ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND SOCIO-POLITICAL PROBLEMS AMONG THE YOUTHS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
Social vices in Nigeria, especially among the youths, culminated into difference cases of crimes; ritual killings for money, prostitutions, and other licentious behaviours, obviously due to ill education, improper training, and negligence of the parents right from childhood. This paper examined the concept of Islamic education, in solving socio-political vices, in relation to educational system, as well as create avenues for knowledge and understanding of religious educational values in Nigeria. It is observed that lack of inculcation of God's consciousness in the society is the basis of these socio-political problems. This work is library based, the archival documents, academic works, and views of scholars on the concept of Islamic education were explored to regulate these social vices and establish religious educational values in reshaping social engagement in Nigeria. The paper argued that religious education remains the best solution to Nigeria's socio-political problems and the Islamic education has laid down concepts that serve as a good advantage both in this present world and the hereafter. The paper therefore concluded that teachers and parents should be well informed of their duties to children, based on divine instructions and guidance, so that children would grow up to become responsible adults and pious leaders, that would be reflective in the country's socio-political activities and engagements.

Keywords: Education, Islamic concept, socio-political vices, youths.

Introduction
Conventionally, religious education is the teaching of a particular religion and its varied aspects: beliefs, doctrines, rituals, customs, rites and personal roles (Wikipedia). This definition underestimates the primary aims of religious education as far as Islam is concerned. Education in Islamic context encompasses all knowledge, with special interest in nurturing the soul to know and understand the Creator, in other to live a perfect life in the mundane and the life beyond. Nonchalant attitude or total neglect of religious education in Nigeria has led to moral degradation that is causing so many atrocities, which in most cases, is affecting the socio-political engagements in this part of the world. This paper aimed at bringing out various concepts of religious education from an Islamic perspective in solving socio-political problems, and as well creates avenue for knowledge and understanding for the value of religious education in our society. Education, as it is

often said, is the key to success, however, the situation in the present-day Nigeria appears to make this assertion a fallacy. This is evident in the spate of the teeming youths' engagement in cuber-crimes and ritual killings. Worst, teenagers are not even left out of these licentious and horrendous activities such as prostitution, pornography, debauchery etc.

In spite of all governmental efforts, these problems continue to rise. The reasons, one of which is improper or poor encouragement of religious education, has become a national problem that is also affecting the political progress due to distraction they are causing. What exactly are the rudiments of these problems? What is wrong with the educational system in Nigeria? What is the prospect of Nigeria educational system? How can the Islamic concept of education provide solution to these problems? How should the solutions be activated and to what extent? These are the questions this paper intended to answer. Encourage standard harmonious religious education from the grassroots to engender the spirit of God's consciousness, from the childhood, so that they will grow up with such worthy character, in all ramifications of life endeavours.

Education in Nigeria: An Overview

Nigeria inherited colonial education which has been criticised for being too theoretical to make meaningful impact on Nigerians (Ibukun & Aboluwodi, 2010). Subject taught in schools reflected the taste of the colonial officials. School curricula were built around the existing colonial values (2010). Thus, the same problem which informed dependency on past colonial education relies seems to have continued till date. African school systems today, according to Woolman (2001), still follow the rigid structure of time periods and grade level progression found in Western education with little change in the curriculum. Meanwhile, Nigeria as a nation had witnessed a series of Educational Systems since 1914 (Adeyemi, Oribabor, & Adeyemi, 2012). After the independence, there were a lot of shortcomings due to the fact that Educational system was based on British educational system which did not meet up with the yearning needs, interest and aspirations of Nigerian society (2012). The introduction of the 6-3-3-4- system of education in Nigeria pre-supposed that the old system 6-5-4, was archaic (2012). The national objectives and philosophy of 6-3-3-4 educational system includes:

a. A free democratic society.
b. A just and egalitarian society.
c. A united, strong and self-reliant nation.
d. A great and dynamic economy.
e. A land full of bright opportunities for all citizens (FRN, 2004).

Though, the objectives were geared towards self-realisation, better human relationship, national consciousness, national unity, social, cultural, economic, political, scientific and technological progress (Adeyemi, Oribabor, & Adeyemi, 2012), the system has helped in many areas like attainment of some National Policy on Education and many others, but the fact remains that much have not been achieved in really carrying out policies that will suite the entire society (2012). Critical view of the aims and objectives above bring out key words and phrases such as "national consciousness". "national unity", "values", "attitudes", "understanding of the world", "skills, abilities and competences" (Otelaja, 2019). A formalised and systemic body of knowledge will expose the student to be conscious of national development and unity which Islamic system tends to create.

