

# INDIGENOUS EDUCATION AND PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY IN CONTEMPORARY TIV SOCIETY: ISSUES AND PERSPECTIVES

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## **Abstract**

*The role of the parents towards the training of their God-given children cannot be overemphasised. The parents are the first teachers to their children and they are responsible for the moral, psychological and social training and development of their children. This explains why the Bible admonishes parents to “train the child in the way he/she should go, and when he/she is old, he/she will not depart from it” (Prov. 22:6). This implies that an irresponsible parent would necessarily nurture irresponsible children. In Traditional Africa too, parents are saddled with the responsibility of inculcating the traditional form of education/skills to the children to be meaningful citizens of the society; more so, that traditional education is a functional form of education which equips the person with requisite skills that make him/her self-reliant. This paper uses both the primary and secondary sources for data collection. The study is motivated by the increasing negligence of parental responsibility in contemporary Tiv society where parents have abdicated their responsibility in lieu of materialism and other socio-economic, educational and political challenges which take the bulk of their time. The resultant effect is that there is crisis and instability in the family as the children in the absence of the parents have tended to imbibe negative values from nannies/baby sitters or peers, films and the internet. This has produced criminals, thugs, cultists, prostitutes and the likes that have constituted a serious nuisance to the whole of contemporary Tiv society. The paper calls on the complacent parents of contemporary Tiv society to go back to the strict discipline of children noticeable in Traditional Tiv society which produced*

*disciplined children who became successful farmers, fishermen , housewives, artisans, wrestlers, carpenters, blacksmiths and other fields of human endeavour.*

“Train a child in the way he[she] should go, and when he [she] is old he(she) will not turn from it” (Prov. 22:6)

Marriage, family and parenting are related social phenomenon. This is because when a person attains the matured age and marries, a family is begun and if the union is blessed with offspring, parenting comes in. The task of training a child(ren) is enormous and a moral obligation sanctioned by African Religion, Christianity, Islam and secular laws. A child (ren) that is brought up properly never departs from that which he/she imbibed from the parents in the earliest parts of his/her life. It is therefore a moral obligation for parents not to abandon their God given children after birth; but nurture them into maturity as responsible citizens first to themselves, their families and the society at large.

As the legally recognised father or mother of their children; parents are responsible for the health, financial support, education, social and moral wellbeing of their children. It is therefore irresponsible and criminal for parents to fail to provide support for their children (*Grolier Int’l Encyclopedia* vol.15:84). In addition to the responsibility of catering for their children, parents also have the right to punish their children with moderation as a means of correcting them.

Ankut (2003:3) was therefore right when she stated that: “the duty of parents is to ensure, at all times, that the best interest of the child(ren) is of basic concern to their parents”. Thus, the parents are to secure, within their abilities and financial capacities, conditions of living necessary to the child’s development.

In traditional Tiv society, parents ensured that their children were properly brought up socially and morally, using indigenous/traditional education as a tool. Towards this, the children had enough food to eat, shelter and clothing as well as their medical needs which were provided by the parents. The children brought up in this context grew up into matured adults being useful to themselves and society generally.

However, in the contemporary Tiv society with its presumable level of enlightenment, some parents seem to have abandoned the noble role of proper upbringing of their children in the right perspective. Tiv society is worse for it with low moral rectitude, disrespect for elders and constituted authority, cultism, thuggery, armed robbery, prostitution etc as the hull back effects.

Parents in contemporary Tiv society for want of time and the pursuit of materialism have completely abdicated their duties to their children to others; hiding under the canopy of being busy. Seeing the importance of responsibility in society, Capsules of Destiny Magazine (n.d: 1) admonishes parents:

Never delegate your child's upbringing to others... we live in days where parents are getting too busy for their children. Children hardly know their parents and the parents hardly know their children. Children are [today] raised by nannies, teachers and others. To delegate your children's upbringing to others is to leave them at the mercy of the values and principles of others.

