

CHANGING THE PARADIGM OF CHILDREN UPBRINGING IN NIGERIA: EXPERIENCE OF AN ISLAMICIST

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Abstract

Generally, children are believed to be one of the best worldly gifts. As such their befitting nurturing and nourishment is a must for every well-meaning parent and guardian. Remembrance of the early period and stages of children growth and all round development remain very important and indelible for many times to come and even can be sustained up till the very last moments of this life. It is in recognition of the above submission that the paper takes a holistic approach in the light of noble Qur'ān and Prophetic traditions to x-raying the many inadequacies associated with children upbringing in Nigeria with a view to ensuring their best and perfect training, steering them to all that is good and wholesome. With the corroboration of documentary sources in form of archival materials and other secondary sources, the paper found out that many children at their tender ages are left unattended to, proper and normal guidance have in away eluded them. In other words, these children found themselves in nauseating circumstances and their brighter future may shatter into shreds. The paper recommended religious instructions and good morals as ways of salvaging them from misguidance and waywardness.

Keywords: Children upbringing, Islamicist experience.

Introduction

Children are gifts from Allāh. With their coming to life in the midst of inability and incapability are yet a source of succour and heralding inspiring messages to their parents; with them the roles of the parents have changed. Other than being a less careful individual, they have changed into loving parents who would be addressed by the child as mum and dad. Parents are oblivious of the fact that arrival of a child into family brings about daunting, tasking and challenging responsibilities which were never contemplated before.

According to Dar Abdul-Qasim (2012), welfare of human society is at the heart of Islam as a religion and way of life. Family set up is the indispensable essential, the very starting point and foundation of a saner society without which no beginning can be made. Every Muslim parent as a matter of religious duty is obligated to raise his or her children in the best way possible. Making available to them a religious happy home, loving care, comfort, basic amenities of a good life which include but not limited to religious knowledge, knowledge to live and knowledge for living. Islamic religious education in its comprehensiveness comprises everything that tends to make one becoming a righteous being devoted to Allāh with pleasing manners and inbiting noble characters.

It is an undeniable fact of history that whatever that has a divine injunction and scriptural backing is deeply treasured and highly rated among things. This is the reason why we should do as much as humanly possible not to neglect the all-important duty of raising children to be upright so that the parents, the children and grandchildren would not suffer but benefit tremendously from mutual love, affection, care and enjoying the eternal pleasure of Allāh. But if in the opposite, the parents are carefree, lackadaisical and negligent of their herculean tasks as parents then the result would be

bitter, detrimental and chaotic in this life and in the life hereafter for them as parents, for children and even great grandchildren (Fisabilillah Publications, 2018)

Indeed, it is as a result of the above backdrop that it is better and apposite for us to start from the very beginning and consider very carefully the thoughts, actions and inactions of our children just to put them on the acceptable standards of morals since they are the leaders of tomorrow and fashioners of the great future for the country. To achieving Godly children, the primary sources of Islam emphasize unequivocally their wholesome upbringing, enjoining them to all that is acceptable and valued. If today's children are properly nourished and excellently brought up through strong religious foundations and lofty moral standards, the upcoming generations are billed to have brighter future and righteous successors. Therefore, this paper is hinged on examining the various styles of up-bringing just to ensure children's proper and robust nurturing while exposing them to all that is humane and generally acceptable.

Research methodology

The study adopted documentary sources inform of archival materials that are rooted in both primary and secondary sources to x-raying the many inadequacies associated with children upbringing in Nigeria with a view to ensuring their best and perfect training, steering them to all that is good and wholesome.

Children upbringing and parenting

The present Nigerian social structure is fast decaying owing largely to the acceptance and attachment to the western lifestyle and complete absence of Islamic awareness. These days, many Nigerians are neck-deep in a state of utter neglect of Allāh's laws and guidance thereby openly and fragrantly disobeying His rules and regulations by involving in avoidable minor and major sins and refusal to fulfil the rights of others. Many of the parents are of the belief that the younger generations (their biological children inclusive) are very rude, manner-less, disrespectful and corrupt. A close look at this allegation revealed that the parents failed to instil religious instruction into their children and therefore, their failure accounts for this state of affairs.