Tola (2011), explains that the admission policy introduced into our educational systems, believes in education as a veritable instrument for national development, based on the premise that students from different backgrounds, religion, race, etc. will come together to pursue a common goal, learn, interact and share experiences about themselves. This is to bring about unity, understanding, and tolerance, without biases, myths and misconceptions. However, reverse is the case in our tertiary education as a result of the quota system, catchments areas, and federal character, introduced into Nigerian admission policy. A student from a geo-political zone will be offered admission first before any other student from another geo-political zone based on classification of some states as educationally disadvantaged, having special cut off marks. Therefore, the issue of class and federal character affects employment and admission in our institutions (2011).

These and many other reasons have shown that various policy adopted to enhance educational system in Nigeria have always proved abortive. The debate on university strikes continued to attract many comments; mainly many of the stakeholders seem not to know what to do on how to bring an end to the strike. The Nigerian tertiary institutions have witnessed strikes, counter-strikes and sympathy strikes for months or years. The level of decadence has permeated the entire educational system (Olujuwon, 1999). The disruption of academic calendar, non-completion of syllabus and lack of conducive learning environment have been attributed to a high increase in examination malpractices and anti-social behaviour, like cultism and drug addiction, which are the effects of students not fully engaged in academic activities (Tola, 2011). The situation in Nigerian academic system is pathetic and poor, caused by socio-political imbroglio in academic institutions, that has resulted into social degradation, moral decadence and inhumanities which obviously hinder the socio-political progress.

Islamic Concept of Education
Education in Islam is emphasised as an important activity besides dissemination of knowledge (Fatah, Muhammad, 2013). It is compulsory on every Muslim, regardless of gender, to acquire knowledge, which is stipulated in the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah,* (practice of Prophet Muhammad): "Acquisition of knowledge is compulsory upon every Muslim" (Tibawi, 1972). Education in Islam aims at enlightening the human soul and enriching the treasure of knowledge that helps in knowing Allah. This will further instill the sense of responsibility to worship Him and obey His command and as well accomplish the purpose of the creation of mankind. Man is taught about how to conduct his religious and socio-political affairs on earth as means to realise the purpose of his creation in accordance with the absolute will to Allah, which occupies a significant position in Islamic civilisation. It is a prerequisite of faith and development. The first revelation to Prophet Muhammad, in Qur'ān 96:1-5, was a divine instruction that education in its essence is not purely a mundane activity, but also an integral part of faith (Fatah, & Muhammad, 2013).

In the view of Salmi (2017), education plays an essential role in the duty to preserve values, and traditions of any society. Thus, Islamic education is a form of training aimed at molding the individual and the society into a dynamic and conscious level; it covers the physical and spiritual perspectives of the receiver. The processes of mental, physical and spiritual training are important; it is an approach where the education itself would be able to produce individuals who are Allah's conscious. The concept of Islamic education refers to the development of individual potential and to the process of nurturing and guiding the child to a state of completeness or maturity.

The process of character development and learning is a sound basis for moral and social behaviour, within the community and society at large, it includes coming to understand and accept the most fundamental social principles, such as justice, imparting and receiving of knowledge usually through training, and instruction or other form of teaching (Halstead, 2004). Sayid and Muhammad (2019), explain the view of Imām Al-Ghazāli's aim on education as to cultivate man so that he abides by the teachings of religion and is hence assured salvation and happiness in the Hereafter.

The development of other aspects of human life through education includes, character formation, brightening the heart, moral development, earning a livelihood and societal development.
Islamic education is clear in its objectives, and essentially should be linked with the objective of life; all activities should be developed around these aims and objectives, and not contrary to it. The purpose of education should basically be to create a realization, and to facilitate to achieve the purpose of life, which is submission to God. Qur'ān says: "I did not create the Jinn and human beings except for the purpose that they should worship Me" (Qur'ān 51:56). The concept of Islamic education is holistic in the sense that it touches mind, heart and soul and equally serves unity, and Divine purpose (Abdul-Muqaddas & Isyaku, 2021). The system transports knowledge through instruction and teaching; nurtures spiritual and ethical principles; refines people's social behaviour; and processes people's rational, feelings, spiritual and social dimensions. Indeed, Islam encourages the equalisation of intellectual and spiritual knowledge.

Causes and Effects of Socio-Political Imbroglio on Education in Nigeria
The education sector in Nigeria has been severally lampooned for failing to contribute to national unity and development. This is majorly as a result of poor governance, mismanagement, corruption, lack of responsibility, politicisation of education, indiscipline, lack of good teachers' welfare, and more importantly, parenting and guidance. Based on these issues, it is clear that the country's educational system is not really producing children who are well prepared to take proper care of socio-political system with good intention and piety. The neglect of education sector heavily reflects on low amount budgeted for education yearly, cases of corruption in education sector, and allegation of collection of bribe and extortion by some higher institution lecturers are part of the challenges deteriorating the system.

