn or acquire during childhood or in early years of their development are likely to remain throughout the rest of their lives.

In fact, all the development the learner internalizes at the early childhood education level helps to boost the learners hygienic, social, moral, numeracy and language development skills as well as serves as a plus in the drive and desire of the state to develop and initiate radical and revolutionary trends for placing the state on a fast lane of sustainable development.

Any state that makes early childhood education a norm can be said to have consciously and unconsciously laid foundations for the propagation of the ideals of social justice and human rights. Undoubtedly, any state that exposes its citizens at the early childhood stage to the concepts of social justice and human rights, with their socio-moral and socio-political orientations or overviews can be seriously initiating the young ones into skills of state or nation building and acts of individual and state welfare. This is because creating such awareness in the young ones early in their lives can sharpen their focus, increase their curiosity and desire to intensify their pursuit for higher order concepts that revolve around issues of rights, justice, empowerment, human survival while jettisoning concepts like poverty, marginalization, depravation and human misery whenever and wherever they encounter them in the society.

This paper therefore is a bold attempt to develop sustainable pedagogy for teaching and promoting social justice and human rights among early childhood learners in early childhood institutions in Nigeria. Our methodology is basically philosophical. A methodology in an academic discourse, according to Nwaokugha and Danladi (2016), is said to be philosophical when it employs or uses the speculative, analytic and normative or prescriptive methods. Speculation as a method of philosophical enquiry attempts to find logical coherence or logical consistency in an entire realm of thought (Aminigo, 1999). What this translates into is that the reasonableness, authenticity or logicality of a preposition depends on the orderly sequence, presentation and how logically connected the constituent arguments in a proposition can be. A revelation which the above opens up is that speculation as a method of philosophical research dwells much on logic and language; hence, a speculation is valid if and only if its conclusions are derived from its premise.

On the other hand, analysis as a method of philosophical enquiry involves the breaking down of terms, propositions and concepts into their smallest constituents and logically and

systematically showing how one constituent unit is related to the other. The mission of breaking down terms, concepts and prepositions into their smallest units is to clarify all possible meaning that may be associated with a particular concept, term or proposition, meaning that the quest to establish meaning is the motive of analysis. It has to be stated in unambiguous terms that issues of conflicts, disagreements, violence or confrontations in any of their ramifications can be reduced to the barest minimum if meanings are presented in clear terms without any form of ambiguity. Language and logic are key to analysis and they function to establish or demonstrate what Hirst and White (2000) call relationship between language and reality or word and the world.

Prescription as a method of philosophical enquiry concerns itself with establishing or setting standards for judging values or making prescriptive value judgements.

Researchers and the knowledge industry are better developed when the philosophical research method is used. It enables researchers to venture into areas which ordinarily they would not have ventured into. This is because philosophical research method is not restrictive and does not in any way impoverish researchers, rather it stimulates in researchers some measure of curiosity that constantly challenges researchers into trying new academic possibilities that result in the breaking of new frontiers of knowledge across disciplines.

In keeping with the tradition associated with this method of enquiry which is the clarification of key concepts in the issues under investigation, we start with the concept of early childhood education.

The Concept of Early Childhood Education
Early childhood education refers to any educational experience that is provided to the learner prior to his or her enrolment into the primary school. Legally, learners in early childhood institutions are taken as people who are yet to attain their sixth birthday. A feature that characterises educational provision at this level is that educational institutions that attend to the needs of learners who are yet to attain six years go by different names, namely: crèche, day care, pre-nursery, nursery, pre-primary, headstart, kindergarten (Nwaokugha, 2016).

In Nigeria, educational institutions that provide educational services go by the name pre-primary education. This stand is taken following the position of the Federal Government of Nigeria (2004) that pre-primary education "is the education given in an educational institution prior to entering primary school."