In the same vein, Ahmed (1993) corroborates this further by saying that the present misguidance among children is as a result of many parents preferring to bring up their children in an irreligious atmosphere and encouraging these lads to imbibe, practice and profess western norms and cultures. It is to be noted here that the basic duty and responsibility of parenting and inalienable right of the child is that he is educated in a religious way. Thus, for the Nigerian society to be liberated from impeaching doom and total ruin, its family structure must be built on the correct norms, values and cherished culture of Islamic civilization.

It is very sad and lamentable to note that in some family, there is dedicated time for sport, amusement and fun and there is no time earmarked for moral training. These days, it is expedient and more necessary to allocate a time daily for moral training, among children. This is because people are now witnessing an era that is characterized by corrosive decline of morality chiefly engineered by western nations' waywardness. Just like there are schedules of activities for daily routine so also there should be fixed hours for the children to listen to moral instructions either from their parents or in the house of God under a religious scholar who will equip them with series of moral guidance.

The holiday period provides ample opportunity for children to be deeply involved in character modelling exercises. The unfortunate child uses this period wandering from one place to another and leaves both his religious and educational assignments unattended to. The parents of this child are happy on account of their own regular attendance at ritual prayers in the house of God and unmindful of the fact that failure of their children in performing religious obligations regularly and

punctually may be a source of serious problems for them with Allāh on the day of accountability. Many parents pride over their children being Master holders, Doctors or Engineers but are less concerned about their spiritual development, forgetting that it is the religious instructions that would make other domains of knowledge to function properly.

With Muhammad, (n.d.) the child has a right to be nourished with the mother's breast milk. This explains why the noble Qur'ān in recognition of this grace and favour of the mother enjoins the child to relate with his mother with exceptional love and kindness. It is also part of the mother's responsibility to instil in the child with each zip of her milk consciousness of Allāh, Prophethood of Muhammad (SAW) and true teaching of Islam which will serve as the basis for religious education while the mother should ensure that this foundation teaching is properly registered in the mind and heart of the child. Mothers should also note that raising up children to be religious is one of their assigned duties which must not be transferred to a nurse without a valid reason. They should be dully involved in this training so as to enjoy the spiritual pleasure and joy inherent therein having carried out the important religious assignment.

Both sympathy and empathy should be given to children by their parents and their interest and yearnings should be provided for as much as possible. This will go a long way in allowing peaceful atmosphere to pervade in the neighbourhood and children will surely develop sense of obedience and praise worthy service in them. Parents should try to bring to their children door-step good, decent and befitting education and dedicated discipline. No sacrifice is supreme to achieving this since this effort is parental religious obligation and a splendid favour to the children which will eventually turn out to be good for them too.

Every child is distinctively special and unique in his mental alertness, social development, psychological inclination and religious consciousness. Different stages of child development has its peculiar level of understanding and assimilation as well as its biological and psychological needs. That particular paradigm employed to safeguard children's well-being should take cognizance of the characteristic features of their level of maturity. Indeed, growing up children require more direct supervision and restricted access on various activities than the older children would.

Fulfilling obligations as the head of the family towards those who are under one's care attracts a huge reward from Allāh according to the sayings of the Prophet (SAW) when he says: *"When a man spends on his family, anticipating Allāh's reward in the hereafter this act of his will be counted as an act of charity"*. In another instance, he was reported to have said: *"You will be rewarded for whatever you spend for Allāh's sake even if it were a morsel of food which you put in your wife's mouth"*. In other words, those who decidedly neglect their parental roles of spending and protecting their family members in spite of their being able to do so are sinning against Allāh as this has a backing of the Prophet (SAW) when he said: *A man who neglects those who are under his care would surely be committing a sin*" (Bahammam, 2015).

It is the duty of the man to encourage those under him to act righteously and refrain them from wrongs doing; he should strive very deeply to make them thread the path of rectitude that leads to the promise land while encouraging them to shun the path of perdition. Inculcating all these in them through precept and example by jealously following the laws of Allāh and refraining from His prohibitions. The wife also has a duty of encouraging her spouse by guiding him to the path of honour and engaging him on discussions bothering on those best ways of nurturing good children. To this end, the glorious Qur'ān impeccable declared: *"O you who believe, safeguard yourselves and your families from a fire whose fuel is people and stone"*. Q.66:6. In the same vein, the Prophet (SAW) said succinctly: *"Every one of you is a guardian and is responsible for those in his custody"* (Bahammam, 2015). Parents and guardians should of utmost importance raise up children while

teaching them to be men at young age and implant in them competition towards good motivated by their relatives and decorate them with sincere love for Allāh and all that is humane and sane.