Parenting is meant to provide the basic needs needed to meet the challenges of life, but many parents do not even show enough care or support, all they want is for their children to excel irrespective of the means. Indiscipline is now rampant to the extent that, even in secondary school, students join cultists, and records of cult killings are now everywhere. Lack of proper guidance has led to the encouragement of malpractices.

Most attempts at educational reforms fail to succeed as a result of politicisation of education, and this is due to desperate political ideologies by political leaders. Lack of continuity also exists from one administration to the other. In the area of accreditation, some schools that did not meet up the standard are also allowed to operate (Birabi & Ogeh, 2020). There exist, at times, educational conflict between the roles of Federal, State and Local governments on the management of public schools. The infrastructure in schools and other vocational institutions, according to Omale (2019) have collapsed due to abject neglect by governments. Tertiary institutions became dilapidated and their products are ill-trained and cannot compete with other products outside the country. All these and many others are intricate and confusing socio-political situations that are seriously affecting

educational system in Nigeria that needs to be revived. All of these, in the same vein, have led to and have continually heightened the menace of crime in the Nigerian society, hence the need for an Islamic educational panacea.

Islamic Panacea in Solving Educational Problems Among Nigerian Youths
Islamic education centred on morality and Allah's consciousness that lead to good and right behaviour with the belief that when a good is done, it would be rewarded by Allah and doing otherwise, the consequences would be faced. The concept of morality is not limited to religious obligation; it also comprises the entire socio-political responsibilities (Ibiyemi & Salako, 2021). *Taqwa* (consciousness of Allah) remains the moral teaching and focal point of Islamic education. Allah says: "O mankind, We (Allah) have created you from a male and female, and made you into nations and tribes that you may know one another, verily, the most honourable among you is that who has *Taqwa*." (Qur'ān 49:13).

Islamic education encourages moral principles, such as social responsibility, justice and tolerance, which if dully observed, the nation will live peacefully, irrespective of regional, religious, tribes, colour or cultural differences. Islamic polity is a reason why Islam, in its contextual definition is examined as not only the religion of Allah, but also a system of administration (Adeleke, 2021). Islamic education explains the political, economic, educational and social aspects of life in details, which are highly entrenched in Islamic jurisprudence. It has many references that serve as guiding principles on act of rulings, concept and scope of governance, duties and roles of leaders and followers and criteria for selecting or electing a leader (Adeleke, 2021). The main objective of all these, in Islam, is to ensure that a society has a good government that will cater for the needs of the people with good intention and piety.

The Islamic belief is a system of normative values which acts as a criterion for identifying the major social objectives, evaluating institutions and justifying the claims of legitimacy (Eltigani, 2004). Islam considers education to be the only means by which truth can be realised and religious knowledge is the ultimate and absolute truth (Paramole, 2016). Allah says in Qur'ān 10:32 that: "Such is Allah, your real cherisher and sustainer: apart from truth, what remains but error? How then are you turned away?" It becomes necessary that man must acquire knowledge in order to know Allah, worship Him and behave well in the society. It can be affirmed that Islam begins and ends with useful knowledge. Thus, teenagers and youths would be availed virtues, trustworthiness, kindness, sympathy, sincerity, affection, generosity and great charm of mind, all of which could be inducted with the attitude of Prophet Muhammad (Paramole, 2016).

Indeed, Islamic system remains the panacea in solving educational and socio-political problem in Nigeria. It gives permanent code of behaviour, and the system of maintaining control and balance in life for the trainings, teachings and instructions, which would ultimately result in a good behaviour, obedience, orderliness and self-restraint (Salmi, 2017). It bestows the individual the quality of being comprehensive in scope, inclusive world view and universal in approach to different issues. It helps in promoting proper education with the concept of commitment and performs duties with open-mindedness, incorporating the beliefs, values and views of others into the decision-making process (Salmi, 2017).

Islamically, the fundamental aim of education is to provide the teenagers and youths with positive guidance that will help them grow into good leaders and someone who will lead happy and fruitful

lives and faithful in the hereafter (Halstead, 2004). Precisely, good leaders require an understanding of Islamic concept of education to accept the obligations of divine stewardship; appreciate the divine attributes, such as wisdom and justice stipulated in the divine revelations, strive for the balanced growth of the integrated personality, made up of the heart, spirit, intellect, feelings, and bodily senses, development of potentials in order to become perfect human being and allow the whole lives to be governed by divine principles. All these have profound consequences on what should be taught in schools, right from elementary to tertiary institutions.

