

TEACHING ETHICS AND MORALITY EDUCATION IN NIGERIAN SCHOOLS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

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Abstract

Over the years, there are incessant cases of antisocial vices in almost every nook and cranny of the country such as cultist attack, suicide, armed robbery, kidnapping, among others. The upsurge of immoral behaviours among Nigerian youth has posed a lot of hazards to the youths themselves, parents, the teachers and the society in general. The religious men and women that were hitherto seen as the fountain of moral up-bringing and upkeep are not left out in this alarming rate of immorality that has besieged the entire nation. In the face of all these immoral behaviours and its attendant consequences, it becomes clear that development is marred heavily by these unwholesome attitudes due to the neglect and/or skeletal teaching of this essential tool for national development. This gaunt teaching of ethics and moral education is among the causes of moral dissipation predominant among Nigerian students which has transcended to the larger society. This moral debauchery has resulted to lack of respect for elders and constituted authority, teenage pregnancy, violence, suicide, indolence, wanton killings, armed robbery, insurgence and so on. In the light of the above expressions, this paper tries to diagnose the teaching of ethics and morality education for sustainable development in Nigerian educational system in respect of the concept of ethics and morality, types of ethics, causes of moral degradation, duties of the parents and teachers in imparting morality and ethics to the Nigerian students as well as the challenges facing the teaching of this an all essential subject that stands to cushion the effect of sustainable development in the nation Nigeria. It is therefore recommended that ethics and moral education be made a compulsory subject and given three or four periods on weekly bases at primary and secondary levels of education while a period be allotted for it at the tertiary level if sustainable development has to be attained. More so, efficient and effective curriculum and teaching of ethics and moral stand to facilitate the moulding up an educated individual worthy both in character and learning that will make for sustainable development, meet and even surmount 21st century development challenges.

Keywords: Teaching, Ethics, Moral, School, Sustainable, Development.

Introduction

Moral decadence in the society has become so paramount that even the security agents are rendered inefficient and often times exposed to impending dangers while trying to combat crime due to the alarming rate and increase in the dimensions it has taken. Parents fear and abhor their own children and are therefore not safe with their children as many resort to disrespect, fight, challenge and even maim or kill, use their parents for money rituals etc. The husband is not secured with wife and vice versa due to cases of wife killing their spouse or the husband doing same. Some of the couples go extra miles to higher assassins to do such odd jobs for them. The family and society that used to be a place one takes succour and solace has become a place of trepidation. One wonders what has really gone wrong. Could it be that ethics and moral education are no longer taught both at home and in the school? Or could it be as a result of prevailing massive unemployment and under employment/under payment that besieged the country for some years now or the economic crunch faced by many families due to high cost of living, family burden, coupled with extended family palaver? All these questions are yearning for answers.

In the light of the above declarations, it is evident that parents are too busy that they do not have time for their wards, the children are at the mercy of the house helps and their peers. Kilton (2017) lent credence to the above exposition by stating that parental reckless abandonment of their children for quest for wealth accumulation is solely the root cause of puerility moral degradation rampaging the society in recent times. There is no day that passes without hearing of one

atrocious act committed in one place or the other by the youth. This jingoism of immorality among our youths constituted a menace to the populace which include: armed robbery, cultism, teenage pregnancy, suicidal cases, kidnapping, rape and so on. It is pertinent to note that this was not the case in the past and that is why many researchers also attributed this moral deterioration to the advancement of information and communication technology (ICT) which has done more harm than good. Many others pointed accusing finger on the opulent parents who over pamper their kids to the level of rendering them highly immoral and unethical.

The Concept of Ethics and Moral Development

The word ethics is derived from the Greek word 'ethos' which means custom, habit, character or disposition. In every society, there is customs and tradition which is their way of life. This is the norms of the society like the manner of greeting, respect for elders, honesty, obedience, charity, love, sympathy, etc. (Needhi, 2018) which is learnt informally as the child grows up. Ethics is that branch of knowledge that deals with moral principles. It deals with what is right and wrong. Similarly, Onyemerekeya (2000) opined that moral is the standard of conducts that serve as yardstick for ascertaining what is right or wrong bearing in mind that man is a social animal that requires harmonious living. Ethics is a term that is used to describe the expected behaviours or set of rules for a people in a given society are anticipated to conform with in which case, any deviation is violation of social norms and is negatively sanctioned by the society (Ahamefula &

Nnajieta, 2005). It goes to streamline the dos and don'ts of a particular group of people and when violated is visited with punishment. In support of the above declaration, Peter (n.d) succinctly put it that ethics is what is good for the individual and the society and forms the people's custom, habit, character and disposition.

