

ETHICAL EDUCATION AND CONDUCTS IN THE FAMILY AS BASES FOR ECONOMIC REHABILITATION AND SELF-RELIANCE IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The paper observes that problems of lack of meaningful economic development in Nigeria have been blamed most of the time on the leadership, the managers and the attitude of Nigeria work-force, or some of the other environmental factors; economic, social, technological, institutional structure etc. This paper takes a different view, and believes that for any purposeful economic rehabilitation and reliance to take place, the family must reevaluate how well it is performing the functions imposed on it by nature. The paper views rehabilitation as a process of improving the present deterioration in social and economic infrastructure to a level, which will ensure their smooth functioning. Reliance is considered as a state of self-sustaining growth and sustainable development. Both demand some more desirable and acceptable pattern of behaviour in the discharge of the family functions to the child and the community. The paper then reports an empirical study that highlighted several dimensions of the neglect of the family responsibilities, which have contributed in large measure to unethical behaviour. It concludes that the path to Nigeria's economic rehabilitation and reliance is sound family structure based on moral principles and disciplined behaviour.

Introduction

Unethical behaviours or acts of indiscipline of various dimensions and descriptions have created major problems in Nigeria presently. They are having serious negative effects on the paths of the nation's social, political, educational, religious, technological, economic and other developmental efforts. They are equally slowing down the rate and path of progress of the nation in several spheres (Ogundele and Opeifa, 2002). Nigeria is the 6^{1st} largest mineral oil producer in the world, yet she is one of the poorest nations of the world. In fact, she is now the 26th least developed nation of the world. This is, in spite, of the fact that she has in abundance other natural and agricultural resources, coupled with her abundant human resources. These should place her among the leading developing nations of the world, such as the Asian Tigers. She has by the 1991 census, a population of over 120 million people, which should be a sizeable market for investors, indigenous and foreign. Several succeeding regimes in power since independence have produced at least on paper equally varied developmental programmes that have come to naught.

The lack of purposeful development in the country have been attributable in the past and still now to several factors. These include, economic inertia of various descriptions, lack of political focus, stability and policies in consistency, lack of appropriately qualified manpower, lack of developmental cultures, belief in sharing and not in baking national cake, culture of indiscipline and several others. The position of this paper is that act of indiscipline or unethical conducts constitute the greatest problem on the path of Nigeria's development. This is because, an act of indiscipline affect, other factors that contribute to a nation's developmental processes.

More specifically, this paper focuses on the influence of the family in contributing to promoting and maintaining unethical behaviour in Nigeria, and consequently hampering the processes of economic rehabilitation. The family is the primary building block in the child social developmental

processes. Ogundele (2000) notes, that a person's behaviour is influenced by, his/her personality characteristics, the immediate family and other environmental factors. The family constitutes one of the variables of Ogundele's (1999) reported study. The present paper is focusing its crucial role in reshaping the path of ethical development of the Nigerian child. The family constitutes the foundation block on which a child's subsequent future social and other developments are built.

Theoretical Framework

The two major constructs around which other issues are discussed are ethics and family. They will be examined in the light of the objective of this paper, which is to identify the ways in which, the family, as social unit contribute to promoting unethical behaviour in Nigeria, which is slowing down the process of economic rehabilitation and reliance.

Ethics ordinarily refers to moral codes of conduct that guide an individual in his relationships with others. It has to do with what is right and wrong. In social relationships, it is, concerned with the level of moral practice in interpersonal relationship. In work or business situations, it is, concerned with principles and practice of morals and good conduct in business life. These processes could be extended to the general society, the nation and the global environment.

Pojman (1990) notes that ethics is usually conceptualized as existing in four domains: -

- (i) Action, the act (right, wrong),
- (ii) Consequences (good, bad, indifferent),
- (iii) Character (virtuous, vicious) and
- (iv) Motive (goodwill, evil will). Therefore, ethics as a field of study focuses on human behaviour in relationship with others on the basis of Tightness or wrongness. Morality, a concept closely related to ethics, is the inner mental or psychological conviction, which forms the basis of man's behaviour.

It will, thus make him to decide whether his/her actions, in relation to others that- he/she interacts with is premised on Tightness or wrongness of action.

Velasquez (2002) notes that ethics has a variety of different meanings. It is sometimes defined as the principles of conduct governing an individual or a group. Thus personal ethics refers to the way an individual lives his/her personal life. Accounting ethics equally is used with reference to the code that guides the professional conducts of accountants.