It is instructive to point out that more than one activity take place in early childhood education institution and this is the point made by Nwaokugha (2016) when he writes that what obtains in early childhood education institution is a conglomeration of a variety of activities that take place at the same time, all of which target promoting the growth and development of the young learners. Basically, the core activities that take place in early childhood institutions are care and education. Some arguments have mounted concerning the place of care and education in early childhood education practice, in which Gibbons (2007) takes a stand that care and education should be incorporated and the environment must

carefully blend the two together. Looking critically at the position of the above mentioned scholar, it is obvious that care and education in the context of early childhood education are not one and the same thing. Nwaokugha (2016:246-248) resolves the distinction between care and education in the context of early childhood education practice when he writes that:

Descriptive and critical reflections targeted at adequately distinguishing the two concepts can lead one to say that care in a way is the surveillance of the adult over the young or infant for purposes of giving or providing him or her protection, security and keeping him or her away or safe from danger and care in early childhood education falls within a lower order where the target is to guide, assist and nurture individuals (the infants) into internalising basic habits for routine activities for their personal cleanliness and daily upkeep while education is a higher order activity that is consciously designed to enhance and promote continuous learning in individuals in addition to enabling individuals indulge in and creatively participate in abstract and critical thinking so as to respond to their immediate and external environments.

Further illumination on care and education shows that of the age bracket of 0-5 that is the jurisdiction of early childhood education, care occurs from 0-3 and is more difficult and complex while education occurs from 4-5. The interesting thing about what has been illustrated above is to acknowledge what Nwaokugha (2016:24) calls growing consensus among scholars of education to pay less attention to the various labels referring to the education of learners at 0-5 years as already indicated in the onset but to simply use early childhood education and care.

Whichever way the state takes it, early childhood education or early childhood care and education according to Nwaokugha (2016:40)
…can be a sure foundation for achieving social justice, a route for awakening learners' curiosity for education as well as enhancing learners' enjoyment of their human and natural rights to education…a state that consciously makes care and education a national priority is clearly and un-mistakenly working towards equalization of educational opportunities, building platforms for achieving its identified national objectives.

The Concept of Social Justice
Social justice is one concept in the contemporary affairs of man and his society that so much ink has been spilled in attempts to understand exactly what it means and how best to apply or realise it in the affairs of man and his society. In every of such attempt, a consensus that emerges is that social justice is a practical variant of justice that is realistically focused on enhancing in the citizens of the state the capacity to actualize their potentials through their own efforts after the state has put in place all the necessary supporting environmental conditions.

What this points to is that social justice is hinged on a public welfare philosophy where the government is expected to hit the ground rolling by providing all the necessary privileges, protection, rights and the satisfaction of interests especially for the poor members of the society. Put slightly different, the idea of social justice revolves around the notion that the

state as an institution should put up public welfare mechanisms in motion that can comprehensively span across health care, education, good road networks, pipe borne water, effective communication systems, electricity, employment, housing, pension, human right issues, equality of opportunities, freedom of expression, freedom of worship, freedom of association, economic and political frameworks, etc which upon their effective exploration, citizens of the state can achieve their maximum potentials without difficulty.

As can be seen above, social justice focuses on the provision of comprehensive welfare services to citizens and following these its comprehensiveness, scholars try to provide definitions of the concept from diversified points of view. Fernandez, Hansing and de Rojas (2008) list three main normative definitions of social justice to include:

i)   The distribution of goods and services through state sponsored welfare programme
ii)   Economic justice through access and equal opportunity
iii)   Political rights and liberties.

From a different dimension, Aminigo and Nwaokugha (2011:170) write that social justice demands ethical considerations in policy formulation and implementation, resource use and distribution, etc so much that intergenerational equity and fairness can be sustained between regions and generation while Nwaokugha and Ndimele (2018:32) write that social justice in its simplest conception is any welfare policy put up by a state for the improvement of the quality of lives of the citizens of the state. Nwaokugha and Ndimele (2018) added that social justice is all about policy or the degree of articulate responsiveness of the state in terms of practical, workable and humane policies for the citizens of the state.

It is certainly correct to say that the awareness on the part of a state on the existence of injustice, human rights abuses, inequality, marginalization, hardship and other forms of human misery challenges responsible states to embrace and initiate social justice policies as alternatives for redressing such dehumanizing situations that citizens go through. Any state that fails to initiate social justice measures may have consciously set the ball rolling for anarchy and rebellious behaviours from the citizens of the state.