Methods of parenting

The only lawful way of bringing about procreation is through legitimate marital intercourse, for the children born out of it not to be susceptible to so many evils. This is because sexual defilement could be a strong factor for unwanted afflictions and conjugal impropriety could result from wrong selection of a spouse, elicit sexual orientations and availing one's self the opportunity to sexual harassment by either men or demons since the characteristic features and personality of children are fundamentally shaped by the social and spiritual dimensions of both parents. It is, therefore, very pertinent for a responsible man to choose a pious and virtuous woman for a soul mate. Going through the pages of Qur'ān and Ḥadīth it is discerned that certain spouses are not compatible on moral and religious purity. Therefore, religious individuals should not pitch tent among those people for both social and marital dealings so that their impropriety would not adversely affect the spiritual foundation of the virtuous parents and their children (Sa'eed, 2005).

Abd-Allah (2001) posits that either by genetic reason or parenting, children do acquire certain essential traits and qualities which eventually shape their personalities and natural dispositions from their parents, thus children who were born to idolatrous and fetishist parents find it very difficult to avoid some short of spell, unless they seriously repent. And those born to a family believed to have once kicked against a particular superstitious belief by going against an idol may for instance be pursued by some curse that may persist for generations to come, except it is seriously expiated through sincere reversion to Islam. This, therefore, presupposes that a necessary compatibility between spouses and proper upbringing are vital ingredients for peaceful matrimonial living and blessed children.

Mahmoud (1999) submits that often times, some parents are too busy providing the so-called "good life" for their offsprings on material and worldly plane, a nice house, sumptuous meal, colourful dresses, very palatial and befitting accommodation. To attain this, these parents work extra time out side home and do not have enough time spent together with their children so as to instil in them the basic foundation of their religious tenets, morality and wholesome characters. Indeed, if parents fail to establish a very strong and deep intimate rapport at home with their children before the attainment of puberty on the part of children, these children will automatically look for the relationships outside the home and if care is not taken, they may imbibe wrong ideas from outside and as such become wayward who will see their parents as no more than providers and obstacles and thorns in their lives.

Many parents do not make adequate and proper planning for the upbringing of their children while at childhood. This according to Ahmed (1993) they say: "they are still kids". To him, perfect characters are implanted in children right from the childhood and habits instilled in children while at a tender age are enduring and lasting. This is because the period of childhood is the time for nurturing moral character and wholesome behaviours. No spare time should be allowed to conflict with their training schedules. They should study and read Islamic literature and those other books that are relevant and useful for mundane gains. They should not be allowed uncontrolled access to read romantic novels, watching pornography, comics and books contradictory to Islam or fictitious and musical magazines.

Due respect for all and sundry should be taught to children. In the presence of parents, some children tease, scold and even disrespect elderly people considering such as a fun. Instead of parents putting these children in order, they regard it as an act of chivalry and bravery and as such the children grow older in this blameworthy act by becoming shameless and audacious. Parents are expected to teach their wards to respect elders, help them in their respective assignments, being

merciful to the orphans, widows, children and not to throw stones and destroy the houses of others thereby they would cultivate such praiseworthy and benevolent characters required of good feature leaders. Some mothers right on their laps teach children to hit others. This habit is an unwelcoming one for it quickly removes from the heart of children, respect for elderly. While playing with the children, frightening them with dangerous items such as knives, blades, matches, sharp objects should not come to play so that children on their own will not do same with other children (Ahmed, 1993).

Television is one of the evils of this present era and undoubtedly a strong destructive agency in the way of raising children. But quite a number of parents are unaware of this reality. Many parents allow unbridled freedom for their children to view television just to keep them busy and always at home. But as good as this appears it has been employed by the devil to turn the home environment into an avenue where nasty thoughts, actions and experiences have been let loose. A lot of obscene shows, cultural deterioration, moral filth and evil are exhibited on daily basis on the television screen. To liberate innocent growing up children from the brink of immorality then their allowance of television viewing must be consciously monitored.