Secondly, and more importantly ethics is defined as the study of morality. Ethicists used the term ethics to refer primarily to the study of morality. Although ethics deals with morality, Velasquez (2002) notes that it is not quite the same as morality.

Ethics is a kind of investigation - and includes both the activity of investigating as well as the result of that investigation. Morality on the other hand is the subject matter that ethics investigates.

One of the problems preventing Nigeria from making positive progress in her path to economic development is various forms of unethical behaviours. This has resulted in economic stagnation or decay in some cases. Consequently there is need for economic rehabilitation and practice of self-reliance for any meaningful progress to emerge.

Economic rehabilitation is the process of renewing our economic and social infrastructure that has deteriorated or has fallen into a state of disuse. Self-Reliance means self-sufficiency or self-dependency in most areas of human, material and other requirements.

Family

Saheed (2002) exhaustively discusses the dominating influences of the family background in the making of the type of individual a person becomes in life. Argyle (1974) notes that a most important evolutionary development has been the opening of the innate tendencies, so that environmental experiences are needed to supplement and 'complete them. The period of dependence on the family has lengthened, as has the learning capacity of the organism. There are series of behaviour patterns, partly innate, which produce appropriate behaviour in infants to parents and parents to infants. This too is partly learnt.

Infants have the following relationship with parents-dependency, affliction and dominance acquired through identification with father or other available male model. Culture drives-other human behaviour pattern, which are acquired from culture drives because they are accompanied by automatic arousal and are goal directed.

Studies of maternal behaviour showed two main dimensions of variations in material behaviour

- (i) Love Vs hostility and
- (ii) Over control Vs granting autonomy.

In addition children often identify with their parents i.e. take after them as models for imitation. This is more likely to happen when parents are warm, nurturant and have an easy-going relationship with the same - sexed parent, partly because of similarity, partly because social pressures and reward for doing things with the parents.

Equally latter social behaviour is affected by position in the family in a number of ways:

- (i) Relations with people in authority are most affected by relation with parents. Rejection or neglect by parents leads to dependence on peer-group and hostility to adults,
- (ii) Relations in peer-group are affected by experience in the family. When children have had a warm relationship with their parents they seek warm relation with peer. When they had little contact with parents in early years they are low in affiliative, motivation role patterns (Argyle, 1974).

Saheed (2002) also notes that the child's behaviour is influenced by the parents in several ways: - impression implanted at infancy, patterns of children up bringing adopted by the parents, methods of child rearing in terms of producing men and women of sterling qualities of exemplary characters and righteousness. Character of parents as determinant of a child's personality and behaviour, method of nursing, modes of dressing, displays of love and affection, moral guidance and counseling, education of all forms, moral, sexual, economic, social, mental adventurism etc. He listed six tools of home training namely:- parents to make their children grow among the faithful, truthful and pious to enhance their Islamic sense of socialization; provision of formal family class in every Training to commence at the child tender age. When other methods adopted in guiding the child fails, can a child be punished? And lastly, the best means of training a child is by example.

Functions of the Family

From the foregoing discussions we can summarise the functions of the parents to a child as encompassing the following's amongst others:

- (i) Feeding the child,
- (ii) Showing love and affection to the child.

- (iii) Education on domestic duties.
- (iv) Clothing and sheltering the child in various forms.
- (v) Serve as positive role models to the child.
- (vi) Educating the child in all relevant forms.
- (vii) Guiding the child to the right social conducts that are societally desirable.
- (viii) Guiding and directing the child in matters of religion.
- (ix) Providing for moral guidance of the child.
- (x) Given the child relevant sex education.
- (xi) Developing multiple skills in the child to become a useful member of the society.
- (xii) Providing opportunity for vocational and other forms of specialised training for the child.
- (xiii) Inculcating in the child a sense of community and national patriotism.
- (xiv) Developing in the child an economic innovative and self-reliance personality.
- (xv) Teaching the child a sense of value for hard work. The list can be extended to include all socially naturally desirable virtues that can make for the individual positive advancement and greatness in life.

Against the background of the functions that the parents or the families are expected to perform for the child, the authors contend that the family, is the rightful primary building block foundation of economic reconstruction and self-reliance. For any family to perform the above listed function it must be ethical and disciplined in all spheres of human behaviour. The question is to what extent does the Nigerian family exhibit these desirable attributes?

