

Teaching Moral Education in Nigeria Schools a Panacea for Combating Insecurity Challenges in Nigeria

¹Akanle Tayo Dare,
²Shaibu Oguche Albert &
³Edigbo Micheal Nonso
^{1&2}Department of Christian
Religious Studies
Kogi State College of Education,
Ankpa
³Department of Christian
Religious Studies
Ebonyi State College of Education,
Ikwo

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Corresponding Author:
Akanle Tayo Dare

Abstract

This paper explores the interconnections within moral education and social order in Nigeria. The paper holds the viewpoint that social orderliness requires moral education. Over the years, there are incessant cases of anti social vices in almost every nook and cranny of the country such as kidnapping, cultist attack, armed robbery, banditry, among others. The upsurge of immoral behaviors among Nigeria 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 behaviors 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 security. This gaunt teaching of 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 all manners of insecurity in the nation. In lieu of this, this paper tries to diagnose how teacher education programmes could help students to link the moral purpose that influences them with the tools that will prepare them to engage in productive change. The paper argues for teaching of moral education for sustainable development in Nigeria educational system in respect of the concept of insecurity challenges, moral education, causes of moral degradation, duties of the parents and teachers in imparting morality 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 insecurity in the nation Nigeria. This paper adopts the method of philosophical analysis. It is therefore recommended that moral education be made a compulsory subject and given three or four periods on weekly basis at basic and senior secondary levels of education while a period be allotted for it at the tertiary level if a secure nation has to be attained.

Background to the Study

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 resorts 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 wives killing their spouses or the husband doing same. Some of the couples go extra miles to hire assassins to do such odd jobs for them. The family and society that used to be a place one takes succour and solace have become a place of trepidation. One wonders what has really gone wrong. Could it be that moral education is 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 situation, 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 vice called immorality among our youths constituted a menace to the populace which includes: 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 these 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.

Conceptual Classification: Security Challenges

The term insecurity challenge could be construed as a social problem which is predicated on any deviant behavior in a disapproved direction of such a degree that it exceeds the tolerance limit of the society. It could be seen as a condition which affects large number of people in an adverse manner. In other words, it is a difficulty of misbehaviour which the vast majority want to correct. Insecurity challenge connotes social disorder or social ill that arises when there is deviation from accepted social norms. These are usually threats to established social values, norms and ways and therefore, it is necessary to eliminate them as quickly as possible (Lundberg, 2005). Gonzales (1976) insinuated that most youths find their satisfaction in the amenities and frivolities of life. This is really the case today. Insecurity via subversion and insurgency can be understood in terms of the youth culture in Nigeria that has bred a trans-regional manifestation of a national security problem.

A number of studies have identified factors responsible for youths' involvement in social disorder. Elegbeleye (2005), identified three major factors: the peer motivated excitement of being a student, the jingoistic pursuit of patriotic ideas, and perceived victimization arising from economic exploitation. Others are lack of humanitarian and social welfare, lack of good governance, corrupt practices of government officials, inadequate training programmes, unemployment, inadequate recreational facilities, and lack of quality education among others. Therefore, there is every need for pragmatic designs, principles and theoretical or empirical approaches that can make positive impact on the evolution of a positive youth encounter with security and society. Moral value which is inculcated through moral training/education has become pragmatic approach to the security challenges.

Moral Education

Etymologically, the word moral comes from a Latin word "mos or moris" meaning the code or customs of a people, the social glue that defined how individuals should live together. Moral education is not a new idea; it is as old as society and education. It addresses ethical dimensions of the individual and society and examined how standard of right and wrong are developed. According to New Encyclopaedia Britannica Vol. 6, "Moral education is a designed moral value that guides people and in learning them towards their eventual role in the society". While New Encyclopaedia Britannica Vol. 8 defined moral education as the development of sense of moral sensitivity and duty towards people and state.

Fafunwa (1976) defined moral education as the inculcation of desirable values, norms and attitudes approved by the society in order to have good citizens in the future. In the light of the above definition, moral education is the key to the general sustenance of national security and social orderliness. In addition, what is morally good is what brings dignity, respect, contentment, prosperity, joy and happiness to man and his community. While, what is morally bad is what brings misery, misfortune, misinformation and disgrace. Thus, moral education teach core moral values, such as honesty and responsibility, care, etc and helps to raise morally responsible and self-disciplined citizens. Problem solving, decision-making and conflict resolution are also important parts of developing good moral character. Thus, to educate a person in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace in society (Omogbe, 2000).