No state no matter how blessed in human and material resources can conveniently and satisfactorily provide all that the citizens need for their survival. This is where the institution of social justice policies are in the best interest of the state. Any state that gets the right social justice policy and the citizens respond receptively by exploring and maximizing such opportunities provided by the state, recoup such through the quality of their contributions to the administration of the state. This is where scholars who maintain that there is reciprocity between states that initiate social justice policies and their citizens can be said to be one hundred percent correct. This reciprocity can be likened to a circle where the state makes policies and through these policies empower and emancipate its citizens and through the activities and actions of the citizens of the state, the state develops. In short, it is through the actions and activities of citizens that state develops. This reciprocity is highlighted by Nwaokugha and Ndimele (2018) when they write that social justice in its real setting makes case for citizens from their state and secondly makes case for the state from their citizens.

True, the commitment of states to social justice issues naturally results to a kind of reciprocity which is good for the state. That this is the case implies that stepping down to introduce the teaching and learning of social justice in early childhood education institutions in Nigeria can bring about maximum benefits to both the citizens and the state. That is, states that lay the foundation for the knowledge of social justice in their learners especially in early childhood education institutions may be laying the foundation for equality of educational opportunities with its concomitant trickle down effects on human and national development (Abraham, Mark & Sylvester 2018:89) and secondly producing philosophically sound and nationalistically conscious citizens whose actions and behaviours can positively transform the learners and their state in desirable directions.

The Concept of Human Rights
Right issues are central to the survival of man and his institutions. The centrality of right issues has projected right as such a concept which attracts the attention of such respected personalities as philosophers, legal practitioners, medical practitioners, theologians, educationists, social scientists, media practitioners, moralists, social commentators, management experts, environmentalist, etc. That issues of right attract the attention of the above persons means that right issues are flash and vocal points to many disciplines. What attests to this are the incisive and robust definitions that scholars give to the concept of right. According to Elvin (1977:107):

A right is a principle in virtue of which claim is made in society on behalf of the individual, a group of person or society as a whole, with a strong sense of moral compulsion behind it and justified on ground that unless it is recognized and acted upon, a perfectly possible wellbeing will fail to be attained.

In his own submission on the concept of right, Angeles (1981:247) writes that right is:
That which one has due to him. That which one has a just demand. That which one has a proper claim. The privilege given to one, sanctioned and safeguarded by what is regarded as an authoritative source such as god, a king, law, a social group, custom, tradition, conscience.

Okoh (2003:125) writes that right has to do with what a person is entitled to and what creates an obligation on others to provide the right. Rights, according to Uruakpa and Okeke (1989: 176), are the prerogative of an individual in contradistinction to his privilege. According to them human person is endowed with some entitlements which offers him some protection against abuse and these entitlements are the human person's inalienable rights. Postema (1989:111) sees rights as normative relations focused around the interests of the bearers.

Characteristically, discussions that are focused on rights maintain a tripartite outlook where there is a bearer of right, where there are bodies, organizations or institutions that are the respecters of the right and there are objects upon which right claims are made. What has been said above is that discussions that are focused on right issues across societies implicate a bearer of a right, respecters of the right and objects of right, where these do not follow there

is no right issue; and a thing of interest in discussions of right is that all such discussions revolve around human dignity.

One issue which authorities and disciplines which preoccupy themselves with issues of rights have consensually resolved or agreed upon is the source of right. According to Brown (1997: 473), right derives from two principal sources namely natural law and charter rights. In his categorization, rights that are based on natural law derive from reason and the notion of human flourishing whereas laws that are based on charter right derive from political bargain or contract. The concept of human rights derives from natural law.

Human rights according to An-Naim (2003:3) are those claims every human being is entitled to have and enjoy as a right by virtue of his or her humanity, without distinction on such grounds as sex, race, colour, religion, language, national origin or social groups. Harries (1992:5) simply defines human rights as natural rights while Sieghart (1992:39) defines human rights as rights which the international law ascribes to all individuals by virtue of the fact that they are human individuals.

One thing unites all the three definitions and that is that human rights cuts across all people of the world not taking into cognizance the race, religious, political, philosophical and ideological leaning of anybody but simply bestowing rights on all human beings on the fact that all are human beings and pointedly recognising that any attempt to deny such rights from any human being will automatically impair the normal functioning of such person as a human being. This accounts for why Johnston (1994:9) writes that human rights are framed in moral arguments where its abuse causes feelings of disgust, discomfort and outrage and Nwaokugha (2013) adds to the reactions that follow human abuse when he writes that denial of any one's human rights increases agitation for human rights.