The paper examines indigenous education, parental responsibility and contemporary Tiv society: Issues and Perspectives. It is divided into subthemes for easy assimilation. It also has an introduction, conceptual issues, parental responsibility in Traditional/contemporary Tiv society and the effects of parents abdicating their responsibility in contemporary Tiv society. The way forward is sought and a conclusion drawn.

## **Conceptual Issues**

### **Indigenous Education**

Education is a lifelong process through which the individual acquires skills from birth to death. This implies the experiences an individual acquires in the whole of his/her life time. Thus, Iheagwam (2008:21) inferred that: *Education is the transmission of what is worthwhile to those who become committed to it. It involves knowledge and understanding and some sort of cognitive perspective which is not inert.* Indigenous education is also known as Traditional, or folk education.

According to Anibueze (2005:130), indigenous education is a life-long process in which an individual learns the values, cultural norms, skills, language, habits or roles of his/her own society or community. This could occur from an individual's daily experiences, which take the process of listening, looking, seeing, observing, doing and acting or taking roles. The resources easily influence him/her from his/her family, neighbours, age groups, peer groups. This form of education starts from the child's family extending to the larger society.

Therefore, Indigenous education basically transmits to a next generation those skills, facts and standards of moral and social conduct that adults deem to be necessary for the next generation. It has sometimes included: the use of corporal punishment to maintain discipline or punish errors. Furthermore, traditional education is gender-oriented in the sense that girls are taught female oriented roles such as cooking, sweeping, weeding, and taking care of the home, that would make them

future wives and mothers. The boys are taught male oriented roles such as farming, hunting, fishing, smiting, the art of warfare etc that would make them future husbands, fathers, family heads and community leaders.

Generally, children started to learn about their physical environment as soon as they learn to play games with clay or wooden animals, twigs, grasses etc. The games usually reflect real-life experiences such as making yam mounds or heaps among the Tiv. When the child became old enough, (age varies from community to community), they started a long period of apprenticeship by learning and doing either under the guidance of their father/mother, siblings, or under other specialised craftsmen. Also, special skills such as medicine, music, crafts, tree felling, hunting, and metallurgy were acquired through more formal apprenticeship from specialised persons such as religious leaders during initiation ceremonies. Indigenous education has four characteristics viz:

- (i) It is completely effective, i.e. the child learns all he/she needs to know to become a functioning adult.
- (ii) Though the education involves harsh trials and ordeals, every child who survives them is allowed to graduate.
- (iii) The cost of education (for instance the praying of masters/religious leaders) is not prohibitive.
- (iv) Children/pupils are not totally withdrawn from the work force.

Similarly, Indigenous education is unique in the sense that in the absence of written records, the curriculum is preserved in the memory of older generation with the help of tales, proverbs, religious ceremonies, songs, dances, games etc in what can be termed as “folk media”. These mechanisms show how skills are acquired, practiced and presented, and how information, whether new or old, is passed onto the young as well as the old. Anibueze (2005:130) contended that the aim of traditional education is to ultimately acquaint the individual with the culture of his/her society. According to him, informal learning inculcates high discipline and maintenance of family tradition, values and norms in the younger ones. Each member of the community becomes his/her brother/sister’s keeper thus, demonstrating that the community is communalistic in nature. This makes the education of a child the responsibility of every member of the community. Re-iterating the aim and purpose of Indigenous education in African societies, Ekoja and Akume (2008:2) stressed that:

*Functionalism was the major guiding principle. Education was for an immediate induction into the society and preparation for adulthood. It particularly emphasised social responsibility, job orientation, political participation and spiritual and moral values. Activities such as wrestling served as recreation while secret cults served as institutions of higher education.*

Functional education was undoubtedly a great legacy of Indigenous education in Africa. The curriculum was relevant to the needs of the society such that unemployment through the search for white collar job was very minimal as very few groups of people roamed the villages and towns in search of job. It may therefore, not be out of tune to postulate that traditional/Indigenous education was virile, relevant and responsive to the needs and aspirations of the Africans who engaged in it before the introduction of western education (Okafor et'al 2003:41).It is sad to note that this form of education is today being neglected and faces the dilemma of near abandonment courtesy of the influence of western education.