Considering the spate of parental absenteeism at various homes these days, Abd-Allah (2001) submits that it may be an act of intentional sin against Allāh on the part of those parents who prefer spending most precious part of their days in idle talks at different joints and club houses while neglecting their religious and rewarding duty of parenting to the care of uncultured house helpers. This action of theirs breeds disharmony, absence of love and serious conflicts at home which will be counter-productive for the good of all in the family most especially the children. The aftermath effect of this can be seen in unsettled minds, discomfort among the children and their upbringing and even their education are seriously hampered. This absenteeism of spouse at home can also bring about an aura of lowness for the others and yearning for companionship becomes dominant thereby he/she becomes prey in the hand of devil who has plenty tricks and temptations to bring to bear.

Indeed, parents who are solely after their personal pleasures at the expense of proper upbringing of children are the cause and cause of all causes responsible for the disastrous end and ruined future of their children; their self-serving interests are the factors for domestic problems and miseries. Meanwhile, these parents are oblivious of the fact that children who are properly and genuinely reared and fortified via Islamic training stand the chance of benefiting their parents in the old age. Some parents raise up children by making them becoming enemies to their own enemies. They want them carry on with the hatred, antagonism, feud and unhealthy rivalry between them and some set of individuals. Instead of creating an atmosphere of peace and friendliness for their children, they subject them on arrival, to a life of suspicion and animosity. To forestall this inept attitude, the Prophet of Allāh (SAW) was reported to have said:

A man who perfectly maintains the ties of kingship is not he who recompenses the good done to him by his relatives; rather, he is the one who is on agreeable terms with those kin who have severed (their) bond with him. (Islamweb.net, 2022)

Fisabilillah Publications (2018) contends that many parents are in the habit of not being worried when they discover that their children are in possession of wealth, the source of which remains unknown such as expensive mobile phones, clothes, flashy cars, cool money, palatial building etc. Even some of these parents accept a form of bribe from their children like gift and other luxuries. This becomes a bribe on the part of the parents by failing to enquire as to the source of this wealth and not wanting the stoppage of unaccounted for wealth. Misplacement of priority has also crept

into the midst of parents by not attaching the expected importance to their children formative years. Instead of injecting them with beautiful moral training that would last for many years to come, they left them to stray away; thinking that the children at this stage of development are not ripe for educative instructions and therefore, utter foul, disparaging and abusive words in their presence. All along, these unguarded remarks become registered in the minds of the innocent children who later become deeply rooted in attacking peoples' personality through bad and hate speeches.

Discussions

The study conducted documentary surveys and observed that many children at their tender ages are left unattended to, proper and normal guidance have in away eluded them. In other words, these children found themselves in nauseating circumstances and their brighter future may shatter into shreds and therefore, suggests Islamic parenting guidelines to bring about proper upbringing of these children.

Different parenting styles and their related challenges

Some parents are in the habit of consistently defending their children even when it is clear that these children are very wrong; they do this because they do not want their children to be sober and sad for a single moment. This attitude contributes very significantly to immoral outlook on the part of the children. It is good for parents not to always side their children but they should be scolded and even severely warned against every committal of wrong. This would go a long way in making them obedient and responsible guys rather than paving the way for them to become irresponsible and bunch of criminals. Also, applying too much flexibility while raising children may make them get obsessed in doing wrong, involving in serious troubles and even becoming immoral, liars and thieves thereby living in perdition and enduring misery for many time to come. However, this is not to say that children should always be reprimanded and beaten whenever a mistake is committed. But they should be given fair hearing and be allowed to prove their innocence before the case is decided (Fisabilillah publications, 2018).

Parents nowadays do not train their children in both moral and religious instructions. They do not consider it an evil expression to declare publicly that their children do not show respect for elders and that they do not exhibit an iota of religious knowledge. They train their children and nurtur them by providing for their basic daily needs in terms of good food, best clothes, plenty money and take them to wherever they desire. Later on, these parents may not want to accept the blame of raising their children improperly insofar they provide them with basic amenities forgetting that the whole essence of parenting is to provide religious knowledge and education for the children while every other provision is secondary. Parents who do not instil religious and moral education in the children should not expect good and wholesome characters from them but instead western ways of life laden with height of disobedience and waywardness.