To answer this question we have to fall back on Ogundele and Opeifa's (2002) data and examine in more detail the aspect relating to the family as a major cause of indiscipline in Nigeria.

Problem of the Study

The study was carried out to unearth the major factors that have stimulated and aided the perpetration of acts of indiscipline in Nigeria. A study of indigenous entrepreneurs organization, Ogundele (2000) reveals that acts of indiscipline was the second most important factor inhibiting effective performance of entrepreneurs in Nigeria. Thus, the problem of the study was to identify the factors that promote the negative behaviour.

Instrument of the Study

The research questionnaire focused on the nature, patterns consequences, control and management of acts of indiscipline in Nigeria. It consisted of three major parts. Part one, is the introduction or general section. Information on the personal characteristics of respondents was obtained here. Part two, contained 60 listed acts of indiscipline adapted from Ekpo-Ufot's (1990) instrument in his study of acts indiscipline in Lagos State. Respondents were asked to select from the listed acts, (a) those that negatively affect the attainment of national development goals, (b) seriously retard progress in Nigeria today, (c) preventing their organizations from attaining their goals, (d) those practiced by most Nigerians and, (e) those which the respondents sometimes carry out though not often. Part three contained open-ended questions. Here respondents were asked based on their perceptions, judgment and personal experience to: (a) list causes of indiscipline in Nigeria today, (b) express opinion on the role of the "elites" in contributing to indiscipline, (c) express their views on the feeling that the root cause of indiscipline is to be traced back to our present day families (This section is the focus of the present report), (d) list traditional moral values that may be used to solve problems of indiscipline, (e) suggest methods to be used to solve indiscipline problems in our society and

analyze various dimensions of discipline in their own organization. Respondents were asked to use cases and incidences to support the views expressed by them.

Overall the research has twelve sections. Only one of the sections is summarized and reported here.

Data Collection Procedure

Questionnaire method of data collection was used. Questionnaire were sent out and received between December 1997 and September 1998. The Executive Secretaries of Local Government Primary Schools Education, Boards, Secondary School Principals, Administrators in the Polytechnics University lecturers, facilitated the processes of administering the questionnaire. Targeted respondents were classroom teachers, school administrators' lecturers and postgraduate students. These were in selected primary secondary and tertiary educational institutions in Oyo and Lagos States.

A total of 1,520 questionnaires were administered. These were in selected primary, secondary and tertiary educational institutions in the two states mentioned above. There were 667 returned questionnaires. Out of these, 604 were useable.

Population and Sampling Technique

The potential population for the study in the two states runs into several thousands of people since it is impossible to reach all prospective respondents, the convenience sampling technique was adopted. The research focused on processes of behaviour. Therefore there were no needs for rigid restrictions on the choice of states and samples of respondents. This is because processes remain constant and processes constitute behaviour.

Method of Data Analysis

Frequency distribution was employed in analyzing the information supplied by respondents. Contents analysis was employed on the cases and incidences given by respondents. Summary statistics were applied to the results of the contents analysis.

Research Questions

Respondents were asked to react to this statement:

People say that the root cause of indiscipline in Nigerian society is to be traced back to our present day families,

- (a) Do you agree, or do you not agree with this statement?
- (b) What solutions of solving the problems of indiscipline in Nigeria, will you suggest?

The concept "Act of indiscipline" used in the research covers all forms of unethical and negative behaviours. They include corruption, smuggling, fraudulent acts, bribery, armed robbery, sexual laxity and indeed all-imaginable sets of immoral and unethical behaviours.

Overall the research is in twelve sections. Only two of these sections are summarized here. They are that on: (i) The families cause of indiscipline in Nigeria and (ii) suggested solution for solving the problems of indiscipline in Nigeria. Specifically, the section that states that the family is a major factor, in contributing to promoting and maintaining indiscipline in Nigeria, which is here examined

Findings

The family was reported by respondents as the 4th most important out of 16 global causes of indiscipline in Nigeria, coming after economic, psychological and socio-cultural causes in that order (Ogundele and Opeifa, 2002). Table 1 below contains a list of twenty-one items that describe the Pattern of behaviour of parents in Nigeria today. These have occasioned wide-ranging act of indiscipline that are exhibited in the society.