Fafunwa (1974) opined that though the objective of traditional education was to produce individuals who were respectable, skilled and conformed to the social order of the day; the seven cardinal goals of traditional education include:

- (i) **Development of Physical Skills:** Through some physical activities, the child acquired physical skills such as crawling, walking, running, playing, jumping, climbing on chairs/tables, dancing and even fighting which may not be necessarily taught to the child. These physical activities ensured that the child developed physical strength and ability, which would enable him/her to cope with the responsibility of adulthood.
- (ii) **Character Development:** As the main objective of traditional education, the parents, siblings and other members of the community actively participate in the education of the child who is taught and encouraged to be sociable, honest, courageous, humble, persevering and of good behaviour at all time.
- (iii) **Respect for Elders and those in Constituted Authority:** In African culture, elders and those who are in authority are particularly respected. Therefore, children/the youth are trained to know some special polite greetings or salutations for parents, elders, peers, chiefs, visitors for the different times of the day and different occasions. This is accompanied by physical gestures such as bending low, kneeling and genuflection.
- (iv) **Development of the Intellect:** Traditional education encouraged intellectual growth and development through observation, imitation and participation. Other methods of enhancing intellectual development include the use of proverbs and their interpretation, cult ceremonies, poems, praise singing, games of counting etc. Through these, the child learns the local geography and history of his/her place and becomes familiar with the hills and valleys, the fertile and non-fertile soils as well as the seasons for rain, harmatan, hunting, fishing and their duration. Elders of each household transmit this knowledge.

- (v) **Vocational Training:** Children in Traditional African societies were given vocational training in the following areas:
  - a. **Agriculture** - covering farming, fishing, and animal care and rearing.
  - b. **Trade and Crafts** - covering hunting, carving, sculpturing, weaving, painting, smiting, building, barbing, drumming, dancing and acrobatics etc.
  - c. **Professions** - Such as doctors, priests, witch-doctors, medicine men/women, exorcists, mediums, diviners, judges, administrators and other form of security personnel, (Ekoja and Akume 2008:11).
  
- (vi) **Communal Spirit:** Indigenous/Traditional African education teaches the youth to appreciate his/her role as a member of his/her immediate community and the society at large. Every member of the community is expected to show some love to the child till he/she grows up to join his/her age grade who most often than not, are engaged in communal work. Moreover, the child is expected to assist his/her relatives and neighbours who may be in difficulty. In the African communal system, everyone in the society is his/her brother's keeper.
  
- (vii) **Promotion of Cultural Heritage:** Traditional education attaches much importance to the perpetuation of the African culture. Thus, the child is born and he/she grows up within the cultural heritage of his/her people and imbibes it. Culture rather than being taught is acquired through observation and imitation. The youth therefore watches religious ceremonies, rites/rituals and funerals and gradually assimilate how they are performed.

**Tiv:** The name Tiv conveys a triple meaning; first and foremost, it is the name of the progenitor or ancestor of the Tiv. Secondly, it refers to an ethnic group and thirdly, it is the language spoken by them. The Tiv are of the semi-Bantu linguistic affinity. Adegba (2015:83) infers that the name Tiv therefore, represents the sum total of the Tiv personality, his ways of life, worldview, religious beliefs and cultural practices. According to Hembe (2003:28), about 3 million of the approximately 5 million Tiv people live in Benue state. The rest of them are scattered in parts of Taraba, Plateau, Nasarawa and Cross River state. There are also Tiv farmers in Niger, Ondo, Ekiti states as well as Abuja and the Republic of Cameroon.