It has to be pointed out loud and clear that as a concept that is framed in moral rationality, human rights provides citizens protection and immunity against autocratic regimes of states-citizens enjoy this protection and immunity through the support of the international community. Again, human rights serves as a safeguard for individuals against external preferences in addition to compelling the state and her institutions to respect individuals and also inculcating in individuals the habit of according respect to others. The high point of the moral rationality of human right is the fact that all areas upon which human survival depend enjoys the status of human rights.

All said and done, it is imperative to sensitize Nigerians in particular and members of the global community in general on how to explore all areas upon which human survival depends as enshrined in human right treaty, including empowering citizens with skills to make demands from the state and their institutions. There is every need for a change of gear in creating more awareness among Nigerians on the direction for this all important task whereas this awareness is important and obvious, the right level to start the laying of the foundation is at the level of early childhood education.

We are convinced that we have provided sufficient background information on social justice and human rights-two concepts that are superlatively rich in moral and ethical principles and that are central in bringing about fulfilments of the potentials of individuals in the society. Naturally, bringing the fulfilment of the potentials of individuals can raise hope and ray of optimism where individuals can see their worth and the ability of their state to help them achieve their various ambitions. The aura of hope and optimism that a regime of social justice and human rights establishes can be capable of challenging citizens of a state to embrace behaviours that can support sustainable development and consequently reduce the citizens' participation in behaviours that promote social unrest or put slightly different reduce the occurrence of social discontent to its barest minimum. Laying the foundation for making social justice and human right a norm in any society can best start at the early childhood education level. Our next focus shall be on practical strategies for teaching and promoting social justice and human rights in early childhood education institutions in Nigeria.

Practical Strategies for Teaching and Promoting Social Justice and Human Rights in Early Childhood Educational Institutions in Nigeria

Nigeria as a country is culturally, ethnically, tribally and linguistically multi-ethnic so much so that a distance of about two or three kilometres takes one into another cultural and linguistic group. Part of what is responsible for Nigeria's multi-ethnic composition is a product of history and that history is colonialism, for according to Wright (2008:465) "the territory that was to become Nigeria consisted of numerous empires and these were absorbed into three administrative regions by the British. In turn these three regions were amalgamated into the colony of Nigeria in 1914". In what is presently Nigeria, some state, ethnic groups and local governments that are close to one another are ethnically and culturally diversified in all indexes of heterogeneity so much that there is a serious and urgent need for real and intensified efforts to unify the various entities or at least help make them understand themselves.

Nigerians are "aware that Nigeria's diversified ethnic and cultural composition, nationally and locally has systematically and severally fractured Nigeria so much that ethnicity and tribalism have become critical factors in the jostling for political and economic power in Nigeria, the result of which has been political instability and abysmal economic performance irrespective of abundant human and mineral resources. These predicaments of Nigeria can be redressed through the effort of young Nigerians and after Nigeria has consciously inculcated in her young ones through early childhood education the skills of mutual respect for one another, empowerment, state building, participation, critical thinking and skills of conflict resolution which social justice and human rights can effectively promote.

There is an age long wisdom in the power of educating the young ones in the desired direction that the larger society or the state wants to go. Any state or people that are desirous to sustainably develop her citizens must first start by laying the foundations for achieving such aspiration in their young ones (Aminigo & Isioma 2019:3). This may be the more reason why the quest for greatness that has eluded Nigeria over the years can start in the 21st century by her laying the foundation in her young ones through early childhood education. The bible

book of Proverbs 22:6 harps on this when it says "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not turn from it". Starting early in life to teach and educate the young ones in Nigeria on the rudiments of social justice and human rights can be sure ways of bringing about the Nigeria of our collective dreams where we can collectively take Nigeria to her rightful place in comity of nations.

The pedagogy for turning this lofty ideal of teaching and educating young ones on social justice and human rights in early childhood educational institutions in Nigeria can start with the inclusion of the teaching of equity and justice in the curriculum of early childhood learners. The ideas enshrined in the concepts of equity and justice are essential socio-moral virtues for the attainment of the good life for the individual and the Nigerian society where the intention is always to give equal attention, equal protection, a sense of belonging and equal access to citizens of the state with respect to social goods of the state. Anyone who examines the above can attest to the fact that the tenets of social justice and human rights are embedded in such socio-political arrangement.

