

PERCEPTION RE-ENGINEERING IN MORAL VALUES AMONG THE YOUTH

By

Okebukola, Alexander Olufemi Afolabi & Dairo Afolunsho Olalekan (Ph.D)
Department of Christian Religious Studies and Philosophy
Redeemer's University, Ede, Osun State.
Okebukola@Gmail.Com

Abstract

Children grow to become youth who are generally seen as the leaders of tomorrow. As such, great care and value are given to how they are raised. The societal hopes, aspirations and visions of the future, from the dream which is anchored on the physical, mental and affective energy and skills of the youth is of paramount importance in the dreams of the Nigerian nation through moral value and religious education approaches that harness their potential to the realization of such dream. Therefore, the paper x-rayed Nigerian youths and their attitudes in life's experiences and a caution to build on moral and value system.

Keywords: Youth, development, moral value.

Introduction

Youths are the engine room of any society; they are the drivers of any developmental trend and activity in a society and major determinants of the extent of growth and development. This assertion is a motivating factor to many elderly people whose interest have been aroused on how to deal with youths. Some elders would sponsor youths to vie for state elections, to inherit some property, many senators, governors are now giving their positions to their children i.e. many other offices are relinquished for them to occupy believing that they look stronger and energetic than the elders. (Anasi 2010).

Apart from all these, government also shares part of the notion of confidence reposed in the youths as agile and untiring. This undoubtedly must have called for the reason why the youths are recruited into the security service of the nation. Njoku (2015) observed that many youths have become soldiers, policemen, military police; police attached to criminal investigation departments, Nigerian Navy, Nigerian Army and a host of others. It is quite unfortunate, that as agile and dynamic as the youths are in their employments on the same level, they have been active in some other illegal businesses through which they become irresponsible and accumulate ill-gotten wealth. What could we say about youths expected to render selfless service to the nation through police force but being found among armed robbery gang? It is very disheartening that each time the hoodlums are apprehended youths are always the culprits.

The Concept: Youth.

Youth may be defined as the time when an individual is young specifically the period between childhood and maturity. The youth age group has been classified to fall between 15 and 24-year-old (UN, 2017). The use of chronological marker has defined youth to the age of 40 such as in Nepal. The Nigeria National Youth Policy (2009) defines youth as persons within the age bracket of 18 to 35 years while in the United States youth is defined as those between 14 and 25 years. So, the definition of youth cannot be tied to a specific chronological age. Youth could be linked to biological process of development ranging from puberty to adulthood when one outgrows the psycho-socio-cultural challenges of adolescence to emerge as an adult.

Adulthood according to Onifade (2004) in many socio-cultural settings in Africa indicates the assumption of specific social roles and responsibilities that weans the adolescent from total parental control. So, any individual without prejudice to age could still be regarded as a youth when he/she cannot be independent of parental control and has not been capable of distinct social responsibility while still relying on the family emotionally, economically and socially.

Youth is also defined as a particular mindset of attitude, physical attributes and psycho-social perception of life issues which could be as influenced by peers, lifestyle, gender and culture (Ralph 2000). Analytically, whenever we make reference to the youth what do we actually mean? Is the youth in the mind? Is it chronological? Is it a mindset? Is it in the physical appearance of the body? If yes, there are numbers of person whose physical appearance negate their class in the society, some are naturally dwarfs, appear older than their age. If youths are expected to grow till tomorrow then everyone is still growing, hence, the leader of youths, we see a man who is about sixty years old still claiming to be youth or the leader of youths. The third variable is tomorrow as suggested by Ndubuisi (1991).

What do we simply mean by tomorrow? Is it one day, is it a year? Tomorrow can imply on the day after today. Tomorrow can also imply the future. Everyone hopes for a better tomorrow. Youth are the young ones expected to grow till tomorrow. The youths in any society are an embodiment of tomorrow's promise, but in Nigeria, the issue of our youth as builders and leaders of tomorrow cannot be adequately harnessed unless we address the issue of unemployment, crime, cyber-crime, corruption and lack of socio/cultural values in the society.