The Tiv occupy the Northern and Southern parts of the middle course of the Benue River and its tributary the River Katsina-Ala. Gerna (1995:1) explained that Tivl and (*tar* Tiv) lies between the latitudes of 7<sup>0</sup> and 8<sup>0</sup> north and between longitudes 8<sup>0</sup> and 10<sup>0</sup> east. However, Shishima (1999:57-59) puts this at approximately 6<sup>0</sup> – 30<sup>0</sup> north and from 8<sup>0</sup> – 10<sup>0</sup> east longitude. Tiv land covers an area of 29,300 square kilometers which covers the 14 Local Government Areas, (in Benue state alone). The

Tivsh are boundaries with Cross River State on the South and with Taraba and Nasarawa in the North; in the West by Otukpo, Apa and Oju Local Government Areas of Benue state and in the East by the Republic of Cameroon.

The Tiv are a deeply religious people who belief in a monotheistic deity; the Supreme Being *Aond*, *akombo* (rituals), *Ujijingi* (spirits) and *tsav* (witchcraft). The Tiv are known for their deep egalitarian social base, which is rooted in their indigenous religion. By this, Gbenda (2005:187) observed that: the conduct or ethical standard of one person is capable of affecting others positively or negatively. This attracts punishment from the Supreme Being and the ancestors. Traditional Tiv society is noted for its deep respect for elders and those in constituted authority.

**Parental Responsibility:** The Grolier International Encyclopedia (vol.15:84) looks at the concept ‘parent’ as the legally recognized father or mother of a person [child]. In a narrow sense, the concept parent can be reduced only to encompass the biological fathers/mothers. Also, individuals who have adopted children are also considered to be parents.

From the above explanation, the status of parenthood results in certain rights and duties existing between parents and children. Invariably, the father/mother are the natural guardians of their children. This position takes us to our subject of concern-parental responsibility. As Igba-Luga (2010:43) succinctly observed:

*The upbringing, discipline and education of children is the primary responsibility of parents and other grown up members of the family. Economic needs of the children and their socialization are also met by the family which they belong. This responsibility of parents towards their children is summed up as parenthood.*

The implication of the above quotation is that parents have authority and responsibility to guide to full maturity their offspring(s) who are still minors. To this end, Duffy (1965:501) correctly inferred that nature makes the child(ren) totally dependent upon its/their parents for sustenance, training and guidance. This explains why parents issue commands and make decisions for their children primarily because of the children’s inability to guide their own lives.

The basis of parental responsibility and authority stems from the bond of blood existing between parents and children; and the consequent obligation on the part of the parents to rear and educate their children. Duffy (1965) further noted that the aim of parental responsibility is to bring the child(ren) gradually to self-sustaining and self-directing maturity. As observed by Henneberry (1965:53) an individual’s life can be streamlined into three phases:

- (i) Childhood years in which the person/child is completely dependent
- (ii) Teen years in which the person/child progresses to independence
- (iii) Adult years which chronicles the person's self-determination and full maturity

On a general note therefore, Henneberry (1965:53) clearly outlines the responsibility of parents to their child(ren) in the following words:

Parents are to love their children and provide for their education. They are bound to supply food, clothing, shelter and medical care; at least until the child is able to get these for his/her self. Parents are also responsible for the intellectual development of their children either directly or by sending them to school, so that the child(ren) may grow into a useful member of his/her family and the society.

The parents are similarly responsible for the religion and moral education of their children. Henneberry (1965) concluded that any negligence in providing positive instruction or in correcting bad tendencies is sinful on the part of the parents. It is to be noted that the African notion of parental responsibility differs from the **western understanding as spelt out in the preceding discussion. In this respect, Ankut (2003:26)** maintained that:

Children in traditional African societies do not belong exclusively to their parents. They have obligations to the wider society, which in the same respect bears responsibility for their proper socialization. She further stated that the concept of 'parent' is wider than the men/women who are biological parents; likewise, the idea of family assumes an extended group of kin.

It is in the context of the analysis above that it is often said that the child in an African community is the child of everyone. In this model of traditional solidarity, a variety of persons exercise different and varying functions over children and that children are important and valuable members of any community over whom all must, and ought to take responsibility. As such, a child must not be seen to be suffering just because the natural parents are unable to take the responsibility for him/her (Ankut 2013).

