

ABATING ERODING TRENDS OF AFRICAN SOCIO-CULTURAL VALUES IN A GLOBALIZING WORLD THROUGH HOLISTIC VALUE RE-ORIENTATION

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Abstract

Globalization is a strong force. Social and cultural values on which a society is erected, sometimes radically change, as a result of globalization. Thus, African rich socio-cultural values are being incessantly polluted and corrupted as a result of technological development orchestrated by globalization. Value re-orientation becomes germane because of the overt and covert influences and assimilations of western values by Africans (especially the negative ones) which have created a weird value systems with deleterious consequences on African societies. This paper therefore examines the place of value re-orientation in abating the eroding trends of the traditional African socio-cultural values. It concludes with the recommendations that inferiority complex that makes Africans believe that western culture is superior, should be discouraged. It is a political statement to claim that one culture is superior to the other. The media should be in fore front of this enlightenment campaigns. The role of family is critical in value re-orientation because no other institution has the capacity in the real terms to effectively accomplish this great task.

Keywords: *Globalization, culture, family, mass media, value re-orientation.*

Introduction

Values are integral part of culture. Values are central to African culture as they represent unique heritage that are passed down from one generation to another. The role of socio-cultural values in the maintenance of social order is globally recognized. It regenerates a society and sets it on the right path of peace, progress and prosperity. It equally preserves a society from moral decay. No society can afford to ignore the issues of socio-cultural values because it touches the very core of societal and human survival as well as, decent existence. However, a society starts to experience all sorts of social challenges when the pillars and foundations of its socio-cultural values begins to decay (Dangana, 2012).

Culture, particularly African culture, is value laden. African culture is an embodiment of different values. The cultures of traditional African societies, together with their values systems and beliefs are closely related, even though they slightly vary from one another. Values permeate every aspect of African life. Okoh (2003) identifies various types of values to include the following: moral, religious, cultural, political, economic and aesthetic values. All these values are inextricably bound together and are to be comprehended in their totality as African socio-cultural values.

Of particular significance is moral value. African culture is embedded in strong moral considerations. It is a system of beliefs and customs which every individual ought to abide by, in order to live long and avoid bringing curses on themselves and others. Adultery, fornication, theft and other immoral practices are strongly discouraged. Mbiti (1977) attests that African

culture has a moral code that forbid doing harm to a relative, kinsman, an in-law, foreigner and strangers, except when such a person is involved in an immoral act. And when that is the case, the recommendation is that one should stay away from such an individual and even at death, their corpses would not be dignified with noble burial in a coffin and grave. Also, religious values permeate every aspect of life of Africans. Religion in Africa is the fulcrum around which every activity revolves.

Enu and Esu (2011) note that values are basic beliefs and attitudes in a society whether of individual or groups which are considered worthwhile and serve as a guide to choices and behaviours in our daily life. Aseka (2010) observes that African societies are linked together by shared values that are fundamental features of African identity and culture. These shared values include discipline, godliness, orderliness, integrity, good character, and sanctity of human life, obedience to the laws of the land, social justice and equity.

Culture is dynamic and not static. African culture and its various components have been refined as a result of contact with the western cultures in the course of time. There was a time in Nigeria, particularly when twins were considered as a taboo and were killed. Also, mothers' of twins were regarded as harbinger of evil, hence unacceptable in the society. People that were afflicted by sicknesses that could not be diagnosed were taken to the evil forests and left to die unattended to because it was believed that they were experiencing the wrath of gods. On the other hand, African culture has much that we can be proud of and offer the rest of the world.

The unprecedented alteration of the African societies through westernization and globalization has greatly disrupted most traditional institutions, particularly the institutions of marriage and family. The societal expectations of marriage and family institutions is high, because the failure of marriage and family spelt doom for the children, resulting from disruption of transmission of desirable and acceptable societal norms, values, beliefs and life skills.

African rich socio-cultural values are incessantly polluted and corrupted as a result of technological development orchestrated by globalization. Western cultures are rapidly submerging our prestigious traditional African cultural norms, values, traditions, customs and morality. Pervasive socio-cultural, religious, political, economic and educational decadence and laxity have taken precedence in the contemporary African societies. Agreeably therefore, the most daunting challenge which has stunted the growth of the African countries, particularly Nigeria, is gross neglect and disregard for the African socio-cultural values. It is against this background that the paper advocates for value re-orientation as a means of abating the eroding trends of African socio-cultural values in a globalizing world.

Conceptual clarifications

Globalization

Globalization is a multifaceted phenomenon which encompasses economic, social, political, technological and cultural dimensions. Giddens (1997) notes that globalization is the intensification of world-wide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice-versa. Abdurrahman and Kura (2013) conceptualize globalization as a complex phenomenon that underlines a multiplicity of linkages and interconnectedness surpassing the nation-state. It is a process that bring various agents, issues, events and actions into a complex web of relationship, and interactions.