Enforcement of discipline, Bello (2020), explains that, parenting as a natural responsibility of those who brought children into the world biologically, is now being left in the hands of house helps, teachers, grandparents and such other persons, whose moral disposition is more of a liability than asset to the children. Mothers who are full time housewives and fathers whose occupational responsibility allow them to be available at home become more of child spoilers out of excessive love rather than being character moulders. Children must be properly trained and brought up in the best Islamic manner, through practical conducts from the parents. In Islam, education becomes the paramount obligation of the child (Bello, 2020). The child must be under close monitoring and guidance of the parents or guardians through proper counselling until he or she reaches the age of puberty. An example of this is the relationship between Prophet Luqmān and his son. The Qur'ān puts it thus:

> And remember when Luqman said to his son, while advising him, "O my dear son! Never associate anything with Allah in worship, for associating others with Him is truly, the worst of all wrongs. And we have commanded people to honour their parents. Their mothers bore them through hardship upon hardship, and their weaning takes two years. So be grateful to Me and your parents. To Me is the final return…. O my dear son! Even if a deed were the weight of a mustard seed-be it hidden in a rock or in the heaves or the earth – Allah will bring it forth. Surely Allah is Most Subtle, All-Aware. O my dear son! Establish prayer, encourage what is good and forbid what is evil, and endure patiently whatever befalls you. Surely this is a resolve to aspire to. (Qur'ān 31:13-17)

More importantly, government has a vital role to play in providing solution to educational problem among the youths in Nigeria. Unfortunately, the advancement that is supposed to be made through progressive and qualitative alternatives in social, economic, cultural, education, technology and political conditions of society, that would lead to an enhancement in the welfare of citizens has been dashed by bad leadership and governance, characterised by corruption. This has remained a huge hindrance to socio-political development with a heavy blow on the country's educational system (Paramole & Alawiye, 2021). In the doctrines of Islam, leadership is the most significant instrument for the realisation of an ideal society, based on justice and compassion. The level of absolute belief in Allah predicates leadership effectiveness, and the quality of Islamic leadership can positively influence the attitudes of followers and as well bring higher levels of satisfaction, motivation, performance, positive thinking and societal loyalty (2021). Good government requires good leadership; the Islamic concept serves as important human resources that offer value for socio-political performance which is a vital tool that can enhance educational development among the Nigerian youths.

Recommendations

- Due to religiosity, Islamo-Christian nature of Nigeria, religious template should be adopted based on the scriptural teachings to establish formidable government that will enhance educational system.

- Parents should be well informed of their duties to children, based on divine instructions and guidance, so that children will grow up to become responsible adults and leaders amongst the righteous.

- The concept of Islamic education should be considered in various aspects of knowledge. Establishing integration between religious knowledge and modern knowledge will prepare the youths for moral quality and responsible adults in all fields of endeavours.

- Re-orientation of teachers, by creating rooms for training, conferences and seminars that will provide methodology and evaluation system in order to be equipped with Religious background in their standard of teaching and learning.

- There should not be politicisation of education. Policy and curriculum should be planned in such a way that Religious knowledge would be incorporated in all aspects of educational system so that the fear of God will be the watchword in both academic and the society at large.Taking good and proper care of the teachers is very important; this will not make them have any excuse in proper discharge of their duties.

- Self-discipline should be enforced into the system, through the inculcation of Religious education, with tested values of respect, dignity and honour which will, in no small measure, provide possible solution to socio-political problems that prevail in the society.

- There is need re-orientate and re-engineer the perspectives on religious education in our society. There is no gain-saying that education remains the key to success. Thus it is contended that religious education remains the best solution for socio-political problems in Nigeria and Islam has laid down the concepts which, if can be adopted, would serve a good advantage for the Nigerian society and beyond.

Conclusion

The status and nature of the Nigerian educational system is currently in a pathetic and a poor situation, and this is seriously causing socio-political imbroglio in the nation. Meanwhile, Islamic concept of education encourages spiritual and moral knowledge, principles and justifications that largely delineated against rational inquiry, independent judgement, and imitation. These objectives and approaches can manage the problems in Nigerian educational system, characterised with corruption, politicisation, indiscipline, lack of responsibility and inadequate parental guidance. Indeed, the Islamic educational system remains a strong panacea in solving the educational and socio-political decadence in Nigeria. Thus, religious knowledge should be incorporated in all aspects of educational system in Nigeria, so that the consciousness of God will be entrenched in both the physical and the spiritual life of the people in order for righteousness, justice and faithfulness, to take over the whole system. The Islamo-Christian nature of Nigeria should be a great advantage; based on monotheistic belief of the two religions. In all, religious template can be

formed and further incorporated into the country's educational system so as to better its standard, which would consequently provide a permanent solution to the socio-political problem in Nigeria.

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