NEED FOR DEVELOPING CURRICULUM ON MORAL EDUCATION FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
The need to develop a curriculum on moral education for the purpose of national development cannot be over-emphasized. This is due to the alarming rate of decline in the moral consciousness among youth and adult in the Nigerian society. The quality of the curriculum content of any nation determines the quality of its educational system. Curriculum is the vendor that passes the selected learning experiences (desirable values) to the future generation under the guidance of the school. This paper discusses the concept of education, moral values, moral education, and national development. Manifestation of moral decadence in the school and in the larger society, moral education and the curriculum, need for moral education are also examined. Based on the discussion, it was recommended among others that; curriculum experts should be involved to develop for all levels of the Nigerian secondary education, a sound moral education curriculum that will reflect the expected moral values such as: honesty, tolerance, peaceful coexistence, patriotism, love, national integration, unity etc. the methodology of teaching should be learner-centred, the political sector should be made less attractive to pave way for genuine individuals who will render selfless service to the nation for speedy development, and not those that will come for self aggrandizement.

Keywords: Moral, education, curriculum, development, values

Introduction
The need for the projection of an ideal society through the curriculum cannot be over emphasized. Formal education at all levels is organized based on a curriculum that requires the inculcation of the right types of values needed in that society. The target audiences for instruction are usually the students who will be adequately prepared for adult life through the instrumentality of schooling. In spite of the role of morality in academic achievement, there are some observable truancy, deviant behavior and indiscipline among students in the Nigerian schools. Nigeria, like most western nations, has predictably turned its attention to the need for a total and systematic moral education programme in her educational institutions. Thus, one of the objectives of Nigerian education recommended by the 1969 Curriculum Conference was “the inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society”. The recommendation was endorsed and produced in Section 1, Paragraph 5(2) of the Federal Republic of Nigeria National Policy on Education (1977), and also in section 1, paragraph 7 (b) of the NPE (2012).

The secondary level of education is very critical in the educational system of any society. This is the period where the child gets to the adolescent stage and indulges in juvenile delinquency if not properly managed. Many critics of the Nigerian scene believe that the most apparent sign of Nigeria’s moral predicament, which thereby points to the need for moral education, is the frightening level of official corruption in the nation’s public institutions. Nduka (1983) noted that there is the need to generate and sustain informed dialogue among various classes and groups of Nigerians with a view to identifying and restating the viable norms, including especially the moral values and attitudes which are capable of sustaining a modern, plural society and enhancing
individual and social development. The concern for a sound moral status is occasioned by the alarming rate of decline in the moral consciousness among youth and adults in the Nigerian society. Ohwovorione (2010) asserts that, this decline has become a disease eating systematically into the very vein of the entire nation. Curriculum is the vehicle which conveys the needs, aspirations and desires of a nation to the future generation under the auspices of the school. This is why, for the purpose of national development, it is expedient to infuse such values as honesty, patriotism, unity and national integration, tolerance and understanding of cultures, peace etc. into the curriculum. The curriculum of the Nigerian Educational System has not taken into cognizance, the imperative for moral education as a core subject or course that will be made mandatory in all levels of education, especially from the post primary level to the tertiary institutions. Experts have noted that “strategic planning at a macro-level is a pre-condition for successful and long-term national development.”

The concept of education
Education is a process therefore it must have both content and method. The content is knowledge and what are worthwhile (values) and the method allows the learner to understand what he is being taught (Kosemani, 2002). Fafunwa (1975) explained education as the aggregate of all the processes by which a child or young adult develop abilities, attitudes and other forms of behavior which are of positive value to the society in which he lives. That is to say that it is a process of transmitting culture in terms of continuity and growth and for disseminating knowledge either to ensure social control or to guarantee rational direction of the society or both. Chauhan (1983) defined education as a process of shaping behavior of the individual, adequate adjustment in the society. He looked at education as a way of developing desirable habits, skills and attitudes, which make an individual a good citizen. The school is the environment where teaching/learning process takes place. The purpose of the school is to formally handle the transmission of the content of education (ie knowledge and worthwhile values). Within the schools, a conscious effort is made to enable the pupils acquire greater amount and variety of knowledge, more complex skills, attitudes, moral values etc. as approved by the society and required for successful social adjustment in the society.

Moral values
Moral is concerned with goodness or badness of human character or behavior, or with the distinction between right and wrong. It is concerned with accepted rules and standards of human behavior. On the other hand, values according to Kalusi (1996), refers to our desires, wants, needs, interest and aspirations. Ohwovorione (2008) opined that value is a function of anything or practice which makes it desirable and acceptable to the society and maintained by the society. Hence, moral values are those desirable attitudes and behavior the society encourages or promotes. The behaviors that are undesirable are the vices. Moral values include the following: solidarity, cooperation, honesty, responsibility, respect, peace and tolerance. All these are universal values.

