

CRITICAL ISSUES IN NIGERIAN EDUCATION TODAY: THE FAMILY FACTOR IN EDUCATIONAL RE-ORIENTATION

Charles, Chukwuedo Nathaniel

*Department of Educational Foundations
Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba
Delta State*

Abstract

Education they say begins at birth and ends at death, thus the role of the family in the entire education process cannot be over emphasized. In the most recent times, there has been an outcry by successive governments in Nigeria lamenting over the declining rate in moral values evidenced by the increasing wave of crimes in the country such as corruption, kidnapping, armed robbery, cultism, prostitution, rape, advance fee fraud, get rich quick syndrome etc ,ravaging the entire country. Nowadays values such as hard work, decency, patriotism honesty, truthfulness, accountability, uprightness to mention but few have now become a scarce commodity in our families and the society at large. The consequences of these declining moral values on our families, education and the entire nation cannot be over emphasized that one began to wonder the type of education that our children are getting. Consequent upon these findings, it is recommended that the teaching of family values be incorporated into the secondary school curriculum, government should ensure that all secondary schools have qualified guardian counselors and adequate legislation be by government to punish offenders.

Keywords: *Critical issues, education, family and factor.*

Introduction

In the past few decades the Nigerian society has been bewildered by series of socio, political , economic unrest, inhuman treatment by men to fellow humans, lack of respect for human lives to mention but a few. One calls to mind the gruesome killings in some parts of Northern Nigeria by the Boko haram terrorist, the victims of cult and ethnic rivalries in some states parts of the country were children were made orphans, many became widows and widowers and lost grip of the essential family and social values. When the Nigerian great family network is torn asunder what would one expect? Who will then teach values to our children our future leaders? Of course there will be dire consequences. Drug abuse, corruption and bribery, stealing, cheating, nepotism, lawlessness, cultism, unpatrioticism and all social vices will characterize our society.

Obi (2012:13) affirmed that “gone are the days when parents command great influence and respect on their children. One would affirm without fear of contradiction that and parents are the first teachers to inculcate values to their children. The inalienable right or role of parents is being threatened by either irresponsibility on the part of the parents or

effects of divorce, poverty, premature death, or due to social break down. Thus some parents have neglected their duty at the expense of wealth and other material factors, the abused house helpers have taken over the precious role of the parenthood, to mention but a few". More often than not, the government shouts "patriotism, transparency, accountability, honesty, but no one talks about family values, which are the bedrock of the moral progress of a Nation.

The government should, among other things, lay emphasis or devote time and resources on the "Family Value Reform". It is in the family that all the social ills are rooted. This paper offers a great opportunity to re-evaluate some of African family values, namely: truth telling, hard work, diligence, obedience, respect, uprightness and love. There are dangers absence of this values poses to our education as well as our future if left unattended to. In the words of Mbiti "I am because we are, we are because I am" A society whose education fails to uphold the virtue of others first may most likely not produce good results that will take the society to the next level.

Meaning of Values

The term values come from the Latin word "Valerie" which means "to be of worth". Nweke (1996) considers value to be in a strict sense what is most important to an individual as social and moral quality, to which the individual does attach a measure of importance. In the real sense of it, human beings value what is important to the society.

People therefore, prefer to have or obtain what they value. Fraankel (2007) explains values purely as "an idea or a concept about what someone thinks is important, worthwhile, and worth doing, worth having and worth trying to obtain". In our context, value could be regarded as the moral or professional standards of behavior, principles or morality that we can hold, respect, cherish and adopt. In other words, our choices are a reflection of our values which could restore social order. Examples includes: respect for elders or constituted authority, humility, punctuality, obedience, discipline, justice, patriotism, transparency, sincerity, truthfulness, honesty, unity, bravery to mention but a few. These values should bring sanity and sense of direction to our education system. Considering the fact that one of the aims of education is to produce responsible men and women for the .socio-political, economic and cultural development of a country, moral values is therefore an essential commodity in any society. Values act as reference points for people's behavior in a community.