To corroborate this further, Muhammad, (n.d.) opines that in western nations during this present era, children do not longer take care of their ageing parents who once nourished and adequately provided for them. They consider the care of old people as too burdensome and therefore, drop them in the old age homes and continue with their luxurious life style having got rid of parents trouble. The same parents were the first to care for them, spend sleepless nights on them, and refused to eat when they, the children did not eat. Parents are to be aware and responsible to their noble tasks of parenting so that at the end of the day their children would not receive other education and influences from outside when they refused to train them in an Islamic way.

It is crystal that religious training is not given to many children right from infancy up to adulthood and as such they become unaware of their duties to parents and hence they drop them in old age homes. It is to be restated here that it is an inalienable right of every child upon his/her parents to be educated in an Islamic way. With this, the children would lead a righteous life and be dutiful to the

parents and even the position of the parents would be raised higher by Allāh for providing Islamic instructions necessary for raising good children.

Excessive love for children by parents has precluded their sense of distinction between what is lawful and unlawful, good and bad, right and wrong, due and undue and vice and virtue. These set of parents do not mind going extra miles, working overtime, and earning unlawful wealth to ensure that adequate provision of comfort and luxuries are made for their children. Too much love for children is censured in the below verse of the Glorious Qur'ān when it reads thus:

O ye who believe! Truly, among your wives and your children are (some that are) enemies to yourselves: so beware of them! But if ye forgive and overlook, and cover up (their faults), verily Allah is oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.

Your riches and your children may be but a trial: whereas Allah, with Him is the highest Reward. (Qur'an 64:14– 15)

The above quoted verses are all out to caution parents on the harms inherent in a very strong love and commitment to children wants and yearnings so much so that parents find it very difficult to observe moral standard, goodness and firmness required by their religion for children upbringing. Thus, parents need to seriously draw a line of demarcation between love of children and the love for the mechanisms of proper orientation and training.

Moral deterioration in the present society is much depicted by the activities of people in entertainment and film industry. This is also encouraged by some parents allowing their wards to read destructive books, magazines and newspapers and visiting destructive online sites. Wrong influences are imbibed by the children from the above bad outlets thereby they become sceptical about righteous acts and drags them from excellent moral characters to the abyss of moral corruption which in turn leads them to depravity since they do not have a strong resistance power such as deep moral training and mental acumen with which they can juxtapose between acceptable and unacceptable moral behaviours.

Another strong bait for moral corruption of this era is pornography which is all around primarily to bring about sexual stimulation. Indeed, the business of pornography is chiefly sexual objectification of female sex. Women are shown in pornographic display half naked and sensitive parts of their body exposed just to mimic every irritating acts and postures all in the name of advertisement. Exposure of children by parents to nudity orchestrated by pornography subjected them to abnormal sexual orientations. To get aroused, these children involve in some weird actions which ordinary plain nude cannot provide and as such they get entrapped in sexual addiction and performed other crimes like drugs, murder, rape, ritual killing, abduction, molestation and incest etc.

Moreover, at the very peak of improper children upbringing stands the indecent dress and Yahoo-Yahoo and Yahoo plus culture. Nudity most especially among female sex is a strong factor for corrosive decline of morality. Wearing provocative dresses by young ladies, women, and even some parents has become a part of trending issues all in the name of being civilized. What they put on these days heightened the base emotion in men and aggravated their sexual sensibilities and, therefore, it is a conscious invitation to irresponsibility, promiscuity, waywardness and moral depravity (Zafran, 2002). It is quiet worrisome, shameful and generally unacceptable to hear that some parents are happy that their children pitch tent with membership of diabolical Yahoo-Yahoo group. These parents do not stop at this, they go to the extent of looking for spiritual assistance for their wards to thrive well due to get rich quick syndrome that has characterized our society. These children together with their parents are deriving pleasure in the human-inflicted misfortune of other

fellow human beings. By so doing, they are knowingly paving the way for their catastrophic misery, debilitating experience and dehumanizing tragic end.