What is moral education
Moral education, broadly understood as a process of human development, or as “training from childhood in goodness” is as old as human society. The traditional curriculum was an integrated one aimed at socialization and character building. Fafunwa (1974) identified seven common educational objectives around which the traditional curriculum was organized. Among them are; to develop character, to inculcate respect for elders and those in positions of authority, to understand, appreciate, and promote the cultural heritage of the community. Most of the great educators have in one form or another placed moral education at the centre of their educational theory, and practice. Downey & Kelly (1978) in Iheoma (1995) observed that “moral upbringing or character training was for long the central feature of what education itself was understood to be by the great theorists and indeed, by the great practitioners. To illustrate this point, we need only to recall briefly the views of such famous
Educators as Cornelius, Locke, Rousseau and Pestalozzi. Cornenius (1592) who envisaged the establishment of a universal system of education that would teach “all things to all men” anchored his educational theory on moral and religious piety. The aim is that all men should be educated to be of quiet manners, so that those who are naturally of a good character should not be corrupted, while those who are evil should be recalled to righteousness. John Locke (1631) asserts that the cultivation of virtue or good morals was absolutely essential for the production of an enlightened gentleman. The rational building model is concerned with the aspect of judging, especially with providing teachers with a rational for engaging in moral education. The values clarification model is primarily concerned with promoting self-consciousness with regard to one’s values. It is aimed at helping students to discover and examine their values so as to achieve self awareness. The cognitive moral development model by Jean Piaget seeks to help students think through moral problems and issues in increasingly sophisticated and comprehensive ways. Consideration model stresses the importance of caring as distinct from judging (Iheoma 1995). According to McPhail (1972), the task of moral education is to build on the fundamental core of caring and consideration that all people naturally possess and to “demonstrate empirically that the differences among persons are superficial, while the similarities are profound”.

**National development**

Development is usually taken to involve not only economic growth, but also some notion of equitable distribution, provision of health care, education, housing and other essential services all with a view to improving the individual and collective quality of life (Naomi, 1995). Gboyega (2003) sees development as an idea that embodies all attempts to improve the conditions of human existence in all ramifications.

National, according to Longman dictionary of contemporary English, refers to a phenomenon that embraces a whole nation. Hence national development can be described as the overall development or a collective socio-political, economic, religious advancement of a nation.

According to Dike, (2008), the concept of national development (economic, political and social) is said to bring with it valuable and positive changes that improves the living standards of the people, as it creates employment opportunities and equality of opportunity, and reduces poverty, among other things. It is very obvious that with the indices used to measure development, Nigeria needs to act fast so as to enhance its speed and direction towards the realization of vision 2020, as a development agenda of the nation. This can be realized through a functional curriculum that will address the yearnings and aspirations of the nation as stated in the nations educational aims.

**Manifestation of moral decadence in the Nigerian society**

Moral decadence is manifested in the Nigerian society in divers ways. These manifestations are discussed under five sub-headings. They include: examination malpractice, cultism and gangsterism, electoral violence and corruption. In the school Examination Malpractice: Schools conduct examination as a yardstick for assessment. Maduka (1993) defined examination as a way to ascertain how much of a subject matter in a particular field of study the candidate has mastered. Balogun (1999) also defined it as the process through which students are evaluated or tested to find out the quality of knowledge they have acquired within a specific period. Examination malpractice is any wrong doing before, during or after any examination. The current trend of examination malpractice is quite alarming. In short, it has become an epidemic in the nation’s educational system. Okwilagwe ((2001) asserts that students’ involvement in examination malpractices has become perennial and institutionalized. Moral education is needed to change this dangerous trend because it is a detailed information which concerns the principles of right and wrong behaviors. Examination malpractices range from impersonation, leakage of questions, computer fraud, fraudulent practices by invigilators, examination officials and security personnel
charged with supervising examination, tampering with results, sorting, bringing in foreign materials into examination halls, copying from friends, assault on examination officials, use of mobile phones for malpractice during examinations. Some individuals and institutions with morality problems are known to have "aided and abetted frauds" during the Joint Admissions and Matriculations Board (JAMB) examination, the West African Examination Council (WAEC) and National Examinations Council (NECO), leading to the frequent cancellation of results in the society. The Daily Independent of May 22, 2005 in Dike (2008) reported that in past nine years, about five million results have been cancelled.

Cultism and Gangsterism: An examination of the post primary schools and tertiary institutions would reveal cases of sexual harassment, the use of sophisticated weapons, students and also some lecturers who’s consciences are dead. Raufu in Pemede (2000) is of the opinion that the problem of secret cult with its associated problems like rape, killing and maiming, palfrey, extortion etc. in tertiary institutions has permanently imprinted the issue in the mind of the average Nigerian. Oluwatobist & Babatunde (2010) reported that cultism on campus emerged as a result of social unacceptable behavior of media explosion, importation of foreign culture, the internet and junk magazine inclusive which overwhelm the youths so that they fall pray to their effect. Gangsterism is seen as a group of criminals especially those who are armed and use guns to intimidate others, or group of students acting as terrorists within the school system (Odubunmi 1998). He went further to state that gangsterism is secret cult in campuses.