They also help in the smooth and harmonious administration of communities, organizations and nations. Values in societies change from time to time according to cultural, economic, social and political changes of the society. Therefore, there are values in traditional as well as modern communities or societies. Values are good things which contribute to the development of the human person. Values can exist only in relation to intelligence and free being. That is to say, that a value is a good thing not in itself alone but in its relationship to human persons. As a concept, value signifies a thing and its capacity to contribute to the perfection of human beings and in the integral development of a nation like Nigeria (Diochi, 2006). In other words, there will be break down of law and order where there is a lack of these values.

The Concept of Education

Education has been viewed and conceived in different ways. Edger (2000) sees education as a lifelong learning project that begins after birth and terminates at death. It is a continuous process, a progressive reconstruction of experience. There is barely any meaning of education that is not tied to transmission of values. It is on this basis that Peters (2005) conceived “education as the process of socialization, enculturation, and transmission of what is worthwhile to those who are committed to it, be they children or adults”. Similarly, Bamiro (2014) a renowned sociologist sees education as the process of cultural transmission and renewal. In order to decipher the meaning of education properly, it is imperative to approach the concept of education from the lenses of Kneller, whose articulation of the meaning of education in two distinct senses; broad and narrow or technical, typified crystal clear ways of classifying scholars definitions of a concept.

In view of the aforementioned, Azenabor (2008) opines that in the broad sense, “education refers to any act or experience that has formative effect on the mind, character, or physical ability of an individual”. In this sense education is a continuous process. We all learn every day and throughout life, by experience” Still in the broad sense Durkheim (1987) defines education as “the influence exercised by the adult generation on those that are yet ready for social life”. Here education is the exertion of physical, intellectual and moral behavior on the younger individuals in the society by adult individuals. In the narrow technical sense, education is perceived as a process by which any society through schools, colleges, universities and other institutions deliberately transmit its cultural heritage its accumulated knowledge, values, skills from one generation to another. Moreover, Dewey sees education as the shaping into the standard form of social activity” In all, education is geared towards the shaping of the individuals mind and character and behavior so as to become relevant in the society in which he or she is given birth or is a citizen.

What is Family?

Different scholars from different disciplines at different times have given different definitions for the term family. In this context the Catechism of the Catholic Church affirms: that “family is made up of the parents and their children. “It goes on to maintain that man and woman united in marriage, together with children form family. According to some sociologists, family is seen as the original cell of social life. It is a natural society where love and respect is called into play; a place where social values are taught to enhance social order. In another context, the document of the Second Vatican council brought out clearly definition which is more appropriate to this discussion when it affirms. “The family is therefore the principal school of Social virtues which are necessary to every society. It is through the family that the (children) are gradually initiated into association with their fellow-men in civil life and as members of the people of God According to Flanney (1988) “One can affirm without fear of contradiction that family is the primary source of learning social values as we shall see in this paper”.

Restoration of Education through Upholding Family Values

Some of the present challenges been faced today in Nigeria in the education industry such as poor funding, government neglect, lack of continuity, corruption, nepotism, poor remuneration etc will be greatly reduced if more emphasis is placed on upholding values at the families level. Some of these values include the following:

Obedience to Parents, Law and Order: Children, be obedient to your parents in the lord; that is your duty. The first commandment that has a promise attached to it is: honor your father and mother, and the promise is, and you will prosper and have a long life in the land. (Ephesians 6:1-3). Perhaps the first thing one thinks in honoring his parents is to obey them. From the genesis of man, obedience is the first real test between God and his children (Genesis 3). In this study, it may not be necessary to go into the etymology of the word- "obedience" rather it suffices to note that it is a virtue not only in a child but in any reasonable mature person, the aspirant leader, the leader, in both civil and church as well. It is the mark not only of a way of behavior but of an inner disposition, which corresponds with his condition as a child. One should therefore obey his parents, leaders always unless, when their command leads to sin; for instance, if they (parents) command the child to steal, commit abortion, give and take bribe, to mention but a few. To be precise, whatsoever is against God's laws, Nigerian Constitution, any constitutional authority must not be complied with. The importance of this virtue of obedience is that it is a spring board that shoots an individual, organization or country high in achieving its set goals.