Thus, in the African understanding that a child belongs to everyone, various persons who may not be the natural parents of a particular child discharge, in relation to that child some parental functions. This understanding obscures the western notion of parenthood hence a number of persons perform or discharge parental responsibilities which in the western narrow nuclear families may be performed by natural parents (Ankut 2003).

Furthermore, a child's claim against the family for food and shelter was of little accent in traditional African society. This is because it was taken for granted that all members of the family will be adequately maintained. Moreover, families were generally sufficient and their wants were few and members expected a lifetime of sustenance and protection.

The children received shelter, education and spiritual training within the family. The children worked and produced food for their sustenance needs within the family. The whole of their upbringing took place within the family environment where they played multiple roles which they had acquired the capacity for these social roles. As such, the food consumed within the family was the product of the children's labour and their parents (Ankut 2003).

Therefore, the idea of a totally dependent child who is fed, clothed, educated and generally brought up at the expense of his/her parents is alien to traditional African society. It is however to be noted that with the changing social and economic conditions, the practice of the community/extended family responsibility for the welfare of the child has changed.

Parental responsibility faces several challenges and impediments that hamper its effective discharge. This can be seen where one parent has an overbearing influence on a child(ren) and thwarts the efforts of the other parents in correcting the child(ren). On the other hand, Genyi (2008: 137) states that the death of one of the parents causes disintegration in the upbringing of the children hence the effort of one parent is inadequate. This tragedy often results to the home becoming a veritable breeding ground for degenerating family values and crime in the extreme. This he attributes largely to modern society working class parents and the long working hours which ensure that the children grow without the benefit of proper parental supervision.

### **Indigenous Education and Parental Responsibility in Traditional Tiv Society**

It is an acknowledged fact that every rational educational system which hopes to achieve anything has its aim, objective and goal. This fact is also true of African indigenous education. Specifically, indigenous education is geared towards providing for her recipient a functional integration into mainstream society. Okafor et al (2003:40) contend that education was immediate induction into the society and preparation for adulthood.

In Tiv Traditional society, the parents first beginning with the mother, followed by the father and other grown up members of the family and community assist the child(ren) in acquiring the requisite skills of indigenous education. Gbenda

(2005:187) subscribes to this when he states that it is the duty of every member of Tiv society to train their children to be of good behaviour to avert punishment from the Supreme Being-*Aondo* and the ancestors. The Tiv strongly believed that unethical life prevents society from functioning optimally. As a result, heads of respective families always ensure that all members behave well hence immoral lives breed shame and insults to the family with the forefathers inclusive (Gbenda 2005: 186).

The child(ren) learn through imitation, and observation. The parents were strict and ensured compliance of the child(ren) to the training. No room was given for laxity and since the education was gender biased with the girls assimilating skills that would help them in their future role as wives and mothers and the boys taking in skills, as future fathers and husbands. No time was spared for anything i.e farm work, weeding, washing, weaving, cooking, fishing, etc were done at the appropriate time. The outcome was that disciplined child(ren) who were self-reliant were produced for society. Parents in Tiv traditional society brought up their children in love and strict compliance of the norms and values of Tiv society. It was uncalled for to hear that because it was drizzling, farm work was to be suspended for that day or because it had rained or that community was experiencing scarcity of water; the wife would not carry out her responsibility of cooking or preparing a meal for the family.

By doing everything at the appropriate time, the children in Tiv traditional society learnt that the performance of one's duties and responsibilities was paramount for the sustenance and overall development of the family and society. They imbibed these values in their sub-conscious and lived with it throughout their life time. They never departed from it. With this outlook Tiv traditional society was the better for it as it was self-sustaining and self-reliant. There was much food produced by the ever willing, happy and contented farmers. The fishermen brought fish, periwinkles, crabs, snails and other aquatic animals for food and cash. The hunters also, killed and supplied game from the forest to their immediate families and the community at large. The Blacksmiths produced hoes, cutlasses, machetes, axes, knives for members of the community and neighbours. The carpenters in Tiv traditional society similarly carved masks used for religious festival celebrations, mortars, pestles etc. On the other hand, the weavers produced baskets, fish traps, reed buckets (*adudu*) and chips driers (*chakera*) etc.

