

SPECIAL EDITION



**AFRICAN JOURNAL
OF STUDIES IN
EDUCATION**

VOLUME 11, NUMBER 3, NOVEMBER 2016

ISSN: 0189 - 241 X

**MORAL EDUCATION: BEDROCK FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE AND
NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA**

**NWENEARIZI OKOH FREDRICK
EGWUELU, P.O.**

08036456054/08150428838

08037854622

okohfredrick@gmail.com

**ASABOR, BIVWIERE MARY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, AGBOR**

08035132068

Email- mbivwiere@yahoo.com

Abstract

Moral education is the bedrock of good governance and national development. The prosperity of a nation depends on the moral disposition of its members. Educated men with very low degree of morality are the greatest obstacles to the development of their own country. It is against this backdrop that a discussion on moral education has become imperative especially in the light of the current state of inertia to which the Nigeria nation has been reduced. This paper therefore, examine the concept of moral education, the educated men, Nigerian society and unpatriotic acts, good governance and the citizens' perspective and finally gave some far reaching suggestion capable of restoring the pride and dignity of Nigeria and Nigerians.

Introduction

All nations have their peculiar problems which may be economic, political, social or ideological. Such problems, especially social are indications of dynamic social life and constitute a feature of living and growing human societies. Nigeria is not an exception. Moral development and maturity on the part of the citizens of a country are pre-requisites for the development of the country. This is because there can be no development of a country if its citizens are morally undeveloped and immature. Moral development must precede economic development through modern technology. The question then is how can there be development in a country in which public funds are embezzled by those who control them and who are supposed to use them for developmental projects? How can there be development in a country in which self-interest is the dominant rule of action? Nor can the economy of any country develop if its citizens lack a moral

sense of duty, the right attitude to work and a sense of moral responsibility to the society? How can there be development in a country in which bribery and corruption, break down of law and order? It is simply an illusion to expect development in a society in which devotion to duty and efficiency yield to self-interest and the craving for self enrichment (Omoregbe, 1990). The prosperity of a society depends on the moral disposition of its members. If a country produces "Intellectual giants" but who are "moral dwarfs" it is simply producing obstacles to its own development (Omoregbe, 1990) "Educated" men with very low degree of morality are the greatest obstacles to the development of their own country. It is against this backdrop that a discussion on moral education has become imperative especially in the light of the current state of inertia to which the Nigeria nation has been reduced. Moral education as the nucleus of the symbiosis of all social institutions is assigned the task of fostering such an all-important disposition in the citizenry.

Concept of Moral Education

The word moral comes from a Latin root (Mores) and means the code or customs of a people, the social glue that defines how individual should live together (Education Encyclopedia, 2010). Moral education could be seen as direct and indirect teaching of issues concerned with right conduct. It refers to the process of growth in moral awareness, moral understanding and distinctive moral action which could lead to rational responsible thought and behaviour (Peters, 1970). Moral education is to encourage individuals to develop to the next level of moral uprightness. The concept of moral education is further defined as "the aggregate of all the process by means of which a child develops abilities, attitudes and other form of behaviour of positive value in the society in which he lives.

The aim of moral education is central to human beings. The social manifestation of humanly acceptable character cherished by a particular culture represents morals characteristics of human life. Upon this background, "Moral education is the education of the heart, without which no individual can be completely human" (Sharma, 2007). Moral education is not found in book or in

the lecture halls or classroom, the basis of moral education is proper feelings, proper conduct and the development of acceptable habits of the society. Generally, its features are manifestations of actions, reactions and feelings. Moral education entails more than classroom teaching and learning *Nweneazizi Okoh Fredrick, Egwuelu, P.O., Asabor, Bivwiere Mary* or book content; it also includes the hidden curricular aspects of education. This includes the ability to think good and make reasonable decision by learners. The home, religious institutions, others social sectors and agencies

