

REVITALIZING MORAL EDUCATION IN NIGERIAN SCHOOLS FOR SUSTAINABLE SECURITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Insecurity has become a major problem in the world particularly in Nigeria currently. It has become so serious that every parts of the country are no more secured to do meaningful business and to live in. Also, It has been disbursing free movement of people and goods from one part of Nigeria to another. Aside from the fact that this has been threatening our corporate existence as a nation, it is seriously impacting negatively on the economic development of this country as the Gross Domestic product (GDP) of Nigeria has remained on the decline side for a while now. To this regard, one of the ways through which the security of the country can be strengthened is by rejigging our moral values. To this extent, this work focuses on revitalizing moral education in Nigerian schools for sustainable security and economic development. In doing this, the work explains the types of moral education, the causes of insecurity in Nigeria. The work however suggests that, the parents, schools and Nigeria government should work together in revitalizing moral education in the Nigerian schools and children should not be exposed to the arm fires and other weapons that can affect their moral orientation negatively at home

Keyword: Moral education, sustainable security and economic development

Introduction

One of the problems that the world is grappling with today is insecurity. Essentially the burden of this insecurity is felt much more by the third world countries than other part of the globe. Magely (2017) analysing the security situation of the world today says that, “more than 1.4 billion people, live in fragile security threatened and conflict-affected settings today. This number is forecast to grow by a staggering 82 percent by 2030. Around 244 million people are on the move, with 65 million people in our world being forcibly displaced”.

Nigeria, among her counter-part is also undergoing a serious problem of insecurity that does not leave any part of the country untouched. There is problem of insurgency in the North-eastern Nigeria, kidnapping, cattle rustling and banditry in the North-west and North-central of Nigeria; while the Southern

part of the country is faced with problem of kidnapping, armed robbery and herdsman and farmers crisis.

Since peace and development are symbiotic in nature; if there is no peace and security, there will be no development and vice versa. To this extent, insecurity in Nigeria has strongly imparted negatively on Nigeria Economic Growth and Development to the level that Nigeria that was occupying 2nd position in economic development in Africa before the period when there was no security problem in Nigeria is now occupying 5th position.

This makes Adedeji cited by Pai (2004) to say that:

Whatever indicator we use, be they micro-economic or social variables, the situation of our country has been one significant and sometimes precipitous retrogression. As a continent, we are worse today than we were 10 years ago in virtually all aspects of socio-economic development out-put and growth. Our balance-of-payment deficits have accelerated while inflation and debt servicing obligation have escalated. Deindustrialization has proceeded on an unprecedented scale. Capital decumulation; rather than capital accumulation, has become the order of the day in Nigeria

The state of economy, increment in criminality and insecurity in Nigeria today shows certain huge lacuna in the area of Nigerian educational sector; therefore, it needs to be rejigged. Edward cited by Julius (2017) also subscribes to this fact thus:

Education system... is a disgrace to civilization. Much has been changed in the last century, transport, telecommunication, computing, values, etc. The one thing that has changed hardly at all is education. Education has a stable equilibrium state from which it cannot be judged.

This observation shows that our educational system needs to be turned around, most especially, the aspect of moral education which is value and moral building education as its evident that there is moral gap in the country as the experiences what can be described as moral failure. Julius (2017) makes it explicit that, “the principal task of our education should be the development and production of men and women of powerful strength of character”. Any education that cannot fulfil this mandate is will not be able to perform the role

development optimally. In other for the education to be useful for the people and the country at large, training of man character is paramount..

Definition of Terms

Moral Education

Moral Education is a moral building education. Olarewaju (2011) defined moral education as an education which aims at helping people to structure their attitudes and behaviours to conform to that which is good in nature. It is a character training education. To this extent, it is a character training education that could change human attitude from negative to positive. It is an education that motivates man to seek after peace and live in peace (Olawaju, 2011).

In the same vein, Etete (2018) sees moral education as the education that teaches what is good as different from what is bad and the values that is described as good, welcomed and worthy to pursue for its own sake.

Economic Development

The concept of economic development is a slippery concept. In most cases, it is always misplaced for economic growth. However, according to Enyekpe (2013), economic growth is used to describe the quantitative increase or expansion of production or output of a given economy over a period of time. But economic development is much more concerned with the effect of the expansion of output on the quality of human life. To this extent, California Association for Local Economic Development (2020) defines economic development as the creation of wealth from which community benefits are realized. To this regard, looking at it from wider perspective, it is more than a job program. It is an investment in growing one's economy so as to enhance the prosperity.