Respect: Eze (2000) opined that respectful and responsible children result to a responsible society. This accrues from families where in the proper combination of love and discipline prevails. Both ingredients must be applied in the necessary quantity in a good society. Besides, respect for the parents must be maintained for another equally important reason. If parents are given their due respect, others will have the same. One thinks that these issues of respect can be useful tool in knowing when to punish and how excited one should go about a given behavior. The parent ought to decide whether an undesirable challenge of their authority according to their position as the father or mother. Punishment should depend on that evaluation. But we should bear in mind that the idea of respects is not unilateral- it must operate on two-way channel. Hence, the popular saying, 'Respect is reciprocal.

Truthfulness: The Ibo sees "truth"-Ezi-Okwu bu Ndu." Ezi-Okwu nalu ilu. "Truth is life." Anyanwu (2009) quoting Ilo emphasized among other things that "Truth heals. Truth liberates, Truth removes prejudices and fear." He goes on to emphasize that "Indeed it is only truth that can rehabilitate many people unjustly wounded by previous errors, hunted by religious bigotry and disturbed by the present lack of focus in the nation." And if our children are taught to be truthful, honest right from our family our country will have great leaders who will be transparent in their respective offices. Corruption will be a thing of the past. One of the greatest missions of the parents therefore is to transmit human life and to educate those whom they have brought into the world. In this way, according to Vatican

Council II (No: 50), “they are thereby co-operators and are so speak interpreter of that love. They will fulfill this task with human and Christian responsibility.” Children on the other hand have the right to know and be nourished from their parents the value of truthfulness and honesty. Children most often than not, learn by example. The leadership crises been experienced by Nigeria today is mainly as a result of the fact that we leaders without morality to tell the people truth about governance.

Consequences of Education Void of Moral Values

According to Elisha (2013) “the relationship between education and ethical values is like the relationship between logic and thinking: or the relationship between the husband and wife”. There is an inextricable overlap between ethical values and education. Both are concerned with standards of behavior in human society. Like ethics education is certainly the most important single function of a society in which each new generation is inducted into its life-style. Thus we can see that the transmission of values and education are not only a social institution of primary magnitude but quite obviously the vital core function on which all else ultimately depends. What then becomes of a society or nation whose education lacks ethical values?

Recipe for a Lawless Society: This picture was well captured by the British philosopher Thomas Hobbes in his classic Leviathan. Hobbes popularly known for his theory of the state of nature (the state men lived prior to the setting up of organized society). In that state, because moral values was lacking, there were no laws, no authority, no sense of justice, no notions of wrong or right. Everybody pursued the satisfaction of his personal desire. Here, self-interest and its satisfaction were the only rules action. Whatever satisfied a person’s appetite was for him good and he will pursue it at all cost. Whatever a person had aversion for, was for him bad. According to Hobbes, the coming together of men to form an organized society ended the chaotic society that in the words of Hobbes was solitary nasty, brutish poor and short. Thus education void of ethical values will take us back to the Hobbe’s state of nature.

Bad Governance and Followership: According to “Trump, (2014) “A society whose education is void of ethical or moral values will degenerate into the biblical Sodom and Gomorrah society characterized by bad leadership and bad followership”. In Genesis 18:20-21. Because the society lacked moral values, both the leaders and the led were committing all kinds of sin including fornication, lesbianism, homosexuality, incest, and abominable things before God. This made God to say that “the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is grievous that I will go and destroy them”. Moreover, such a society will be were anything goes. The government agencies will be less prepared to fight crime because corruption has eaten deep in to the fabric of the nation. The picture of such society is aptly portrayed in the words of Olu Olagoke (1989) “If the citadel of justice is corrupt, what will happen to the body politics? It will completely rotten and collapse”.