Ostensibly, morality is a kind of virtue which is developed as the child grows up according to the practices commonly accepted as the norms of that particular group. These moral behaviours are learnt at home chiefly from the parents and elders in the neighbourhood. It is conspicuous that at home the child learns to say, good morning, thank you, please, how to eat, am sorry, helps in house chores, not to steal, personal hygiene and so on, this is maintained and upheld by the teachers as the child enters school. When parents do their lot and the teachers take up from there these incidences of suicide and a host of other anti-social behaviours will be greatly reduced if not totally eliminated. The educational objective which is geared towards national development will then be met and thus the society will be a better place to live.

On a similar dimension, Austine (2018) reiterated that ethics deals with what is good for individuals and the society. To Merriam Webster Dictionary, it is a moral duty/obligation or the principles of conduct governing an individual or a group. In view of the above expressions, ethics is the culture, tradition, belief and in a nut shell the totality of the peoples way of life which has been generally accepted and handed down from generation to generation through oral tradition, modelling, coaching, training and pedagogy which must be guided by social

control to exert conformity and prone to change when found to be inimical. A critical look and an in-depth understanding of morality indicates that it is crystal clear that ethics and morality are the two sides of the same coin and as such can be used interchangeably.

Morality Education and Sustainable Development

Moral education is emphatically the teaching of societal norms and the right attitude that enable the children be law abiding, respect constituted authority, relate well with others thus lead a happy life in the community. Based on the above exclamation Onyemerekeya (2000) asserted that moral education entails creating awareness to the children on the essential virtues that could assist them to lead a good social life, it has penalties for defaulters. This becomes a guiding principle in helping the individual to make a healthy choice of action in life. Sustainable development according to International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD, n.d) sustainable development is the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable developmental goals are; no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, quality education, clean water and sanitation among others (UNDP, 2018). In fact, to the make for sustainable development is to ensure that morality education is not only taught at home and in school but also ascertain that the principles of morality is imbued and internalize in the students in everyday life failing which corruption, dishonesty, tribalism, nepotism and other vices will continue to pose

headlong challenges in the polity of education industry in particular and the society in general.

Types of Ethics

Ethics is an acceptable way of behaviour by a particular society. It involves good personal attribute, the way one behaves among others which is generally accepted and the way a group of workers have accepted to behave. This leads to the emergence of three main types of ethics namely; Personal ethics, b common ethics and professional ethics as propounded by Lumen (n.d).

1. Personal Ethics; this deals with one's personal values and moral qualities which is highly influenced by the family, friends, culture, religion, education, social media etc. it is that kind of ethics is solely dependent on the individual as a person which is prone to change.
2. Common Ethics; this is the kind of ethics that is generally accepted in which case majority of the people accepted.
3. Professional Ethics; these deals with set of rules that guides a work force, it includes their dons and don'ts.

Trending of the same development, Austine (2018) listed three types of ethical system to include deontology, teleology, and virtue-based.

1. Deontological moral system deals with the individual understanding the moral obligation and sticking to it in carry out duties. When the individual

adheres strictly on the moral guidelines in all actions, the individual is behaving morally but if the other way round, the individual is immoral in behaviour.

2. Teleology and Ethics deals with the consequences of your action. When the result of your action is generally accepted one is behaving morally but if not the behaviour is immoral.
3. Virtue Ethics is also referred to as develop good character traits. This implies that when good character traits are exhibited through kindness, charity, honesty, love and so on, this good character may touch the recipient to behave in like manner to others.

Causes of Moral Degradation

Causes of moral decadence among the students are enormous. Many attributed it to the fault of the teachers while many others put the blame on the parents, yet others on the government. Chikwe & Ekechukwu (2009) outlined some of the causes to include;

- a) Rebellion against parental authoritarian styles.
- b) Adult loose living and loose talk in the society which provide bad role models.
- c) Corroded moral values in the larger society.
- d) Frustration from broken homes.
- e) Mass unemployment

- f) Get-rich-quick syndrome
- g) Influence of advanced technology

Continuing, kilton, (2017) added some other causes to include

1. Lack of parental control, permissiveness and over indulgence of children.
2. No teaching, coaching and counselling by the appropriate authority, children learn themselves and from friends and peers.
3. Parents lack of time for their kids due to busy schedules.
4. Influence of modern technology which was provided by the parents themselves without monitoring or sifting the ones the kids would watch in relation to their age.
5. Human being by nature is greedy. The desires to attain or be reckon with in the society without much hard work.