Security

The concept of security is a derivation of secures which means the quality or state of being secure from danger (Abolurin, 2009). Security implies therefore the absence of threat to life, property and socio-economic wellbeing of the people. However, Odekunle cited by Abolurin gave a broad meaning of security to include protection or defence against all kinds of victimization, physical attack, economic want/poverty, illiteracy, disease/ill health, social exploitation, psychological trauma, political oppression, criminality e.t.c. To this extent, security implies safeguarding the entire human life, his need and his environment.

Agencies of Moral Education

The agencies of moral education in Nigeria. includes home, school, religious centres, peer groups and mass media

Home

Education of every child starts from home. It is at home that moral values are exposed to them for the first time in their life. At home, the values, like proper ways of greetings, table manners, how to respect elders, sanctity of life, how to maintain brotherhood e.t.c are taught children. Importantly, practical aspect of imparting moral into children takes much of guardianship job and adequate monitoring on the part of the parents for a long period, for this reason, it is incumbent on the parents to monitor their children character, and live as a moral example, as moral learning is much of imitative in nature (Chuabe, 2014).

Importantly, since the foundation of moral education laid at home, is what children imbibe and build upon in the later life, moral training at is usually taken with every seriousness in Africa. To this extent in Africa, particularly in Nigeria, anyone who is known for not exhibiting this basic home training that is accepted by the society, is often referred to as a person who lack good home training or good upbringing (Oni, 2013). The primary teachers at home are the parents, brothers/sisters, extended family members in most cases, the whole members of the community can join in teaching children moral values. However, the major obstacle to home education today is socio-economic pressure; in which both parents do not have enough time for their children due to pursuance of white collar jobs.

School

After home, formal school is the next level of moral educational institution in which children are taught moral education. Moral education, essentially are taught at different levels of education both at primary school stage of education and tertiary level of education. School plays a major role in the ethical and moral character of the children. both teachers and children from different home always meet in the school. They exhibit different types of characters. Teachers in this case regulate and act as moral bridge between the children in school and the parents at home. For this reason, teachers are expected to be well mannered and not bias in giving moral instruction to the pupils so as to make them to be an ideal moral leadership that is worth of imitating morally for the children (Chuabe, 2013). Essentially, moral leadership involves the ability to have a compelling and powerful dreams or vision of human betterment. Second, it requires disposition to do the right thing and influence others also to do the right thing (Mishra, 2015)

Religious Institutions

The role of religious institution is fundamental to the provision of moral education in every society because one of the primary responsibilities of religion is to teach morals and rid the society off the immoral behaviours. Ilori (2002) attests to the fact that since religious houses are the places where different people with the same basic philosophy come together, it is reasonable that such places be where primary instruction of children, most especially moral instruction, takes place. Most importantly, every religion teaches their religious members moral behaviors that are both acceptable within their religious circles and the society at large. The negative side of religion as an agent of moral education is that people can easily be indoctrinated instead of being educated through their religious teachers.

Mass Media

Mass media as an organ of communication is quite instrumental in teaching and learning moral education. It is quite effective in teaching and learning as it can cover so vast areas with a short time, it is also fast in disseminating knowledge. It is convenient, as you can sit at the comfort of your home and receive knowledge. Omprakash (2011) describes it as the brand of socializing influence whereby they teach basic manner, attitudes and values of the society and supply models for behaviour in various areas of life. These also provide education in more formal sense about issues and problems of the society. Children must be kept under watch while using mass media so as not to allow them to stray to the negative side of the mass media usage.

Peer Group

Peer groups consists of children of similar age. In most cases, among traditional society, peer group influence is very huge (Giddens, 2010) Children learn much of moral values from the peer group. Peer group teaches the child by actual experience, as the children found it comfortable to turn to their peers for information and guidance. They have confidence in themselves and they easily share ideas, to this extent, peers can learn a lot of moral values from each other both at homes and in the schools. They generally maintain close and friendly connections throughout their lives, that signifies that peers influence and relationship may be established beyond school, childhood and adulthood levels (Giddens, 2010) But peer needs to be monitored so as not to borrow or teach each other negative moral values.