Concept of Morals and Values

Though closely related, there is a difference between morals and values. Morals can be classified as the values that a person is born with. Morals can best be described as the structure of beliefs that are taught to an individual so that he can have the ability to differentiate between right and wrong, decent and wicked, allowed and forbidden. It is upon these moral values that the person is judged in the society, because they are visible and are considered as the social value of the person. As a youth, the moral character of a person becomes his identity, this identity becomes very important in business because it is what the consumer regards as the image of the business which eventually impacts their purchase decision and preference. The major difference between morals and values according to Arthur (2002) is motivation.

Morality motivates a person to do good in life, encourages the person to lead a good life in all best possible manner, but values are within a person and completely depends on his or her own choice.

In his own view, Raz (2000) see values as instincts, perception or gut feeling within a person. The relationship is that morals are formed with the help of values. So if values are missing, then morals will not exist. Values are earned, developed from the society, whereas morals are the system of beliefs, Dzurgba (2003).

Ruwa (2001) argued that right values have major influences on a person's behaviour and attitude and serve as broad guidelines in all situations. Moral values such as respect, kindness, honesty, courage, self-discipline, compassion, generosity are taught to be imbibed by our youth to enhance character development and promote good moral upbringing and moral health in them. Most parents want to instil these kinds of values in their children. Doing so, we protect them from potentially negative societal influences and lay the foundation for them to become good citizens.

Ojo (2014) suggested that in order to make our youths responsible society members, we must teach them moral values such as honesty, loyalty, respect, self-reliance, gratitude, personal responsibility and courtesy. Youths are the next generation of leaders in our society, so it is important to keep the big perspective in their minds.

Haynes (2007) admitted that values indicate the ideal way of doing things, acceptable standards and living virtuous life in society. The positive values that serve different societies along the cultural beliefs and values in Nigeria in which our youth must imbibe include respect and honour accorded to parents, elders, men and women of honour. Dignity, love and protection of family name has been the ways of life in the traditional setting but contemporary society is lack of respect for parents, elders, men and women by our youth and there is inordinate pursuit of material acquisition and the worship of money . (Achebe 1983)

To Uka (1989), the youth has turned the society to another "level of fair of foul. Life in sum, 419 of various dimensions and magnitude", to him society is based on high level of distrust, suspicion and everybody has become a suspect of misplaced value.

Akinpelu (2015) argued that moral education has been eluded in schools from this point of view, education has affected the value system in Nigeria as certificates or degree are awarded to those found worthy in learning without worthy character. Bible 2 Chronicle chapter 34:1-7 gave an exemplary life of Joshua, when he was 16years old, he sought God in earnest, dedicated his life to Him and zealously served God.

Our youth should emulate Josiah's lifestyle and serve God, do away with vices of this world, most of them do not have God's interest at heart, that is the reason many of them are into Yahoo Scheme or Yahoo + (plus) syndrome.

Ecclesiastes Chapter 12:1 also admonished our youth to remember their creator in the days of their youth, with this in mind, it will make them a good citizen and a better leader in the future.

Timothy 1, 4:12 also encouraged the youth to be a good example by living an exemplary life with good character via conversation, charity and faith. Youths are advised to do away with social vices of the society, they should have it at the back of their mind that, troubles and challenges would eventually come but they should depend on God for solutions rather than looking for a short cut.

Research Methodology

The researchers adopted theological and documentary methods in this study, opinions of scholars expressed in books, journals, periodicals and religious scriptures teachings coupled with internet sources were all considered for the discussions and justifications that follow.

