

## TEACHING MORALS AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: AN INNOVATION IN HIGHER INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA

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### **Abstract**

This paper examined the need for re-orientation of moral values in the society, especially with regards to how females can use the influence of moral education to enhance technological development in Nigeria. Moral education is required if there should be sustainable development in every nation. Nigeria as a developing country requires value reorientation and the people to influence this in children are mothers and female teachers. This is because women and mothers are good character molders within the home and school. This paper therefore defined moral education and focus on how the roles of mothers and female teachers can be applied in homes and schools, in academic disciplines, and in female's technological education in Nigeria.

Education and morality can be viewed like two faces of a coin. Plato, a Greek Great philosopher, defined education as a means of making a person virtuous and an ideal citizen. According to Plato, an ideal citizen is both a good leader and a good follower and that an educated man is good and virtuous. According to Plato in Aguba (2006), definition of education is strictly anchored on moral goodness. Referring to teachers and moral education, Hiroike (2005) stated that, teaching is not a means of becoming a teacher or a public official; rather it is a means by which one imports good knowledge and contributes in the enhancement of the nation. Furthermore, he argued that, the value of a person is not attached to his position; instead, it is determined by how much that person has contributed to the world. He was convinced that moral education can determine the rise and fall of a nation. Plato's and Hiroike's definition of education was based on virtue and morality, according to them; these epitomize the importance of moral education. One can argue that education is a concept that focuses on improving man to achieve personal development which will in turn assist people to contribute to national development. Such education is carried out regardless of age, gender and class. It is based on equal opportunity for all citizens to decide the discipline of their choice. For instance, females should be encouraged to choose any discipline of their choice because their education is required in all human endeavours, especially technological education.

In advanced countries, moral education programmes are designed for schools from the younger generation to adult level. This is a part of national educational policy of countries such as France, Japan, and Germany etc. Their main focus on education is the promotion of peace, good character and conduct which are the hallmark of sustainable national development. In Nigeria today, the educational system requires that the citizen's moral values be tailored to enable the nation to have peace, good character and also sustainable development. Martin (1981) stated that it is important to

remember that decisions on the country's basic educational system depend not only on what the world is, but also the way the people think it should be, the kind of life they want to live and the society they believe to be worth of living for. Also Gilligan (1982), noted that the concept of an ethic of care is based on the kind of moral reasoning that is ideal for people but which is ignored by scholars and scientists in the area. She argued that in advanced countries, scholars considered that moral education should be possessed from home, schools and society at large. It is on this basis that the roles of mothers and female teachers are important, because teachers are more like mothers. From this point of view, there is a need to increase the role of mothers and female teachers in Nigeria as we aspire for national technological development. These roles are worthy of consideration in Nigerian educational system since nature has made it imperative that females should be care givers. Literature is replete of the roles of woman in various aspects of human endeavour as discussed below, beginning with moral education in homes, schools, academic achievements and technology development.

### **Moral Education in Homes**

Home is the foundation of moral education. Martin argued that if an ethic of care was traditionally taught in the home it will create modeling of good character foundation. This is because homes and schools are partners in the education of the nation. She observed that a vacuum is created if the home is not active in this partnership. Home, in essence, is where children learn about domestic activities. For instance, some countries like Japan appreciates moral values imparted at home by mothers, and moral education has been part of their national policy. Japan technological development starts from home where mothers teach their children, both male and female some creative arts, such as origami. Mori (2008) defined origami as cubical creative form which is practiced to foster emotional development among children. Promoting emotional development is vital for moral education at home which prepares children for schools where different kinds of moral education is imparted to children for better upbringing.

### **Moral Education in Schools**

Nursery and primary education are the foundation of educational structure and basically the key to success or failure of the educational system. When a child enters school, he/she is expected to acquire moral education. Nigerian educational system requires overhauling for moral transformation, to enable the school children to behave in an expected way in the society. Good behaviour is expected to reduce corruption, nepotism, ethnic centredness and moral re-orientation in the society and this could also encourage the citizens to appreciate the importance of female education. Female teachers are a useful influence in molding the character of children because they apply useful caring values to them as mothers. This careful disposition is an attribute of motherhood that is absent in male teachers. Therefore, it is not unusual to equate teaching with mothering; because the role of female teachers and mothers are the same in classroom situation. The various arms of government should consider this attribute of motherhood in the female teachers and encourage them to acquire moral education in order to also teach this to school children. When teachers take the role of mothering children in their classrooms, it will benefit not only the children but the nation as a whole. Green (2003), states how she brought her motherly attitude to her classroom. According to her, she exhibited interest in teaching by paying attention to her pupils and listening to their complaints and needs. She showed that she loved the pupils just as she loved her son. Green demonstrates how teachers can influence

students through moral practice students through moral practice aimed at character formation. Other educators, such as Bosworth (1995), and Bulach (1998), observe several characteristics of teachers that are associated with mothers to include: friendliness, respectfulness, responsiveness, tolerance, willingness to listen etc. These qualities are required by teachers to make pupils and students to have a change in bad behaviour and to develop interest in their studies.