Former President of Nigeria, Alhaji Shehu Shagari in Ethical Revolution Campaign (1988). He observed that imparting of moral education will lead to the achievement of individual aim and objective by political, social, economic and technological advancement in all human endeavours. Hence, leading to a time when the whole country will be like a family sharing the same view, design target, goals among others, irrespective of their immediate monetary or economic gain thereby molding and cultivating desirable attitudes. 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.

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, I 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 sustained then the society will be a better place to live in.

Moral education is emphatically the teaching of societal norms and the right attitude that enable the children to be law abiding, respect constituted authority, relate well with others thus lead a happy life in the community. Based on the foregoing 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.

Moral Education and Security of the Nation

It could be affirmed that morality provides ethical principles that safeguard the right of the individual in the society and points out to him his reciprocal duties and responsibilities. In this way there is justice, freedom and social order from the contents of morality. As Wiredu (1992) observes, morality is universal and essential to every human culture. And any society without a modicum of morality must collapse. In this sense, morality is the observance of rules for the harmonious adjustment of the interests of the individual to those of others in society. Considering morality as a social enterprise through which all human beings have some concern for their personal interests, yet it is clear that everyone is not naturally inclined towards being concerned about the interests of others all the time. According to Wiredu (1992) "morality cannot but be founded upon the principle of sympathetic impartiality". Stressing that it takes imagination to foresee that life in any society in which everyone openly avowed the contrary of this principle, and acted accordingly would inevitably be solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and probably short. In other words, morality is a medium of regulating human interpersonal behaviour; morality is an emanation of man's overriding desire to preserve social harmony by ensuring that moral codes discourage aggression, injustice, deceit and anarchy in any social order.

Speaking from the social nature of human existence, morality becomes a very important and inevitable tool which could avert the condition of disharmony in society. Morality achieves this social regulation and control not only by ensuring the clarification of rules and laws differentiating good from bad, right from wrong in society, but also by ensuring that specific traits of characters or dispositions are instilled in people. Frankena (1973) affirms that morality is an instrument of society as a whole for the guidance of individuals

and groups. And it takes care to observe that an individual, family or social class may have a morality that is different from that upheld by the society. But for him, the dominant morality in the society is the societal morality.

According to Whiteley (1982) morality is social in a more fundamental sense, as an outline of norms of behaviour operative in a community. To this end, life in a human community is possible, only if there exists a certain level of friendliness, mutual aid and rules for settling issues. Without these facilities, a community cannot survive or exist at all. Morality as a means of social control and the preservation of harm forms the essence of its sociality because according to Kupperman (1983) the core of morality must be injunctions against harming others. Therefore, morality promotes our security by forbidding thefts, murder, torture etc, and prevents harm to both the individual and the society.

Furthermore, morality being an instrument of social control, Cox (1981) refers to as defensive social behaviour adopted against a hazard. For Cox, the protection, safety and welfare of the society is the generating motive in the development of moral rules. Certain rules against murder, lying, callousness, and faithlessness are made the object of social order because these constitute a threat to the well being of society. The type of social order which morality underlies is one that seeks peace, order, justice and dignity for all and sundry. In other words, social order is said to be the social systems and schemes of social relations that define the political, economic and social roles, rights and duties of people in a society. Thus, social order originates out of fundamental concerns about justice between men and it is realised in the idea of partnership between men in rights, duties and responsibilities (Ujomu, 2006).

The fundamental goals of social order are to provide fair and favourable conditions for the national integration, protection, peace and security of lives and property, the enjoyment of rights and fulfilment of duties by all, and the sharing of benefits and burdens in socially equitable ways. Social order strives for the good of all and the active participation of as many as possible in the administration of social life. It seeks to co-ordinate the voluntary initiatives and gifts of individuals and groups in their attempt to make some contributions to the society. The society can benefit from the inputs of people only if it administers social life on the basis of justice. This it does by seeking the best and harmonious system of allocating and protecting rights, duties, responsibilities, burdens and benefits in the society in accordance with humane, cordial and mutually supportive practices and intentions.

Morality conforms itself to the basic goal of social order, which is the articulation of a properly regulated system of interrelated social activities in view of the common good and dignity of man. Social order and morality strive to uphold the dignity and respect of man by relating to him as a responsible, free, voluntary and rational agent. Thus, morality and social order strive to guarantee harmonious, peaceful coexistence among men through the assurance of co-operation, goodwill and role designation as critical factors in any worthwhile human social interaction.