Since independence in 1960, civil war, military coup d'etat, and consequent military government have created a Nigeria political environment that is not always seen a stable, these circumstances have constantly destabilized and jeopardized Nigeria's democracy as well as the political states that border Nigeria: There has been a constant and utter lack of rule of law on the part of government and the governed. The most urgent issues in Nigeria today are the lack of management of decaying simple amenities and government instability and the maintenance of decaying simple amenities and infrastructures in the nation. The issue of the upsurge of corruption is endemic and troubling. Transparency International Consistently rates the levels of corruption in Nigeria among the highest in the world. Pervasive corruption appears to permeate many levels of the Nigerian society (Eti Ogaji & Probert 2006). Hargreaves (2002) in discussing about the ways of improving basic health care in Nigeria claimed that Nigeria, once heralded as the beacon of Africa, has fallen somewhat short of this potential. Years of Plutocratic repressive dictators and military rule, coupled with wildespread corruption, have resulted in large scale neglect and deterioration of public services. According to Kew (2006), the giant was brought to its knees by 20 years of brutal and corrupt military rule, which left a legacy of executive dominance and a political corruption in the hands of Nigeria's so-called "god fathers" powerful political bosses sitting a top vast patronage networks who view the government primarily; through the lens of their own personal enrichment. According to Eicher and Liedholm (1970), the pressing problems of every day survival remain the highest immediate priority. Since oil boom of the 1970s, the nation's economy has been in crisis despite continued expansion in oil production. Inefficiency in governance has further deteriorated the Nigerian economy. Political instability and lack of proper accountability in the country have severely impeded the ability of successive governments to implement economic policies for the common good of the people, thus creating a lack of basic amenities for the people in the country. The people of Nigeria, like most people in other developing countries in Africa have been disadvantaged and neglected by their elected leaders, lawmakers and politicians. Many Nigerian leaders are faced with the dilemma of meeting the needs of its poor millions, who have to eke out their living from primary productive, activities and maintain the integrity of natural resource and the environment These leaders have misrepresented and ignored the voice of the people, the common good, peace, and stability of the country and have equally hindered most people from economic growth and opportunities due to their race, lack of skill, greed and power. They sometimes create obstacles to future growth and vision of

the country. Lipset and Lens (2000) stated that cultures that stress economic successes as an important goal but nevertheless, strongly restrict access to opportunities will have higher levels of corruption.

In assessing the leadership situation in Nigeria, Adejimi (2005) indicated that in Nigeria, most of the policy makers as well as those involved in decision making are engaged in bribery, egoism, power and trade liberalization. They are distracted to an extent that they forget the nation's policies aimed at improving the lives of people in the society.

A great number of leaders and policy makers are occupied with mismanagement and poor leadership skills in their administration of the country. They neglect and ignore policies that are aimed at improving the standard of living among the people of the nation.

It is of vital importance to understand some of the main factors especially religion, history, tribal, ethnicity, power, colonialism as well as political get-rich-syndrome, fraud and corruption elements that have continued to undermine good leadership in the Nigerian situation. These factors and others have contributed greatly to the instability, poverty and suffering among the people of the nation.

Regardless of where corruption occurs, the individual or group involved, and what causes it or the form it takes. The facts and outcomes still remain that in Nigeria, corruption has contributed immensely to greed, mistrust, insecurity, and injustice as well as to the poverty and poor millions, who have to eke out their living from primary productive activities and maintain the integrity of natural resource and the environment. These leaders have misrepresented and ignored the voice of the people, the common good, peace, and stability of the country and have equally hindered most people from economic growth and opportunities due to their race, lack of skill, greed and power. They sometimes create obstacles to future growth and vision of the country. Lipset and Lenz (2000), poverty and income inequalities are tied to corruption. According to Walter (1990), Nigeria is the giant of Africa and many of its outstanding leaders have been kept in prison or in exile for the sake of criminal act and embezzlement of public funds, as well as lack of accountability and good leadership. Corruption is responsible in a large measure for broken promises, the dashed hopes and shallow dreams that have characterized the lives of most Nigerians in the past few decades. He noted, adding that Nigeria was unlikely to meet the Millennium Development Goals (Walter 1990).

Mismanagement, government irregularities and corruption in Nigeria and other developing countries are among the major problems of national growth and development. These problems and their practices occur in nearly every level of bureaucracy, ministries, departments, and polity, as well as in the upper and lower administrations and agencies in the nation. In the mind of McMullan (1970), a public official is corrupt if he accepts money or money equivalent for doing something that he is under duty to do anywhere, that he is under duty not to do or to exercise a legitimate discretion for improper reasons (McMullan 1970).

Corruption and inefficiency in public services are linked to weak governance and leadership. The political and economic environment of a country determines, to a large extent, the standard and quality of its public services and administrations. There is virtual agreement among observers that corruption and political and economic instability have been responsible for derailing Nigeria's growth and development and primarily explain the suffering and poverty in the country. Leaders and decision makers in Nigeria should understand that a leader is one who can lead a group of people to accomplish common goals in the right direction, with cost efficiency, within the time frame and achieve the desired outcomes (Nahavandi 2004).