### **Moral Education and Students Course of Study**

Achievement of academic discipline depends on teachers, to assist students to make choices that can lead them to contribute to national technological development. Interest in moral values starts from infants when children and adults relate (most especially mothers). It is the belief that, the nature and strength of children's upbringing determine their ability to learn and function in the world. Therefore, a secure and trusted relationship can lead to good moral values and moderate lifestyle. Ecken and Watson (2003) are of the opinion that all children need to be loved, to feel secure, and have a sense of belonging before they can demonstrate competence and interest to acquire knowledge. It is also a known fact, that teacher's attachment and relationship to students help to discover the student's emotional states, and also create room for proper advice in their studies and choice of disciplines. Some students fail in the school and in the society not because of wrong choice of discipline imposed on them as a result of social pressure. In view of Ecken and Watson (2003), mothers and female teachers can motivate students to make moral academic choice based on intellectual aptitude rather than gender. According to them, female students should be encouraged to choose technological education as a course of study in their schools.

### **Morals and Women Education**

We cannot talk about female technological development without inculcating moral values in our teachers to promote moral development of the nation. Technology is scientific knowledge used in practical ways to improve national development. It is therefore, required that we improve our attitude towards utilizing scientific approach by giving access for women to acquire moral education and technological education. For example, the United Nations University project on Technology Transfer, Transformation, and Development was established to assist people in this direction in the whole world. It is now left for the individual nation to implement this policy. The Japanese Experience was carried out from 1978 to 1982 with the objectives to contribute to an understanding of the process of Japan technological development. This project focused on the infrastructural technology and human resources development, social and economic conditions that benefit both the male and female. In advanced countries, technology resources are updated regularly to provide opportunities for both male and female professional development. Nakamura (1990) noted that, the quality and content of the Japanese way of life are now being transformed by the overwhelming dominance of technological development in both genders to sustain national economy. Nakamura's study stated that Japanese females are given the opportunity to be technologically balanced and to take their careers to the highest level. As a result, those that have embraced technology are highly skilled and experienced in application of scientific knowledge. These are also the people who always aspire to develop their careers further, and to volunteer to train others at no cost. Furthermore, Nakamura noted that, because of female's involvement in technological development in Japan, variety of services and multiple skills have been provided and these brought rapid changes in the system. He also noted that the changes

taking place in the structure benefits both the family and the nation and that the changes have broadened the scope of female engagement in labour and have reduced the problem of female unemployment.

In Nigeria today, female are the less opportuned members of the society. They are underrepresented at all levels of authority. They are often not given the opportunity to take decision on personal problems. It is therefore, important that Nigeria should expand its technological resources to integrate females in order to build strong and vibrant technological society that is useful to all citizens. Female technological development will assist mothers to be up to date in identifying tools that can assist them to manage their family and their work environment. Since moral education starts from home, female technological development will help to reduce harmful practices to economic development and growth. Integrating female into technological development in Nigeria is of great advantage to the nation in its aspiration towards sustainable development.

### **Conclusion**

The paper used the Plato Republic to introduce the concept of education based on morality. It also examined the definition of moral education through application of Hiroike educational ideology. The paper supports Martin's ideas in domestic and school moral system focuses on care. The major focus of the paper is moral education in schools where female teachers are required to continue the motherly role of being the care giver, (Gilligan, 1982). On the issue of academic discipline, the argument that mothers and female teachers can motivate students to make moral choice on their academic disciplines is required for progressive economic development. Moral education should become a national policy, especially in developing countries, including Nigeria. In essence, for real, unconditional loving attachments of mothers and teachers, to children and students, moral education is of necessity. Without this policy, the price mothers pay in children's upbringing as well as the skills they apply may be underestimated, devalued and neglected. Finally, the paper analyzed the important of morality in female technological development and sustainable national development and argues for people's attitudinal change towards to encouraging females to acquire technological knowledge. It was noted that technological education assists females to be creative and productive and that this should be included in the national policy of education. In conclusion, mothers and female teachers can be motivating forces for moral education which starts from homes to schools. Moral education is required for societal re-orientation and attitudinal change towards empowering females to acquire technological knowledge and skills.

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