Skillful wrestlers were also produced and they entertained during festivals. The healers in traditional society on their part cured different kind of ailments in the community having learnt the art of medicine and healing; knowing which herb could heal what kind of sickness. From the various households of Tiv traditional society maidens were groomed into respectful and obedient housewives just as the boys who had been trained as competent future husbands and community leaders. Morals were developed through folktales (*Kwagghir*).

The implication was that Tiv traditional society was not only self-sufficient and self-sustaining; but also the level of criminality, immorality, theft and other social ills were at their lowest ebb. This was a society which was its brother's keeper and where group solidarity (*ayatutu*) was uppermost in the minds of the inhabitants as opposed to the contemporary Tiv society with its western oriented individualism. The parents in Tiv traditional society take the credit for bringing up their child(ren) to imbibe these ideals. Such parents did not abdicate their natural parental responsibility to others to discharge for them.

It is worthy to note that since Tiv indigenous education being an informal education without organised classrooms children learnt from the elders on the farms and in the *ate*(reception hut)during moonlight tales as they reclined after the day's work on the farm. Here they imbibed values on religion, culture, civics, ethics and morals. The elders who are the custodians of ethical values enforced a code of conduct that manifest as taboos, prohibitions and laws (Gbenda 2005:187).

### **Indigenous Education and Parental Responsibility in Contemporary Tiv Society: Issues and Perspectives**

As noted in the preceding discussion, in traditional Tiv society parents brought up their children in love and strict compliance of societal norms and values. Parents in Tiv traditional society were not complacent; neither did they abdicate their parental responsibility to anyone. This explains why Tiv traditional society was self-reliant and a disciplined society with a minimal level of social ills. The contemporary Tiv society with its western orientation cannot be said to be the same. Parents in contemporary Tiv society are complacent, and their children are not compliant to traditional norms and values and this has resulted in a catastrophic and chaotic situation.

Parents in contemporary Tiv society in pursuit of materialism have completely abdicated their responsibilities to nannies, baby sitters, teachers and the like. For contemporary Tiv parents bringing forth the child is one thing and being responsible to them is another matter entirely. Decrying this trend of event Bishop Wilfred Chikpa Anagbe of the Catholic Diocese of Makurdi cited by Akpough (2015:26) observed that:

*New Generation (contemporary) parents are increasingly becoming careless about their parental responsibility of bringing up godly children thereby losing their roles to their children's peers, television, housemaids and schools. The Bishop noted that while some parents have shifted their responsibilities to kindergartens and housemaids, no educational facility can take the place of family training.*

In the absence of the abdicating parents, the television, movies (mostly foreign), computer games, pornographic sites and movies, DSTV, GOTV, Star Times, Satellite Television Stations and the internet have taken over in negatively molding the character of their children. These media have caused colossal damage to the spirituality and moral values of the contemporary Tiv children; most of who grow up without maternal or paternal direction.

Commenting on the above, Adegba (2010:52) observed that contemporary Tiv parents in search of material things of life have no quality time for their children. The fathers are often found at palm-wine and *ogogoro* joints to care about their obligation to their children. The mothers on the other hand are too busy with the gender equality 'war' to think of the children. The elderly siblings are often in their girls/boyfriend's houses than to assist their abdicating parents in this regard. Elderly members of the family/community are afraid of 'over protective' parents who could institute legal action against them for trying to correct their over-pampered and spoilt children.

A conglomerate of related issues have turned out as hull back effects; for instance, Tiv society is no longer self-sufficient, hunger has taken over the population because the Tiv youth have refused to farm and some have resorted to begging on street corners, motor parks, hotels and restaurants to get something to eat. The ladies are unable to prepare a common meal, let alone a traditional Tiv delicacy. Morals have gone away with moonlight stories which have been replaced by movies.