Apparently, ethics and morality are meant to be taught at home which the first agent of socialization is. It is the duty of the parents and other elders in the neighbourhood to participate in the training of the children ways of greeting, respect for elders, other principles like honesty, trust, charity, sympathy, love, obedience etc. All of these the child is expected to learn at home before attaining school age. Suffice it to say state that this modern time when all parents are working class or engaged in one trade or the other due to the economic crunch that bedevilled the Nigerian nation, it is no longer news that parents hardly had time for their kids as they send them to day care

centres at a very tender age, from where they start school. Invariably, parents no longer have time for their children all in the name of making ends meet. Those who do not have money for care-giver centres employ the services of nannies and other domestic workers. Experience has shown that these domestic staff do more harm than good.

The Duties of the Teachers in Teaching Moral Education in Schools

It is a known truth that teachers are saddled with lots of academic work and other allied jobs that make teaching learning outcomes worthwhile but that should not mean that their duty should not be extended to the teaching of moral and ethics (Mellisa, 2019) if given the time for that in the school itinerary. Students' moral deterioration has reached the level of having the teaching as a subject not just as skeletal as it appears in some subjects like civic and religious education. Even when moral and ethics are cued in some subjects like Civic education, Religious knowledge, etc. the teachers teach the theoretical aspect without much emphasis on the practical aspect. In which case the worse immorally behaved student could make an excellent result in those subjects.

Teachers have the major responsibilities to ensure that children are taught ethics and morals especially this time when they stay more with the kids than the parents but with maximum support from the parents. In fact, teachers and parents are expected to exhibit symbiotic function in the teaching of these virtues. No party can effectively do it in isolation. In support of the above affirmation, Kolberg's theory promulgated that moral development starts early in life

and continuous in stages from childhood, adolescence and adulthood periods (Wilber, 2019). In all of these stages, there are educational implications which the teacher is expected to adhere to in assisting the child in moral development namely;

- a) The teachers should ensure that they define in an explicit manner the classroom rules, inspire and recompense the law-abiding ones while offenders are denied gratitude.
- b) Promote team work by allowing the pupils work together in class activities.
- c) Create more opportunities for group work like assignments, projects or even games since they are aware that good behaviour attracts reward while bad behaviours fetches punishment.
- d) Establish a democratic classroom setting in which case, the students are part of decision making syndicate that formulate classroom rules and regulations as well as the disciplinary measures for defaulters

In his own submission, Otedola (2018) enunciated the following as the duties of the teachers in teaching moral education;

- Teachers aid the students to comprehend moral principles and ethical behaviours.
- Should be role models as student copy their behaviours.
- Teachers should ensure that the child is exposed to the appropriate social experience that will develop good moral in the child,

- Apply reward by praising or gift a desirable behaviour while punishment to repel deviant behaviour.

In attestation with the above pronouncement, Paul (2019) identified the teachers' role in moral upbringing to include;

- ✓ Honesty; teachers should assist their students to be honest, not to indulge in examination irregularities or even copy assignments from others, not to tell lies against their teachers and fellow class mates.
- ✓ Enthusiasm or avidity for learning: teachers could help students develop interest and zeal to learn by motivating and encouraging them.
- ✓ Ambition and hard work; teachers should discourage lazy students while reward should be used to promote hard work. Names of hard working student could be pasted on the class bill board on weekly or monthly bases.
- ✓ Curiosity and asking questions: the Socratic Method should be adopted to help students ask questions and try to answer them. Children by nature are inquisitive, they are curious about many things around them and therefore tend to ask questions. They should be patient in dealing with them at this time.
- ✓ Being responsible; the teacher should be punctual by always being in school on time and encourage students to do the same. Give them responsibilities like being prompt in writing and submitting assignment and appointment of prefects.

- ✓ Etiquette and Manners; simple ethics like obtaining permission before going out, avoiding noise making and random movement. Being polite, exhibition of gratification etc. are also imparted.
- ✓ Self-esteem; good manners, grooming and personal hygiene should be the guiding principles. This is because all of these lead to self-esteem and confidence.
- ✓ Co-operation with others; here class discussion and group project are of great importance.
- ✓ Being kind and helpful; students should encouraged showing kindness to their teachers and class mates. This achieved through assisting to clean the board and assisting one another while in the class.
- ✓ Being public minded; this is a civic responsibility every students must learn like arranging chairs for school events. Keeping their environments clean.

Evidently, the thrust of the matter is that teachers has the major responsibilities to teach moral education in Nigerian schools because the children are brought to school early enough starting from crèche to post primary education. Seemingly, they spend more hours a day with teachers more than their parents. This is not to exempt parents not to play their parts. Parents should be aware that these are their wards who will one day be the custodian of all the wealth they have accumulated.