Characteristically, equity and justice can be said to be based on such humane and rational principles of reason, fairness, impartiality and non-arbitrariness and making knowledge of the concepts of social justice and human rights norms in Nigeria's educational practice especially at the early childhood stage can sensitize young Nigerians on the extent in which the principles of egalitarianism underguard Nigeria's socio-political and administrative dealings; hence, the tendency and inclination of the young learners to their sustenance. The above conditions translate to fairness and rightness in the treatment of citizens in a state and the invocation of principles of equity and justice as listed above can best be appreciated in transactions involving many persons. It therefore follows that stepping it to the multiple composition of Nigeria can illuminate on how fair treatment of the various component groups can result in each contributing its fair share to the development of Nigeria as against the present practice where Nigerians sabotage Nigeria. Letting young Nigerians know the cause of underdevelopment in Nigeria very early in their lives can cause them to display the right behaviours to themselves and to Nigeria so as to avoid becoming victims like those before them.

Developing in learners in early childhood educational institutions the display of empathy towards their fellow human beings can be a way of promoting social justice and human rights. According to Goodman (2000: 1062) empathy involves being able to identify with the situation and feeling of another person. What this buttresses is that any human being who is empathetic to the conditions of the other person is on the fast lane of developing powerful skills or virtues for promoting social responsibility that can enable the person acquire higher order virtues that can enable the person accommodate or tolerate people who are different from him. To be empathetic to the conditions of the other person suggests that one cares about the person and consequently cannot oppress, discriminate, indulge or withhold anything that can result in advantage to the person rather the one who has the feelings of empathy for the other can remove all traces of injustice and inhuman behaviour or treatment on the way of the person being empathized. This is why Goodman (2000:1064) writes that empathy is a powerful force in acting for justice and this accounts for why actions toward

social justice are deep rooted in ethical considerations with anyone in this habit of mind concerning himself or herself with the promotion of the welfare of the people and consequently preventing harm or psychological and emotional suffering.

The point here is that the show of empathy as a strategy for promoting social justice and human rights derives its foundations from morality and making the teaching of morality especially the morality of care a norm can be a foundation for respect for social justice and human rights in a state. A good teacher can always invoke the golden rule principle which stipulates that one should act on to others the way he would want others to act on to him in all of his transactions with fellow human beings and nature. Properly guided by this, no one with his/her right senses can dream of inflicting harm on to the other person or cause social or environmental disarticulation that can be injurious or harmful to the social system.

A strong starting point for teaching social justice and human right in any state is to establish proven cases of injustices, human rights abuses, sufferings, marginalization and instances of discrimination in that state. There are virtually instances of injustices and human right abuses across all segments of life in Nigeria. Wright (2008:467-468) graphically captures many layers of injustice and human rights in Nigeria when he writes:
It is properly fair to say that Nigeria's political elites, both civilian and military, have failed the country. Politics is based upon patrimonial inclinations, where access to political office normally translate into corrupt assess to the nation's wealth…social development has remained poor, as money often does not make its way into productive usage. The most obvious of this skewed development can be seen in the oil producing areas of the Niger River delta. Potentially the wealthiest of the region, the people inhabiting the delta, such as the Ogoni and Ijaw peoples have the lowest indicators of social development and environmental degradation of the region is staggering.

Issues of environmental and general injustices and human rights abuses in Nigeria are monumental and have been recognized by the international community. Minority ethnic groups especially in oil and gas producing regions, powerless and vulnerable groups suffer terrible human rights abuses and do not receive equitable and corresponding shares of the revenues that are generated from their environment. These developments are flashpoints for the teaching of social justice and human rights so that new ideas can be developed for better welfare deals for the people.