Islamic parenting guide for children upbringing

Marriage establishment is as old as man; it is known practice of the Prophets and Messengers of Allāh a religious and meritorious deed. In Islam, the place of marriage in raising virtuous children is quite pivotal and very central. To support the above, the Prophet (SAW) was quoted to have said:

By Allāh, I am more submissive to Allāh and more afraid of Him than you; yet I fast and break my fast, I do sleep and I also marry women. So he who does not follow my tradition in religion, is not from me (not one of my followers) [Sahih al-Bukhari, 5063].

Indeed, the religion of Islam has laid great emphasis and deeply enjoined parents to raise children in a perfect Islamic way when the Messenger of Allāh succinctly reiterated:

All of you are shepherds and every one of you is responsible for his herd. A man is the shepherd over his family and is responsible for his herd. A woman is the shepherd over the house of her husband and is responsible for her herd. A servant is the shepherd over the wealth of his master and is responsible for his herd. So all of you are shepherd and every one of you is responsible for his herd. (Sahih Muslim, HadeethEnc.com)

In Islam, training of a child begins immediately after his arrival. For this reason, parents are charged to always speak good words in the presence of the children irrespective of their ages. At the formative period of their existence coupled with the fact that children at this stage are in a pure state, parents are to quickly direct their attention to Islamic way of life by uttering statement like Allāh is the Creator, the Fashioner, the Provider, the Owner of livelihood, the Giver of profit, loss, honour, dishonour, wealth and riches and nothing happens in the high heavens and on the earth surface without His knowledge and permission. In fact, uttering the Islamic beliefs system above always and always in the vicinity of the children make them imbibe and practise the Islamic beliefs and as such it would be very difficult for these beliefs to be easily expunged from their minds even at their old age. For this, Imām Hassan Al-Basri (2022) said: *seeking knowledge at a young age is like engraving on a stone.*

Having children presupposes that parents are on the verge of preparing for a charming brighter future for them. They hope among other things that their children are going to be responsible, religious, apple of parental eyes and laden with noble characters. In truth, this can better be accomplished only if the right method from the onset in an enabling environment is put in place. Parents are to note that proper spiritual upbringing is more beneficial than the wordily and physical upbringing. Inasmuch as the environment prior to the arrival of a child is important so also is the environment into which he is borne into for his perfect upbringing and inculcation of wholesome morals. The Islamic training of a child starts from his conception in the mother's womb via the types of thoughts and ideas she nurses, the feelings she has through the texts she reads, through the company she keeps and perhaps the type of expression she listens to. Afterwards, the actual training begins right there in the mother's lap the first school for the child in Islam (Ahmad, 1993).

To sustain a balanced and healthy growth of children most especially during pregnancy according to Muhammad (n.d.), terrifying images of deformed children or animals should be avoided by

pregnant mothers while the sight of beautiful children, flowers and smell of charming fragrances are encouraged. In the same way, studying bad books, going through bad thoughts, evil intentions, bad habits and committing crimes should be eschewed for the fear that these vices may have an overbearing influence on the unborn child later in life. This may be true because the mother's nervous system has an influence over the baby over all systems. The baby has his own independent system yet he is being carried and sustained through the mother's womb and therefore, her thinking, feeling and state of the mind influence the child's system. However, it is highly recommended for the mother to always be in the company of the righteous individuals, read good texts like Qur'ān; Ḥadīth, other Islamic literatures and to be at such places where good and fascinating news are listened to. Good feelings and thoughts should be the watch words of the mother while grudges, malice and anxiety should be avoided; this is due to the fact that the kinds of thoughts within the reach of the mother have effect on the child's disposition.

Only through pious parenting (moral and spiritual upbringing) can a Nigerian child be properly brought up and safeguarded against any form of evil. In Islam, every child is born a Muslim and in a pure state; it is the parents and the environment into which he is borne into that shape his future disposition. For this reason, before parents can expect their children to be good, they themselves must first and foremost be good and practising goodness. They should set good examples before the children, if they, the parents are good, the children would also be good and vice – versa. In confirming this logic, a popular poem reads: “the parent is like a mirror, the reflection it gives, the child adopts”.