From a look at Table 1 below, it is evident that they represent lack of performance of the functions of parent that were listed above. The listed family causes of indiscipline include among others lack of parental guidance, which tops the list for all the three groups of respondents, others are, of home training of all forms, indisciplined parents, lack of parental care, parents' truancy from home, wrong upbringing of children from childhood etc.

Table 1: Family Causes of Indiscipline in Nigeria

	List of Causes	Primary Resp.		Secondary Resp.		Tertiary Resp.	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
1	Lack of parental guidance	154	22.00	91	17.6	34	12.4
2	Excess pursuit of money to negligence of child	30	4.3	35	6.8	29	10.6
3	Lack of moral instructions from parents	41	5.9	29,	5.6	18	6.6
4	Lack of time to attend to family needs	42	6.0	31	5.1	20	7.6
5	Parent bribing their children before they will help	25	3.6	17	3.7	15	5.5
6	Today's socialisation process destroys parents influence on children	33	4.3	28	5.4	19	6.9
7	Parents bad habit have influence on children	17	2.4	18	3.5	15	5.5
8	Lack of proper religious guidance	15	2.1	13	2.5	4	1.5
9	Parent truancy from home	11	1.6	8	1.5	6	2.2
10	Parents indecent dressing in the society	13	1.9	11	2.1	7	2.6
11	Lack of proper care at home	86	12.3	53	10.3	29	10.6
12	Lack of control over children by parents	14	2.0	18	3.5	11	4.0
13	Broken homes	31	4.4	24	4.7	15	" 5.5
14	Lack of exemplary conducts by parents	19	2.7	17	3.3	6	2.2
15	Violence involving husband and wife'	11	1.6	10	1.9	8	2.9
16	Buying examination scores for children	37	5.3	24	4.6	4	1.5
17	Over production of children more than financial capacity	9	.3	16	3.1	5	1.8
18	Parents abandon domestic responsibilities	36	5.1	27	5.2	11	4.0
19	Parents allowing children to copy immoral acts	39	5.6	20	3.9	5	1.8
20	Parents exhibit dishonesty and worship money	17	2.4	11	2.1	8	2.9
21	Parents backing unethical children	20	2.9	16	3.1	11	4.0
	Total	700	100.00	517	100.00	274	100.00

Keys: Resp. = respondent, freq. Frequencies, % percentages

Source: Respondents from Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Education Institutions in Oyo and Lagos States.

It should be noted that bad families cannot serve as good foundation for economic rehabilitation and reliance. The society requires families with sound moral upbringing imbued with the spirit of hard work and positive innovation. How can we achieve these objectives. The family based suggested solutions by respondents are given below.

Suggested Solutions by Respondents

- (i) Parents should be disciplined.
- (ii) Parents should be models of excellent conducts.
- (iii) Parent should take proper care of their children.
- (iv) Parent should engage in proper control of their children.
- (v) Proper training of children at home.
- (vi) Good upbringing of children right from or pre-birth (Saheed, 2002).
- (vii) The home should be the starting point to teach moral and other desired societal and economic values.
- (viii) Fall back on religious models, because every religion that is worth being tagged that name teaches moral, it is the source of ethics or moral guidance, should make significant contributions to the overall growth of human society (Bidmos, 1992). The Christian protestant ethics greatly influenced industrial revolution in Europe (Schumpeter, 1934). In the same way the current Libyan economic development is largely influenced by the Islamic ethics. Therefore, upright conducts by people of various religious beliefs can have positive impact on a nation's economic path.

Conclusion

Nigeria's economic rehabilitation and self-reliance drive will require substantial change in the attitude of its family units. Parents have to teach their children the best mode of behaviour, which must be exhibited by the parents also. Children in the family must be taught right conducts and warned to be wary of others who may not have right conduct. People are rewarded for their right conducts. Remember Mary in the Bible and the Quran, who was rewarded with the birth of Jesus Christ, one of the most outstanding personalities in human history, because of her pious conducts. We need to educate the child about valued behaviour. Discipline a child from childhood even at the age of three or four when he/she misbehaves. Give all round education. In the same way the future for the generation yet unborn can be made better if people indulge in acts prescribed by God. A nation that cherishes and teaches good conduct to her offspring, is planting the seeds of prosperity unlimited, a living example is China. Nigeria's efforts at economic rehabilitation can be greatly facilitated and enhanced if each family teaches and mandates its offspring to learn and practice good deeds. It is the sure path to real national prosperity. Uncultured youths will destroy any valuable structure at the slightest irritation.

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