The boys have become increasingly lazy as they are unable to fish, farm, hunt, wrestle, or weave for their communities. This has translated to high rate of crime, theft, armed robbery, thuggery and hooliganism, cultism, prostitution and high rate of divorce (52). This clearly demonstrate that since no one can give what he /she does not have; hence parents in contemporary Tiv society are bequeathing nothing to their children in terms of quality training in morals, ethics and other ramifications of life, such children will lack what to offer to Tiv society tomorrow. This is a clear scenario of garbage in and garbage out. Tiv culture, language and pride are at stake of being lost forever, courtesy of contemporary Tiv parents and their irresponsible parenting. These parents would prefer to speak English to their children even if it is pidgin to show that they are not being left behind by modernity.

Worried by the development above; the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Makurdi, Most Revd. Dr. Wilfred Chikpa Anagbe has ordered the reintroduction of Tiv language in all Catholic schools in his diocese to save Tiv language from extinction; noting the poor usage of the language by the younger generation. According to Akpough the Bishop blamed parents on the sorry state of the language as they prefer to communicate with their children in English even at home and the craze for foreign movies at the expense of Tiv movies which would have aided

children in learning their mother tongue (35). On a general level Tiv culture has been bastardised and there is complete neglect of core values such as respect for elders, communalism, love for self and neighbour, observance of taboos and marital infidelity etc. In its stead, western culture is now gullibly considered as the best

### **A Call for Responsible Parenting in Contemporary Tiv Society (The Way Forward)**

The paper has examined indigenous education and parental responsibility in contemporary Tiv society: Issues and Perspectives. It is thus apt at this juncture to seek a way forward out of this issue. First and foremost, the paper absolutely acknowledges that children are special gifts/blessings from God. Parents should live up to their responsibility of bringing up their children in the most proper way they can. As Sopuru (2007:50) rightly observed, “it is not an easy thing to raise children of virtue. It requires that parents forgo some pleasures and submit themselves to a virtuous agenda”.

If parents are not willing to make personal commitment to character formation, they can as well forget about seeing character develop in their children. Virtue is not taught with words; it requires personal sacrifice and being patient with the children and being their friend too (Sopuru 2007).

Furthermore, parents who have made it a habit of running their homes by proxy hardly known by their children should devote special attention to the godly upbringing of their children. Therefore, mothers and fathers should always create quality time for their children; play with them, eat with them. By so doing, they will be able to know more of their children and correct them where necessary when they err.

Also, parents must note that bringing up children is much more than the mere provision of their social and economic needs. What would parents gain if they bring forth five children and provide for their economic/social needs but at the end, such children lack morals and good character? The onus therefore lies on parents in contemporary Tiv society to bring up their children properly in all the ramifications of Tiv moral values. Abdicating their duties means putting their children at the crossroad of life where they will learn from unorthodox sources and become a big challenge to themselves, their parents and society at large.

### **Conclusion**

The paper examined indigenous education and parental responsibility in contemporary Tiv society: Issues and perspectives. The paper found out that, indeed, parents in contemporary Tiv society unlike those in the traditional Tiv society have abdicated their roles of responsible parenting to nannies, teachers and the media. These parents lack quality time with their children as they go in hot pursuit of material

things. This has created a situation where their children have imbibed all sorts of values from friends, peers, the internet, and their keepers which are at variance with the Tiv cultural values. Tiv society is therefore, paying dearly for this change of events as these irresponsible children from irresponsible parents have besiege contemporary Tiv society with petty crime, drug abuse, thuggery, cultism, armed robbery, prostitution, and the like.

It is worthy to note that one of the greatest responsibilities that God has given to parents and society at large is to ensure proper training of the children. This explains why Onwukaobi (2015: 20) pointed out that those who have failed in this noble responsibility are today reaping the sad and unpleasant after effect. This implies that parents must perform this God-given duty for the betterment of themselves, their children and society at large. The rapid erosion of moral values among the youths of contemporary Tiv society is worrisome and if steps are not taken to quickly fix this ugly development through family and responsible parenting; Tiv society and the Nigerian society generally would surely be heading for doom.

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