Sahih (2016) argues that the entire personality of children depends to a large extent on the type of training, instruction, life style, an environment provided by the parents. The nature of the home and the entire neighbourhood where children are reared contribute to their overall progress or retrogress. If the home is Islamic in nature, then the children stand a good stead of being religious and responsible but if the home environment is the other way round, then the children are inept and corrupted. Absence of Islamic aura in children upbringing makes the children prone to copying immoral acts that are all around us by watching television and listening to bad songs, they will definitely want to follow signers and T.V. celebrities as their role models. Children who always listen to the words of Allāh and guidance of the Prophet (SAW) would showcase good qualities and expected manners while those that follow hip-hop stars become irresponsible and live a fake life.

Similarly, Sa'eed (2005) observes that raising good children begins right from the selection of a spouse. Nuptial knot must not be tied with unbelievers, paganists, and promiscuous ones. In the same token, pre-marital sex and extra marital affairs should not be taught of let alone involving in it. The sperm organ and ovary pot of both the parents must be clean and pure so as to ensure the physical and spiritual purity of the children. The by-product of unlawful filthy union would simply inherit and actually display the animality of their parents. These children will be hunted by the illegality of their conception and if by design they are not aborted, they definitely would not escape bad influences of their origin and source. In a nutshell, for both the physical and spiritual essence of children to be ensured, parents should do away from pre-wedding and extramarital sexual dealings.

Moreover, those children who listen to parents fabrication of events, words of deceit and frivolous jokes laden with lies may later in life become unrepentant liars and dishonest children. To achieve protection of children chastity and purity of their being, Islam warns parents against tutoring children in the acts of deceit so as not to corrupt their fragile innocence. Parents should be abreast of the influence their actions and in actions could have on the physiology of their sinless children. And at the same time, they should have a good knowledge of the type of school they enrolled their children and the kind of friends they keep. This is because to a large extent these two agents are character shaper, developer and architect of children moral orientation in life. Parents, school, teachers and play group are very central in raising children. Hence, apart from being good, parents

should be extra vigilant in monitoring their children school environment, who their teachers are and what type of peer group they associate with. Children should be get off bad company, evil friends, and bad companions thereby the powerful influence of the parents is not mortgaged for the detrimental influence of bad social friends.

Educating children to dress in accordance with the Islamic prescription right from childhood plays an impressive role in their future life. Children should be allowed to see that their appearance tells the type of persons they are. Those who appear indecently copying the western life styles see nothing wrong in such shameless appearances while those that put on acceptable dress would not mimic the present waywardness. Thus, parents should make sure to see that children appear in honourable and modest dress. In fact, the best way to make children learn good habits is for the parents to imbibe and practice such manners, children will in no distant time copy what they see their parents doing. Parents are the first and best role models for children so they should cultivate and practice the same behaviour they want their children to exhibit.

Furthermore, the tender love of the mother and the affectionate character building and disciplinary guidance of a father are vital ingredients that are indispensable in rearing righteous children who would be responsible enough for their well-being and contribute to the development of the society where they live; rather than becoming irresponsible, lazy and profligate who always cut corners. In other words, the use of rod should not be spared so as not to spoil the children. To emphasise the use of rod in bringing up children, the Prophet (SAW) said:

command your children to pray when they become seven years old, and beat them for it (prayer) when they become ten years old; and arrange their beds (to sleep) separately.
(Sunan Abi Dawud, 495)

It is crystal clear from the above quoted ḥadīth that out of love parents should not fail to use rod in the beginning and when children get rotten. To spare the rod and spoil the children is no kindness at all.

Morestill, Sahih (2016) opines that raising up children in a manner that would be in tandem with the generally acceptable moral code of behaviour is greatly tasking and challenging enterprise. Therefore, parents, the first children trainers must understand the peculiar nature of each child so as not to err in training them. The parents must also be abreast of the very many successful ways of raising moral children, the knowledge of the parents should also consist of knowing that each stage of child's development carries different traits and different methods of arresting each stage for a balanced education and training must not be elusive from the parents.

Lastly, the type of Islamic education that should be given to children include Qur'ān and Ḥadīth knowledge but it is by no means limited to this. The education and training given to children must be such that it develops a complete Islamic personality in them and brings out necessary leadership skills expected of a good leader. They should be educated to become leaders of our society rather than adherents of wrong foreign ideas. They must be strongly aware of their duties to Allāh, the fellow human beings including other creatures (Dar Abul-Qasim, 2012).