Reasons for Moral Failure in Nigeria

Westernization is one of the challenges of African nations today, including Nigeria. This has made them to do away African morals values system; they have completely accepted the value system of the Western world

and they are living it holistically at the detriment of African values system that is rich and mostly characterized by such endearing features such as collectivism, loyalty to authority and community, truthfulness, honesty, handwork, tolerance, love for others, care for others, abhorrence of theft and high regard and value for human life. In every African society, stealing was considered disgraceful to the thieves and the whole family members of the thieves. It is all these value systems that we lost to modernization and westernization that made our society to lose her security today.

Nigeria is currently operating under a mystery economy. An economic environment where there is high inflation running pari-parsue with high rate of unemployment and underemployment. Giving this economic situation, there is high tendency for existence of insecurity in Nigeria because a nexus exists between underdevelopment and unemployment rates and insecurity; because unemployment breeds insecurity. Collier and Hoffer cited Awojobi (2014) led credence to this that, “The assumption of the youths is that, joining armed groups become more lucrative to the unemployed youths where there are no legal means of income earning. The youths find succour as members of armed groups gangs in looting, smuggling and illegal mining as the case is in Nigeria today”.

Poverty rate is high in Nigeria today to the extent that the country is described as the poverty capital of the world. In Nigeria, about 86.9 million people live in severe poverty. This figure represents almost 50% of its entire population (Borgen Magazine, 2020). Again, coupled with huge population rate of Nigeria, it has become extremely difficult to control poverty and crimes.

Added to this is huge proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) across Nigeria nation. The porosity of Nigeria boarder has made it so easy for criminal elements to embark on gun running business with little hinderance. It is also not too difficult for the criminal from another country to enter Nigeria to perpetrate havoc with ease. Dambazau cited by Ajayi (2009) once raised an alarm over the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Nigeria thus: “out of 70% of the estimated 500 million of small arms and light weapons illegally imported to, West African, 70 percent, which translated to 350 million are imported to Nigeria. This figure released by the minister of defence did not include the number of arms and ammunition produced and used locally in Nigeria. This huge number of small arms and light weapons in the country have been a source of concern which made insecurity to be festering in Nigeria.

High level of illiteracy among Nigeria youths is also one of the features that is exacerbating insecurity level in Nigeria. Large number of Nigeria youths

who are illiterate are being used for kidnapping, armed robbery, cattle rustling and other crimes. Due to Nigeria negligence of educational provision for its citizenry. To make the matter worse, there was no time that education has been given a good attention that can spur the uneducated youths to embrace it. United Nation Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), recommended that 15-20 percent of the total annual budget of a country be allocated to the educational sector (Charles, 2020). There was no time that Nigeria budgetary allocation exceeds 10%. instead, majority of the budgetary allocations always go to security.

Failure of education to provide livelihood for people in Nigeria, several youths have been trained in different field of endeavors at different levels of high institutions of learning in Nigeria but got frustrated as they cannot secure satisfactory job that can keep their soul and body together. As a matter of fact, a thin line demarcates these groups of people from joining bad groups.

Effects of Insecurity on Nigeria Economy

Insecurity has brought huge negative effects on Nigeria's economy since it began in Nigeria. First among them is dwindling foreign Direct Investment into the country since the beginning of the activities of armed banditry, kidnapping, insurgency, cattle rustling, ritual killing, etc there have been a decline in Foreign Direct Investment into Nigeria economy due to issues that are related to security. Even most of the investors that had businesses in the country moved their investment to other neighbouring African nations like Ghana, South Africa. Joshua & Chidozie cited by Omilusi (2016) lend credence to this thus:

Investors are wary of coming to a country where lives and investors are not safe: Nigeria has been at a steady decline in the Global peace index. Out of 158 countries surveyed, the position of Nigeria was 117th in 2007, 127th in 2008 and 137th in 2010, 142nd in 2011 and 2012 146th. Even a country like Chad is more peaceful than Nigeria. We are only better than such countries as Syria, Pakistan, North Korea, Iraq, Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Afghanistan, Libya, Israel, Russia and Somalia-Pariah State or nations on war footing.

This ugly development has created a ripple effects of high level of unemployment and underdevelopment, high poverty rate and low economic development in Nigeria.