One critical subject that can be used to promote the knowledge of social justice and human rights among early childhood learners in Nigeria is mathematics. Knowledge of Mathematics is essential in determining what each person, social group, region or component unit of a state gets in the process of sharing the limited resources of a state. Knowledge of Mathematics helps to sharpen the analytic and critical abilities of young learners to think creatively and reflectively and consequently establish if injustice, abuse or marginalization has occurred, it becomes a turning point for the evolution of better ways of resolving such injustice, abuse and marginalization. It is possible the outcome of the sharing, the pattern of the sharing and what each person, social group, region or constituent or component unit gets can determine

the fairness, equity, justice or unfairness, inequity or injustice in the sharing and the degree of marginalization of some members of the state.

What has been exposed or brought to the fore is the fact that knowledge of mathematics especially as it concerns sharing of resources has potentials to widen the learner's understanding of social, economic and political issues in the world. This, very instructively, shows that young learners can critically and reflectively analyse issues bordering on social justice and human rights. Bartell (2011:2) says it all when he writes that mathematics can be used to teach and learn issues of social injustice and to support arguments and actions aimed at promoting equitable change. It is important one points out that any pedagogy for teaching social justice and human right that achieves or succeeds in its mission develops and inculcate in the learners the capacity for nation building and national development, namely, the curiosity to restructure the present system of things especially where there are perceived injustices, that threaten peace and stability. The direction for restructuring is imperative so as to vacate or remove barriers that may have hindered the growth, empowerment and emancipation of people from some regions, small class or minority ethnic groups in a state.

It must be stated loud and clear that teaching mathematics in ways that learners can use it to assess the level of justice and injustice of a state can enhance the learners' sense of critical pedagogy especially their application of knowledge in creating a better society or world. Put slightly different, the pedagogy for teaching and promoting social justice and human rights can be tailored to work towards the creation or development of new knowledge that can focus on the projection of the desired behaviours that can lead to the promotion of social justice and human rights in the state.

A desirable direction in educational provision that can promote sustainable social justice and human rights is one that targets developing in learners the ability to think critically in directions that can trigger taking actions. These are especially actions that in addition to adding value and quality improvements in the lives of others double by supporting welfare and egalitarian policies where actions in support of the promotion of rights and development of all the citizens can be norms (Osaat & Anagwo 2018: 277).

A strategy for teaching and promoting sustainable social justice and human rights can start by teaching learners in their early stage of life respect for human rights. In fact, making provisions and protecting the rights of citizens seems to be the hub upon which egalitarian principles of the state rest, as educating the citizens on the dynamic for demanding and assessing their right can be additional boost to other opportunities like democratic participation in choice of candidates to preside over their affairs. Such education on respect for human rights can extend by prioritizing the education of learners on issues of the environment. True, human rights covers all areas upon which human survival depends but particular emphasis must be laid on issues of the environment. Singling out the environment as an area of priority in discussions on respect for human rights especially on educating the young is centred on the fact that the environment is the hub upon which other issues of human rights and human survival especially on how to persuade their state to protect the environment and also allow them access to its resources. Such education can sensitize young

learners on what can be their predicament when they are not allowed access to the resources of their environment.

CONCLUSION

It is our keen and strong belief that this paper has succeeded in proposing pedagogical guidelines for teaching and promoting social justice in Nigeria where learners' knowledge of critical pedagogy can be widened in directions where they can apply their knowledge in creating a better world or create new knowledge that can focus on the projection of desired behaviours that can lead to the promotion of social justice and human rights in Nigeria. This study has direct implications for the education system in Nigeria especially at the early childhood level at it has to reposition itself to make allowance for tailoring teaching and learning at the early childhood level to accommodate teaching for justice and human rights. For learners it can improve learners' knowledge of critical pedagogy thereby challenging to use their knowledge to create new behaviours that are supportive of social justice and human rights, for the society, can quickly and easily trigger change that can bring about the sustainable development of man and the society and finally, can add to the professional growth of teachers and the teaching profession, amongst others.

Therefore, social justice and human rights are socio-moral concepts that hinge on egalitarian principles and policy. Egalitarianism as a state policy revolves around the general welfare of all the citizens of a state. Investments in education that make egalitarianism a norm can be made inclusive by integrating and exposing learners at the early childhood educational institutions in Nigeria. Providing learners at this level with experiences on issues that border on social justice and human rights can deepen the foundations for welfare policies in a state and this has potentials to make the Nigerian state achieve her dreams for her citizens.

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