Eboh and Ogbu (2010) see globalization as the high rate of inter-dependence and inter-linkages among nations of the world occasioned by high speed in economic, social, political, technological and cultural interactions. Aluko, Akinola and Sola (2004) view

globalization as the renewed attempt to consolidate the re-colonization process. They establish further that the current tides of crisis of collapse of industries, education sector, health facilities, water and electricity supply, escalating national debt bill and collapse of public security are traceable to the renewed attempt to consolidate on the re-colonialisation process. Wilfred (1997) corroborates that globalization is a continuation of the long tradition of over five hundred years, the tradition of imperialism. Globalization is the latest phase and expression of this uninterrupted history of domination and subjugation of peoples and nations.

Globalization is a critical tool for cultural homogeneity and a dynamic force to end cultural diversity around the world. Consequently, African traditional cultural values, norms, beliefs and traditions are replaced by the global cultural values. This study shares the cultural convergence perspective of globalization. This perspective is adopted to serve as a guide in the understanding of the impact of globalization on African cultures and values. Globalization is a reality for all of us around the world. We have no option or choice but to live in a global village. The reason is that the cultures of the world are seen as growing increasingly similar, at least in some degree and manner. In view of the foregoing, Africans should develop a balance perspective of globalization as both, a gift and threat particularly on the African culture.

Value Re-orientation

The issue of values re-orientation become germane because African societies have being misdirected. The overt and covert influences and assimilations of western values (especially the negative ones) have created a weird values system with deleterious consequences on African cultural values. We need to embark on deschooling, that is, consciously jettisoning and resisting all counter-productive values that have hampered African developmental strides. However, our immediate focus on the issue of value reorientation should target how to root out the cancer of endemic corruption from African countries. The re-orientation on materialistic tendencies and get rich quick syndrome should be replaced by value-based life of helping vulnerable and disadvantaged people.

Value re-orientation according to Njoku (2015) is a conscious development of human resources through ideological appeals, planning, training, productivity and efficiency at achieving cooperate culture. Okafor (2014) sees value re-orientation as a move away from corruption, embezzlement, dishonesty and general indiscipline to the direction of virtue of honesty, patriotism, hardwork and general abhorrence of social vices. Nkechi (2011) asserts that value re-orientation is simply re-educating people on the principles defining what is right or wrong, to enable people to have an idea of what is important in life. Values re-orientation suggests that we should go back to our root, precisely African core values system.

It is important that Africans cherished socio-cultural values such as humility, patience, self-control, integrity, accountability and honour should be imbibed, most especially through value re-orientation, so as to abate African developmental challenges. It is perhaps not an overstatement to establish the fact that nothing short of value re-orientation can salvage Africa.

Effects of Globalization on Indigenous African Socio-Cultural Values

The family system has been accepted all over the world as the basic unit of human existence. The place of the family in the process of socialization is so significant that it is often considered as the primary agent of socialization. In the process of socialization, family inculcates societal values in the child (Dangana, 2012). Prior to the advent of technological advancement and globalization, African family was essentially self-sufficient and effectively facilitated the

process of socialization specifically through initiation from childhood to adulthood by equipping the young members of the society with desirable and necessary knowledge, values, beliefs and life skills (Nynairo and Kamaara, 2010). However, due to the impact associated with modern economic conditions, increased educational opportunities, technological advancement and globalization, the institution of family has come under considerable pressure leading to changes in its fundamental roles and significance (Shakeela, 2014). To a greater extent therefore, the alarming spate of disregard for the African socio-cultural values is basically due to the failure of the family system to bring up children with sound values.

African societies are typically agrarian. Agriculture, the base of every nation's wealth economy, is grossly abandoned and neglected, resulting in food insecurity, hunger, starvation, unemployment, under-development and economic recession. Many able body men, particularly in Nigeria, prefer to roam about the streets looking for white-collar jobs that are not available than embarking on farming which is our traditional occupation.

Cultural globalization of African has become very pervasive and prevalent over African values and cultures. Nude dressing and fashion craziness is not African. However, artificial beauty and fashion contest now permeates Africa. Immodest dressing most especially among African women and ladies, is gradually becoming the more appreciated and valued African dress code. With the advent of globalization and influx of foreign films with pornographic contents, indecent clothing like mini skirts and skinned tight clothes that expose breast, chest, belly, upper arms, armpits and buttock are increasingly common among the women and ladies. In contemporary African society, most girls are almost naked on the streets. The consequences of this acts are enormous. For instance, it is responsible majorly for pre-marital sex, prostitution and promiscuity among others things.

Robert, Besong and Dibia (2015) note with dismay that the esteemed values, norms and cultures of African are still being eroded by African themselves. They lament over the situation where Africa elites, intellectuals, academics, bourgeoisies, and common parents alike now resort to communicating and teaching their children and wards in English language. They therefore strip them off of their indigenous languages, their own very cultural identity. Ndimele (2004) argues that globalization, technological development and the spate of Information and Communication Technology has further made the agitation for the use of mother tongue in teaching and learning especially at the primary and secondary levels of the educational system of no significance. Thus, according to Robert and Dibia (2015), African languages and their native speakers live in a more intense and harsh linguistic environment.