Good Governance and the Citizens Perspective

Good governance is an indeterminate term used in international development literature to describe various normative accounts of how public institutions ought to conduct public affairs and manage public resources. These normative accounts are often justified on the grounds that they are thought to be conducive to economic ends, such as the eradication of poverty and successful economic development. Unsurprisingly different organizations have defined governance and good governance differently to promote different normative ends.

The World Bank defines governance as "the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development". The Worldwide Governance indicators project of the World Bank defines governance as "the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised". This considers the process by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced; the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies and the respect of citizens and the state of the institutions that govern economic and social interactions

among them. According to the United Nations Development Programme's Regional Project on Local Governance for Latin America.

Governance has been defined as the rules of the political system to solve conflicts between actors and adopt decision (Legality). It has also been used to describe the proper functioning of institutions and their acceptance by the public (Legitimacy). And it has been used to invoke the efficacy of government and the achievement of consensus by democratic means (participation).

If one compares the practice of democracy in Nigeria with other Countries in Africa, one would begin to wonder whether it is democracy we have in Nigeria or civilian government with military temperament. Within the context of Abraham Lincoln's perspective of democracy (the government of the people, by the people and for the people), it suggests that true democracy should

promote responsibility and responsiveness in a given society. It is suffice to conclude that accountability is a reflection of good governance. On the other hand, any democratic setting that lacks responsiveness in governance is actually a dictatorial government in civilian camouflage.

The Citizens Perspective

It is only in Nigeria that politicians would promise the people heaven on earth as manifesto. Accountability is the last thing most Nigerian politicians would ever consider necessary as far as good governance is concerned. It is quite unfortunate that the freedom of speech is just mere freedom of expression that does not go beyond the ceiling. Yes, the citizens have the liberty to express their grievances. But the people's grievance has never moved the government an inch, regardless.

It is also unfortunate that the average Nigerian does not know what good governance is all about. The suffering in the midst of plenty over the years has increasingly imprinting a mediocre mentality in the psyche of an average Nigerian. Therefore, any incumbent political office holder that throws out some "goodies" to the people in the name of dividends of democracy is seen as a saviour, even though he uses the public funds. This does not negate the fact that good works should be encouraged and appreciated. But in a situation whereby someone is been extremely celebrated and praised for doing the work which he is elected to do, then, there is problem with the citizens' perspective of what good governance is all about. Good governance is not about the rulers but about the ruled mass. The well being of the ordinary

citizens is the yardstick for a good government and robust economy.

Nigerian politics must be hinged on economic development of the society and separated from the current individual, group and regional supremacy contest, because this is the old way. If leaders continue to do things the old way they will only get the same old results all the time. The youth, women, and the educated must be mobilized for good governance. The youth, because the future belongs to them, the women because the family is the nucleus of every society and the educated because, they are the light of the society. The welfare of the people is the gauge for the effectiveness of any government and it is time to make their welfare the subject of politics. It is time for a positive change to responsible leadership.

Conclusion and Suggestions

Moral Education is the bedrock of national development. No nation can develop without moral education for its entire citizens. Moral education therefore, should transmit values, skills, attitudes and knowledge to make the recipient responsible and effective functioning members of the society. We need Moral education to curb social and political vices in our polity. This is one way of creating a conducive environment for desirable attitudinal change that will bring about national development. On the basis of this, this paper makes the following suggestions.

There is the need for moral education to first of all re-orientate Nigerian leaders and those in the public service. They are the makers of policies just as they are also the ones who implement them. That education should emphasize ethics, effective service delivery and accountability.

Nigerian leaders need clear and comprehensive social reform to break the cycle of inefficiency in leadership. For a successful reform to take place in Nigeria accountability and transparency have to be guaranteed and the people have to be involved in issues that affect their lives and immediate environment. It was obvious that one of the major reasons for the current leadership deficiency in the country is that many Nigerians have not had the opportunity to live and operate in an environment that is under the rule of law. De Bono (1990) posited that law and order are the basic part of the fabric of society, and the society needs to give priority to this aspect of life because poor quality here downgrades everything else in the systematic network of the place.

Northouse (2004) suggested that sociability refers to leaders' inclination to seek out pleasant social relationships. Leaders who show sociability are friendly, outgoing, courteous, tactful and diplomatic. They are sensitive to others' needs and show concern for their well-being. Social leaders have good interpersonal skills and create cooperative relationships with their followers. According to Faghadebo (2007) transparency and accountability in governance will increase the sense of national community as well as the level of system affect.