In Nigeria for example, the inculcation of moral values and social order will disseminate favourable traits and dispositions among citizens which in turn would guarantee the continued security, peace, co-operation and friendliness indispensable for our national integration. Moral education imparts on the functioning of other areas of social life such as politics, economy so that they are properly regulated using human, dignifying and productive rules or patterns of action. Therefore, morality emerged as the function of social order, without it viable social order and national integration cannot possibly be established and sustained. The moral values underlying national integration and social order are thereby made explicit, normative and universal for all in the society.

However, mass society presents a sharp contrast, as the young grow up, they are faced with confusions, delays and discontinuities. This has become a great challenge in integration and securitization of citizens. Although, most societies emphasize the importance of ethics in maintaining integration and social order having observed that natural and man-made cultural and cosmological factors such as ethnicity, poverty, technological deficits, institutional inefficiency, local corruption, inhospitable environments and human ignorance have truncated and aborted the roles of economic empowerment as strategies of national integration and security sustenance (Ujomu, 2006). We have also witnessed the failures of militarism and militarization that triggered the conversion of youths into arsonists, bandits, renegades, hooligans, terrorists, hijackers, vandals, armed robbers, cultists, human traffickers, drug traffickers, prostitutes, fraudsters and assassins, among others. There is need to look elsewhere for the foundations of the national integration and insecurity challenges that is urgently and desperately needed in Nigeria today. Moral education seems to be a way forward especially when we define and contextualize its role in the much-needed establishment and sustenance of national integration and social order in Nigeria.

Causes of Moral Degradation

Causes of moral degradation 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 and 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 counseling by the appropriate authority, children learn 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, morality is meant to be taught at home which is the first agent of socialization. It is the duty of the parents and other elders in the neighbourhood to participate in the training of the children's 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 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 and 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 of morals 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 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 fetch 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;

- a. Teachers aid the students to comprehend moral principles and ethical behaviours.
- b. Should be role models as student copy their behaviours.
- c. Teachers should ensure that the child is exposed to the appropriate social experience that will develop good moral in the child,
- d. Apply reward by praising or gift a desirable behaviour while meting punishment to repel deviant behaviours.

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

1. 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.
2. Enthusiasm or avidity for learning; teachers could help students develop interest and zeal to learn by motivating and encouraging them.
3. Ambition and hard work; teachers should discourage lazy students while reward should be used to promote hard work. Names of hard-working students could be pasted on the class bill board on weekly or monthly bases.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. Co-operation with others; here class discussion and group projects are of great importance.
9. Being kind and helpful; students should encourage showing kindness to their teachers and class mates. This can be achieved through assisting to clean the board and assisting one another while in the class.
10. Being public minded; this is a civic responsibility every student must learn like arranging chairs for school events. Keeping their environments clean.

Evidently, the thrust of the matter is that teachers have 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 than their parents. This is not to exempt parents from playing their part. Parents should be aware that these are their wards who will one day be the custodian of all the wealth they have accumulated.

Parental Responsibilities in the Teaching of Moral Behaviours to their children and 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 is expected to do the following.

1. Parents are expected to be role models. Be honest, if you want them to be honest. Teach by examples.
2. 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.
3. Tell them stories with moral lessons. In the good old days' parents used folk tales to teach morals.
4. In dealing with them show them politeness, be considerate and respectful to them too.
5. As they watch movies or other interesting programmes, reason with them on what is happening so as to broaden their mental reasoning.
6. Give them more attention and time by answering their inquisitive questions.
7. Encourage teamwork among them and others (Sehgal, n.d).

Perceptibly, parents should 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. This being the case, they should ensure they collaborate with the teachers to impart on their children and wards moral and ethics, all these cannot be bought with money.

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.
- d. Some of the teachers have equally met their untimely death in the hands of 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 educations are 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 lives, 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 contribute to the national growth and development thus sustainable development with a secured nation.

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. Education when adequately provided, it broadens the students' horizon through improvement of sanitation, personal hygiene and income. Teaching of moral education entails character building necessary to produce an all-round educated individual who will not only be 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 acts 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.

Suggestions

Based on the above elucidations, the following suggestions were made.

1. There should be public awareness on the parenting responsibilities as television programmes, seminars, symposium, PTA meetings etc.
2. Parents should be aware that most of the things children say or do is what they copied from them and as a result should be good role models.
3. Parents should allow their children participate in the family meeting and avoid too much high handedness or authoritarianism. This enables children to be close to their parents and share sensitive issues.
4. 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.

5. Revival of religion and moral instruction in schools is very crucial. The religious bodies should also be helpful during services, by preaching more of morals.
6. Guidance and counseling services in schools should be reinvigorated.
7. 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 too.
8. Creating employment opportunities to school leavers so as to enjoin others to see the result of hard work and follow suit.
9. 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 morals to their children instead of dampening their efforts.

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