Globalization accounts for the endemic corruption that now characterizes most African societies because of greed. Embezzlement and misappropriation of funds which practically translate into failed leadership have crept into our body politics in Africa (Chikaan and Ahmad, 2011). There is no accountability and probity in both private and public institutions anymore. Religious groups are even more corrupt than others. Obiozor (2016) alludes that Nigerian politicians have not developed appreciable level of ethical and moral capacity to distinguish between right and wrong, good and evil both in theory and practice.

Adesina (2016) establishes that many African societies are now grappling with many behavioural challenges of dishonesty, drug abuse, assault, violent demonstrations, vandalism, robbery, secret cult activities. In spite of increased profession of religiosity all over the African societies, rather than the societies experiencing moral and spiritual edification, what prevails is moral and spiritual acrimony. Moral decadence in most African societies has reached the point

that human life is expendable for material gain. For instance, kidnapping is now a fast growing and attractive enterprise in Nigeria today.

Oni (2008) observes that Nigerian youths are rapidly losing touch with cultural values and that this could be seen in the alien culture which they portray; their bizarre dressing, dancing and language. They are not properly integrated into African society. Nicolaides (2012) makes similar observation that younger generation of teenagers in South Africa have abandoned their African cultures and languages and even religion and try to be hip by imitating their mainly American rap artist role models who for most part of their lives display an acute lack of values and act immorally on television shows and promote promiscuous behaviour. Teenagers and youths generally are vital segments of the society who can be instrumental to promoting African culture. Unfortunately, the orientation and lifestyles of the teenagers and youths in African societies have been grossly affected by exposure to western movies to a great extent that rather than promoting African cultures, they have become hardened acolytes and promoters of western culture.

Holistic Value re-orientation as Catalyst for Abating Erosion of African Socio-cultural Values

Any society that would be great must be established on enduring core values of diligence, hard work and industry, probity, accountability and transparency, social justice, equity and fair play, loyalty and patriotism, concern for the wellbeing and welfare of others and social decorum. The need for value re-orientation had long being recognized as the best way to abate the myriad of societal challenges confronting Nigerian society. Consequently, successive administrations have articulated and pursued re-orientation programmes in one form or the other (Agu, 2016). For instance, Operation Feed the Nation, Green Revolution, Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), War Against Indiscipline (WAI), Mass Mobilization for Self Reliance, Social Justice and Economic Recovery (MAMSER), Better Life for Rural Women among others things. These programmes achieved little or no success because they were mere political sloganeering. They were devoid of strong political will. Ayakoroma (2015) also affirms that cultural re-orientation is capable of creating a process of positive impact on national development.

Effective value re-orientation programme aimed at holistic national transformation must start from the top of governance and leadership as an example for citizens to follow. Aboluwodi (2014) buttresses this that the effectiveness of the value re-orientation in Nigeria rests on leadership rather than rhetoric. Nigerian leaders need to understand the essence of governance. They must come to term with the central concern of government so as to enhance the well-being and quality of life of the people.

Family is another real driver of value re-orientation. Family as a miniature society, is a custodian of all the societal value system. It serves as nursery that nurtures acceptable societal values. Any nation that wants to build its capacity for development must start with the family. The family is the first place where children are taught the core societal value such as honesty, hard work, integrity, accountability, transparency among others. According to Agu (2016), values, attitudes and beliefs can be taught, once learnt, they become difficult to change.

Value-based education is another potent driver of value re-orientation. Society equips education with the values to be transmitted while education exposes each generation of young people to the existing beliefs, norms and values of their culture (Schafer, 2000). As a matter of

fact, value-based education develops in individuals those values which make for good citizenship, such as modesty, selflessness, tolerance, dedication, hardwork and personal integrity.

Vibrant and pro-active mass media are important forces of value re-orientation. Nigeria media should redirect their focus at arousing the attention and interest of people to indigenous values, norms, cultures and arts that are still very relevant in a globalizing world. The entertainment and art industries particularly are expected to produce art that showcases the exciting mix of Nigeria's cultural diversity and the very values that hold the African societies together (Umeh, 2015).

Recommendations

- Inferiority complex that makes Africans believe that western culture is superior to Africa culture should be discouraged. It is a political statement to claim that one culture is superior to the other. The mass media should champion this course.
- The need for value re-orientation is inevitable. The family must take the lead since no other institution has the capacity, in the real terms, to effectively accomplish this great task.
- Parents, teachers, clergy man and significant others should inculcate acceptable values in our society.
- Government, in collaboration with curriculum planners and educationists, should draw and implement a comprehensive value-based education beginning from primary schools to the tertiary levels.

Conclusion

The growing influence of technological development and globalization has become a major concern to many Nigerians. Every aspect of traditional African life has been affected by globalization. It is evidently clear that any society that abandons its socio-cultural values is tending towards extinction. This is because a society's value system is the pillar on which it rests. It has been established that purpose driven value re-orientation can help in abating myriad of societal challenges that Nigeria is grappling with.

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