The Parental Responsibilities in the teaching of moral behaviours to their wards

The home provides the first scenario for child's learning experience and personality development. It is at home that the child learns how to relate with other children. The basic social behaviours are learnt at home before the child proceeds to formal schooling. Despite provision of food and other essentials needed in the upbringing of the child, the home expected to do the following;

- a) Parents are expected to be role models. Be honest, if you want them to be honest. Teach by examples.
- b) Teach them morals such as loyalty, respect, patience, kindness, gratitude, self-reliance etc. this helps in good personality development and curtail the possibility of going astray.
- c) Tell them stories with moral lessons. In the good old days parents used folk tales to teach morals.
- d) In dealing with them show them politeness, be considerate and respectful to them too.
- e) As they watch movies or other interesting programmes, reason with them on what is happening so as to broaden their mental reasoning.
- f) Give them more attention and time by answering their inquisitive questions.
- g) Encourage team work among them and others (Sehgal, n.d).

Perceptibly, parents should be on the know that their children are the greatest investment they can make and ensure that all

that they have accumulated over the years are not squandered in a short while when they are no more and as such should ensure they collaborate with the teachers to impact on their wards moral and ethics all these money cannot buy.

Challenges facing the teaching of morals in Nigerian Educational system.

- a. Incessant parental attack and hostility to teachers due to one disciplinary measure taken to enforce moral and ethics to their wards.
- b. Many parents in an attempt to portray affluence insult the teachers before the children making it possible for the kids to underrate the teachers and even disobey them due to the parental backing.
- c. Cases abound where many teachers face court litigation for a legitimate duty the teacher is performing as an 'in loco parentis'.
- d. Some of the teachers have equally met their untimely death in the hands daredevil parents.
- e. With fear of not wanting to plunge oneself into trouble, teachers are being skeptical and soft in enforcing these essential traits in the students which is gradually eluding the school system.

- f. Moral and ethics education is not a subject on its own but are embedded in some other subjects and are handled on a peripheral level.
- g. When the children's needs are not adequately provided, they may likely seek an unhealthy way of satisfying their needs which is counter-productive.

The implication is that the children's moral behaviour deteriorates as they lack directives, lack trust and confidence in their parents, teachers, and religious leaders. The fear of God which is the beginning of wisdom is totally absent in their entire life, hence behave outrageously to the extent that they continue to wreak havoc thus constitute impending danger to their parents, teachers and other members of the public. They are available for hire to perform some obnoxious duties such as assassins, political thugs, arsons and all manner of evils. Meanwhile, these are fully fledged work force that if well rehabilitated would contributed to the national growth and development thus sustainable development.

Conclusion

Education as the panacea for social, cultural, economic and political changes should be satisfactorily provided to the beneficiaries failing which it boomerangs adversely on the society. When adequately provided, it broadens the students' horizon through improvement of sanitation, personal hygiene and income. Teaching of ethics and morality education entails character building necessary to produce an all-round educated individual who not only useful to himself but partake in the development that

withstands the test of time in the society where he lives. When the focus of education is just to teach the content of the curriculum at the expense of moral development one cannot be astonished at the preponderating circumstances of nefarious act of immorality to the youth themselves, their parents, teachers and the larger society which to a great extent poses a stumbling block to the attainment of sustainable development needed to compete globally in this technological advancement.

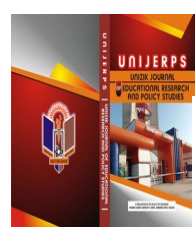
Suggestion

Based on the above elucidations, the following suggestions were propounded;

1. There should be public awareness on the parenting responsibilities as television programmes, seminars, symposium, PTA meetings etc.
2. Parents should deem it fit to teach their children sex education instead of allowing their peers and social media devices to do that in a crude manner.
3. Parents should be aware that most of the things children say or do is what they copied from them and a result should be good role models.
4. Parents should allow their children participate in the family meeting and avoid too much high handedness or authoritarian. This enables your children to be close to you and share sensitive issues.
5. Parents should as a matter of importance provide their children's essential needs and alternative ways of satisfying their needs. Starving them of essential necessity could cause some damages.
6. Revival of religion and moral instructions in schools is very crucial. The religious bodies should also be helpful during services.
7. Guidance and counselling services in schools should be reinvigorated.
8. Children should not be given too much freedom in accessing the internet, television programmes and the social media. It is good to sift the media to expose the kids to.
9. Creating employment opportunities to school leavers so as to enjoin others to see the result of hard work and follow suit.
10. Parents should see their parental job and that of the teachers as having a symbiotic function and as such assist and support the teachers to inculcate ethics and morals to their children instead of dampening their efforts.

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