In the same vein, Nigeria agricultural sector has also suffered a great deal in the hand of insecurity. It has become almost impossible for rural farmers to go to their farms undisturbed. Many farmers have been maimed; others have been killed, while some need to pay the bandits before they could have access to their farms. These have caused food inflation in the country because farmers can no longer operate at their optimal capacity. This has equally caused food inflation to raise to 20.57 percent year-on-year in January 2021 in the Nigeria. Unfortunately, this coincided with the period when the country is trying to diversify its economy by giving agricultural sector a priority.

Insecurity has also affected Nigeria's health sector greatly, most especially in the insecurity prone areas. Many hospitals and other health facilities have burnt down; and many other medical workers taken captive, other raped and dehumanized, while several others lost their lives. Scores of the internally displaced persons do not have access to good medical help. Those who can afford medical tourism moved out to seek medical help in the neighboring countries like Egypt, Cameroon, Mali etc. (Onuilusi, 2016)

Insecurity has caused Nigerian government to shift their attention on spending more on the important development recurrent expenditure and other economic developmental projects; rather, the attention of government is always on defense. In 2020 alone, whooping some of one hundred billion naira was budgeted to be spent on defense alone, yet it was judge not enough in some quarters. Part of the percentage of money budgeted on defense alone can be used to build the dilapidated road, hospital and education.

Importantly, insecurity has caused a lot of setback on our educational sector. So many schools have been burnt down, several school teachers and children have been maimed and killed. Some of the schools that were not burnt down are used as internally displaced camp. This has led to the increase in number of out- of- school-children exceedingly. The current out-of-school children in Nigeria today is estimated to be 14 million children, this has a negative consequence on future Nigeria development.

Human capital wasting has been on the increase in Nigeria as a result of insecurity. Several school children have been killed, several school teachers and lecturers have been killed and several other well-meaning people in the society have been killed and often displaced. Some have observed that many lives have been lost to insecurity than some dreadful and dangerous diseases that are dreaded worldwide e.g. Covid 19, HIV/AIDS, Lassa fever, Ebola fever etc.

Role of moral Education in Curbing Security Problem

Moral education can play a huge role in curbing the menace of insecurity in Nigeria today. In the first instance, what is at stake today that makes insecurity fester everywhere in Nigeria is moral problem. Moral education which is character building education that can build the minds of both young and old people and change their attitude from negative to positive is not given the needed attention in the country today. According to Olarewaju (2011) “Every evil and bad intention starts in the minds of man. Through moral education, minds produce good and virtuous human”.

As a matter of fact, naturally good and bad attitudes exist in the world, to tailor any human being toward good attitude man needed to be taught; man needs moral education because moral is not just develop in the minds of people except they are taught. To this extent, moral education is useful in creating awareness in the young ones regarding what is good, bad and immoral acts, especially those that can cause evil, unrest, hatred etc. Moral education can be instrumental in increasing the positive and constructive thing of the minds of the young ones; it is quite unlikely for a moral being who has passed through effective and rigorous moral training, and not indoctrination, both at home, school and religious centres to go wayward to the point of joining criminal gangs.

Importantly, if society is devoid of moral education, the minds of the people in that society will be bared of moral values, and consequently, the society will breed bad people. Conversely, if a given society embraces moral education, that particular society will be good, orderly and peaceful. This implies that moral education has huge effect in producing good or bad people and good or bad society.

Conclusion

The work sees insecurity as a major problem that is hampering economic Development of Nigeria nation and free movement of both goods and human beings from one locality to another today. This is so serious to the extent that it is currently threathinig the unity of Nigeria. The work also sees moral education as a veritable instrument that can be used to reposition the moral problems that Nigerians is going through today; most especially the deviants that are troubling the Nigerian society today. It noted that rejigging moral education in our schools today should be all encompassing; involving home, schools, the whole societal members, mass media and the government should embark on the moral re-orientation through mass mobilization agents. This can help to reduce the insecurity to a minimum level.

Recommendations

- Every hand should be on deck in proffering security solutions to the security problems in Nigeria today. Parents, schools, religious centres and members of every community should be involved in enhancing moral orientations of the children.
- Every parent should try as much as possible to keep weapons and firearms, which can affect moral orientations of their children away from their children's reach at home.
- The curriculum of moral education and related subjects, such as civic, religious and social studies education should be geared towards security building in Nigeria..
- Transformation education should be used to deradicalise minds that have been engaging in criminal acts in Nigeria.
- Governments should try as much as possible to ensure that moral messages that are healthy for unity are passed across to the populace so as to avoid radicalisation of the people's mind.

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