To ensure more and better government responsiveness, civil society actors who have all the capacity to compel their leaders' to be 'accountable to them should brace up for the challenge. Deliberate and conscious efforts, borne out of patriotism, are needed to ensure the emergence of a virile civil society. An informed civil society is of vital importance to balance the powers of the Nigerian state. According to Munford, Zaccaro and Harding (2000) problem-solving skills refers to a leader's creative ability to solve new and unusual, ill-defined organizational problems. Nigeria needs problem-solving skills of leaders to help fight fraud and corruption in the country.

To truly clean up the bad leadership and corruption, Nigeria needs sound ethical leadership that is rooted in respect, service, justice, honesty and community. Leaders who place fairness at the centre of decision making, including the challenging task of being fair to individuals as well as to the common interest of the community they serve (Northouse 2004). The country needs people who are morally are educated and sincere and honest both in administration and leadership styles. In the Nigerian leadership situation, selfless and charismatic leaders are needed to amend the wrong (Ademjimi, 2005).

I strongly believe that these suggestions would help create for, African states and Nigeria in particular, a high level of organization, a sincere and purposeful leadership, an enlightened and politically conscious citizenry, and an honest and responsive political class working purely for the sole benefit of the people within popular based democratic culture' relevant to our environment, compatible with our more and benefiting from diligent application and absorption of the traditional knowledge and practices of our people. Accomplishing this will no doubt help break our failure syndrome and bring about the much desired but seemingly elusive dream of moving the nation to an advantageous position within the new global order capable of restoring the pride and dignity of Nigeria and Nigerians.

References

- Nweneazizi Okoli Fredrick, Egwuehi, P.O., Asabor, Bivwiete Mary
- Adejimi, A. (2005) optimizing management of design process for effective maintenance of public building in Lagos State, Lagos University of Yaba Press.
- De Bono, E. (1990) Democracy and Education. New York. The free press
- Education Encyclopedia (2010). Moral Education Retrieved From Education Encylopedia/State University Com.
- Eicher, C.K., and Liedholm, C. (1970). Growth and Development of the Nigeria economy. Lansing: Michigan State University Press.
- Fagbadebo, O. (2007). Corruption, governance and political instability in Nigeria. African Journal of Political Science and International Relations 1. 28-32.
- Hargreaves S. (2002). Time to right the Wrongs: Improving basic health care in Nigeria. Lancet 35, 2030-2055
- Kew, D. (2006). Nigerian in Tatic S. (Ed) Countries at the crossroads (pp. 7 1-73) New York, NY: Freedom House.
- Kpangban, E. (2013). Teacher Education: A Tool for Nation Transformation: Being a keynote address presented at the 2nd annual conference of the school of education, College of Education, Aghor, from 15 to 18.
- Lipset S.M. and Lenz, G.S. (2000). Corruption Culture and markets in Harrison L.E. Humtingtons S.P. (Eds) Culture matters (pp 112-12 New York NY Basic Books.
- Memullan, M. (1970) Political Corruption: Readings in comparative analysis. New York: NY Holt Rinehart & Winston.
- Mumford, M.D: Zaccaro, S.J. and Harding, E.A. (2000). The leadership, Quarterly Newssetter, 11(1) 155-170.
- Nahavandi, A. (2004). The art and Science of leadership (4th ed) Upper saddle River, NY: Pearson Education.
- Northouse, P.G. (2004). Leadership: Theory and Practice (3rd ed). Thousand Oaks CA: Sape.
- Okorosaye Orubite, A.K., Agabi, O.O., Ezekiel-Karl, J., & Eghezor, D.E. (2005). (Eds) School and society. Port Harcourt; Dacidstones Pub. Ltd.
- Omoregbe, J. (1990). Ethics: A Systematic and Historical Study, Lagos: Joja Press Limited.
- Peters, R.S. (1966). The concept of Education, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Nwencarizi Okoh Fredrick, Egwueltu, P.O., Asabor, Biwiere Mary

Peters, R.S. (1970). *The Concept of Education*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Sharma, Y.K. (2007). *Sociological Philosophy of Education* New Delhi: Kanishka Publisher, Distributors.

Waiter, K. (1990). *A force for change: How leadership differs from management*. New York, NY: Free Press.