Conclusion

The foregoing expositions establish that Islam as a religion has given primary station to family being the place where generations are raised and the future of every nation depends on the condition of the family. Thus, concerted efforts should be on the top gear to perfect our families so as to usher in a society that would be peaceful, secured, harmonious, and good for nurturing righteous children who would be the coolness of the parents' eyes.

For children to be able to understand perfectly well the rights of the parents, the elderly and every member should be seriously trained in religious education and morality right from childhood and upon growing up they become use to it. Many children of nowadays who do not respect parents and elderly are carelessly left unattended to by their own biological parents at a time when proper training was mostly needed by these children. Parents should come up with a priority list between educating children in all round education and preference for worldly things and profane greed for materialism.

The budding generation of children is a trust which Allāh has put under the care of parents, teachers and the elderly in general. Thus, the first assignment of the above mentioned stakeholders in raising children is to save them from every form of ignorance that can be counter-productive in their life journey. After this, they should be exposed to different doses of spiritual and intellectual training thereby they become righteous members of the society. To accomplish this, there should be sincere concern and sympathetic attitude for their safety and well-being. Good pieces of advice must be timely given to them just to do well in the assignments ahead.

The concern of Islam as a complete way of life is the wellness of human society of which family set up is the indispensable essential. Parents are therefore, encouraged to bring up children well and properly, provide for them happy home, care, love, comfort, the basic necessities of life and all round education an essential foundation for all future instruction.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following are recommended for a proper upbringing of Nigerian children:

- First and foremost, to salvage nowadays children from misguidance and waywardness, religious instructions and good morals that are vital raw materials for a healthy living and factor for the good of this world and Hereafter must be provided for by the parents and guardians.
- Much love and affection must be shown by the parents to their children in the course of raising them. Through this, the children will experience healthy home environment; they should be praised and gifts be presented after a positive performance; there should be expression of approval via prompt smile, cares or a kiss. These actions and many more are desirable acts of love essential for producing healthy and good children.
- Children educators are required to cooperate in the effort to teach children commendable qualities and good attitudes towards Allāh and His Messenger and every individual especially those who have rights over them such as relatives and neighbours. They need to be educated in good qualities of righteousness, such as assistance to others, sacrifice, chivalry and generosity.
- To raise children in the Qur'ānic way, that is, in the way of Allāh, the parents have to be present parents and not absent one. They have to be there for their children without transferring the duty of parenting to those house helpers who are genuinely naïve in the true acts of children upbringing. They should be selective in the choice of career opportunity. Irrespective of the promising prospects of the job, any job that would not make either of the parents present at home should be jettisoned, this is because the “cartoon” cannot and would not do the parenting tasks.
- Every stakeholder in children upbringing should try not to express negative utterances when correcting wrong behaviours but through a charming and constructive way. Children problems should be listened to and discussed so as to help them out. They should be charged to take active role in finding lasting solutions to problems.
- Through kindness and gentleness, parents could inject right upbringing into children by instilling good attitude and character firmly in their hearts so that they would be able to

subdue corrupt whims and desires. With this, they will not feel comfortable except with things that help them stick and glue to the path of rectitude and despise unrighteous behaviours. Absence of kindness in raising children brings about harshness, alienation and above it all stubbornness and disobedience or the prevalence of fear which generates attitude of lying and deceitfulness on the part of children.

- Parents must first of all adhere themselves to the attitude and behaviour they are trying to introduce into their children. For instance, it is not right enough for the parents to forbid children from lying when they themselves are chronic liars. A good home environment, that is, an environment where doing good deeds is praised and the one who does it is respected whereas bad deeds and their doers are criticized and seriously rebuked should be created.
- Parents should not only be concerned with the provision of good clothes, delicious meal and a comfortable home environment. They should also spend on means of acquiring good attitude and proper morals.
- Lastly, parents should build a strong relationship between Allāh and their children by drawing their attention to Him, offer sincere supplication to Him to make their children righteous and instil in them right belief that Allāh is Alpha, Omega and the Enabler.

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