Willful disobedience to God: Men like William of Ockham, John Locke, our own Panthaleon Iroegbu as well as religious people in reaction to the absence of moral values in our education have opined that such any education given by any society void of moral values will amount to willful disobedience to God. According to their argument, every society ought to have moral values included in their school curriculum and reinforced by individual families. When this is lacking, such society and education is likely to fail, because God promised will punish any society that disobeys him. Deuteronomy 4:9-10.

Conclusion

From the forging one can affirm without fear of contradiction that the family plays a very important role in the whole education process. Thus one can boldly say that family is the nation with-large. The family in the foundation where values needed for the overall socio, political and economic growth development and nation building is laid. This is so because the human and material resources needed for nation building are products of the family. The author therefore opines that the high rate of moral decadence plaguing our education today as well as the entire Nigerian society today will be seriously reduced and brought to its lowest minimum if families wake up to this all important task of inculcating moral values to their children and avoid transferring this assignment to the society. It is interesting to note that while the virtue of love builds, and purifies other virtues, values of honesty, hard work truthfulness, justice and honesty are catalyst that propels a society to greatness. In any society where these virtues or values are thrown to the wind, failure and calamity is always becomes inevitable because such society will be impoverished mentally and morally and the future of the society and its education, bleak

Recommendations

In the light of the foregoing discussions, the following recommendations were advanced;

- The subject of values should be inculcated into the primary and secondary school curriculum
- Government should make sure that qualified guidance counselors are provided in every primary and secondary school
- Adequate laws be made by government to punish offenders to also serve as a deterrent to others
- There should be an increase in public enlightenment programs by the government and NGOs to create awareness in declining values among the youths

References

- Bierstadt, R. (1999). *The social order*. Bombay – New Delhi: Tata, McGraw-hill Publishing Co. Ltd.
- Diochi, M. (2015). *The quest for integral development in Nigeria: Its social ethnical requirement*. New York, U.S.A: Peter Lang,
- Echekwube, C. & Iroegbu, O. (2009). (Ed.) *Kpim of morality: Ethnics general, special and professional*. Lagos: Heinemann Educational Books, Nigeria Plc.
- Egbucha, D. (2008). Coping with juvenile delinquency in Igbo land with a revisitation of traditional moral values. *Juvenile Journal*, 2 (1), 27.
- Flannery A. (Ed.) Document of the second Vatican Council II Vol. I Dublin, Dominican.
- Mbiti, J.S. (1988). *Introduction to African religion*. London: Heinemann Books.
- Mullan, J. (1965). *The Catholic in modern African*. London: Geoffrey Chapman.
- Obi, D. (2016). Parents' role in moral and ethical discipline in African contemporary society. *Juvenile Journal International*, 3 (2),
- Obi, D. (2014). *Human suffering: A challenge to Christian faith in Igbo/African Christian families: An anthropological and theological study*: New York, U.S.A. Peter Lang Publishers,
- Obi, D. (2012). *Religion and human values in a secular age*. Owerri, Imo state, Nigeria: Edu- Edy Publication.
- Ogbalu, F.C. (1995). *Igbo institution and customs*. Enugu: University Publishing Co. Nigeria.
- Onyeocha, A. (1998). *Family apostolate in Igbo land*. Roma. McGraw-hill Publishing Co. Ltd.
- Steidl-eier, P. (1984). *The social order* (third edition). Bombay-New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill Publisher Co. Ltd.
- Uchendu, P. (1999). *Nigeria social problems: Origin and solutions*. Okigwe, Abia State Nigeria: Fasman Communications,
- Umeasiegbu, R. N. (2000). *The way we live*. London: Heinemann.