Degeneration of religious values

The influence of religion on the value system in our society cannot be overestimated. (Uka 1989) opines that missionaries were rated as guardians of African youths and as source of change agent of several typologies in our society. But in Nigeria today, over secularization of religion has led to the worship of materialism which has led to moral decadence in the society influenced by the moral degrading of values through religious personnel in our society. The problem of religion is the survival of hetero sexual marriages with the problem of homosexual marriages being legalized by some religious sects in the world, it is then obvious that value system in Nigeria has been tramped under the carpet by some religious institutions.

Loss of economic values

The economic situations in the country have degenerated to the level of creating moral values in the lives of youths and parents that cannot meet up with their financial obligation, therefore, the economic situations have prompted youths and adults to indulge in the acts of cheating, stealing by trick, bribery and corruption that ravage the country now. Everybody wants to get rich quickly and this syndrome has eaten deep into the society which makes youths engage in all vices. The parents who are to train up their children now spend lesser time with their children as they have to pursue material wealth to sustain their families.

Sigh and Nath (2008) observed that unrestricted and unrestrained entry of foreign films, pornographic film and publications, satellite broadcast and other means modern technology have great influence (positive and negative) impact on Nigerian value system. These gadgets were acquired but their use are hardly controlled or regulated thereby allowing children and youth to watch films meant for adults which later have negative values in our society.

Suggested Solutions

There is a lot of indiscipline in every facet of life in the country. Integrity is no longer cherished by many youths. The get rich quick syndrome and pursuit of easy money has reduced the dignity of labour. There is high level of religious intolerance, kidnapping and terrorism. There is therefore a great need for value re-orientation and development strategy to instil the virtues of honesty, hard work selfless service, moral rectitude and patriotism into the young ones. The re-orientation on materialistic needs and never ending lust to learn more by putting less effort can be exchanged for value-based life through inculcation of an attitude that earning money is for living a reputable life and for helping others who are less privileged.

It is expressed that parents should train their children, monitor, guide their behaviour patterns at home and determine the kind of films, novels and association the youths are exposed to. Job creation must be a central objective of government policy by providing enabling environment for private sector to develop entrepreneurs which will enhance job creation. Also, government should endeavour to establish schools and skill acquisition centres closer to the isolated places, slums, under the bridge across the country, mechanic villages and other strategic places where youths can be helped to acquire skills and education.

Religious groups in Nigeria should stress the religious values in their teachings and preaching in churches and mosques to integrate the youths with cultural and moral values for the upliftment of national development and re-orientation.

The media has very important role to play in disseminating information to the youths and the general public on the effects of negative values and need for hard work, fair play, self-employment. Workshops, seminars, symposia which will go a long way in repositioning the positive values should be organized for the youths from time to time.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It has been established in this paper that there are problems with our youths in respect to moral values disposition. The study revealed that our societal values have been taken over by social vices such as kidnapping, drug trafficking, embezzlement, human trafficking and prostitution, corruption to mention but just a few, the citizens pursue wealth without knowledge, without character, pleasure without conscience, commerce without morality, worship without sacrifice and politics without principles.

This study therefore recommended that re-orientation of values in the youths would promote national image, development, respect for human life and corporate values. The youths would then imbibe the culture of hard work and productivity, wealth creation, generating employment values and entrepreneurship which would make them contribute significantly to the development of the nation.

Recommendations

- The following recommendations will make the youth productive and responsible as a result of right moral values disposition.
- Total integration of the youth into the immediate community and the Nigerian society will help the youth to be conversant with the enormity of the challenges of nation building through religious re-engineering.
- Vocational classes should be included in school activities, so that skills could be learnt and when the need arises, such knowledge could be used to generate income, especially when there is shortage of jobs.
- The young ones should also be guided and given some vocational, educational and religious counselling on what to study, in the higher institution and expected behaviours..
- Parents should endeavour to be good role models. There is no better way to teach the youth than being a role model.

- Youth must encourage themselves by interacting with one another and creating social networks that can easily strengthen them when faced with moral issues and other challenges.

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