In the larger society
Electoral violence: In any political system where there are snatches of ballot boxes, stuffing of ballot boxes, elimination of political opponents, riots and thugery, forceful declaration of fake results even when no election is held, refusal to swear in winners of elections, or refusal to vacate office after losing election is said to be under political violence. Some of the causes of political violence are: failure of justice system, lack of democratic culture, corruption and the lucrative nature of our political sector.

Corruption: The dire economic condition of the majority of Nigerians makes social vices like corruption to thrive and make the electorate susceptible to money-bag politicians. The lack of economic stability in the country is a strong motivator for corrupt individuals also who are willing to subvert the electoral process by making elections a “do” or “die” affair to ensure they get into public office with unfettered access to public funds and also in good position to influence those who are economically impoverished to engage in violence by inducing them with cash or kind.

Moral education and the curriculum
The quality of the curriculum content of any nation, determines the quality of its educational system. The relevant curriculum content must be valid, learnable, and significant, should reflect the interest of the learner and more importantly, should be consistent with social realities. The Nigerian Secondary Schools Curriculum as contained in the National Policy on Education (2012), section 5 provides for core subjects, prevocational electives and non-prevocational electives at the junior secondary level of education. Also, at the senior secondary level, it contains core subjects, vocational subjects and non-vocational subjects. A closer look at the core subjects at both levels of secondary education shows that emphases is placed on the development of the cognitive domain by setting exams for them at the end of each term. The psychomotor domain also enjoys some emphases in theory, but the affective domain is thrown into limbo. Ohwoviriono (2010) opined that the assessment of students is basically in academic performance and consequently bias. According to him, it is logical to say the introduction of continuous assessment (CA) would have taken care of moral assessment of the students at the junior
secondary level. But the challenging question is, how many schools actually go about continuous assessment objectively and are equipped enough in terms of human and material resources to objectively assess the moral conduct or affective competences of their students. At the secondary level of education, the assumption is that moral instruction could be taught or incorporated into the teaching of all subjects.

**Need for moral education**

There is an urgent need for the inclusion of moral education in the school curriculum due to much of corruption, exploitation, merciless killings as that of the dreaded Boko Haram and other related incidences, terrorism, communalism, pollution, global unrest, mutual hatred and a total crises of character. All the aforementioned need to be reformed. It would be impossible, and, even if possible, of little value to attempt a comprehensive picture of the types and scope of Nigerian corruption. I will only say that most people will agree that corruption has grown enormously in variety, magnitude and brazenness since the beginning of the second republic because it has been extravagantly fuelled by budgetary abuse and political patronage on an unprecedented scale (Achebe, 1983).

This view is in line with Iheoma (1995) who pointed out that the ominous features of the moral climate of our country are ubiquitous and conspicuous even to a casual observer: rampant fraud, endemic corruption in high and low places, bribery, stealing and robbery with violence, scandalous nepotism, political patronage and abuse of power, excessive materialism which is fast becoming the dominant value of the Nigerian society. He went further to say that the moral ills of our society have been a matter of a serious concern to the general public as well as in official government procurements. The increasing moral problems in Nigeria (corruption, greed, dishonesty, violent crime, political killings, drugs (peddling and abuse) and other destructive behaviors, call for “values education” in the society. Presently, corruption drives and shapes social values in Nigeria, and for some individuals, the quest for “easy money” is a justification for breaking the laws of the land and distorting policies directed toward national development.

Consequently, unnecessary display of ill-acquired wealth threatens Nigeria and its democratic political process. When the leaders and the people think of public service in instrumental way, accountability declines, and national development is adversely affected (Dike, 2008). It is not out of place to note at this juncture that the youths of this great country Nigeria, need inspiring role models (elders) who make positive contributions to their communities because most of the youths are growing up not knowing that corruption is socially injurious. A typical example of a lawmaker who recruited thugs to snatch ballot boxes will be surprised to see his son cheating in the examination hall because he assumes that it is morally alright because his father (the lawmaker) did it with impunity. Experts in “moral education” believe that “moral development” “promotes critical thinking and moral reasoning” (Garrod &Bramble, 1977), which positively impacts national development.

**Recommendations**

In order to ensure a well developed curriculum on moral education for national development, the following recommendations are made;

1. Curriculum experts should be involved to develop for all levels of the Nigerian secondary education, a sound moral education curriculum that will reflect the expected moral values of the Nigerian society such as honesty, tolerance, peaceful coexistence, patriotism, love, national integration, unity etc.
2. The methodology of teaching should shift from the traditional methods to the learner-centred method of delivery like the questioning and project methods, discussion method.
3. Team games should be introduced to encourage team spirit among students.
4. Continuous assessment system should be improved especially on all domains; cognitive, affective and psychomotor.
5. Government should make the political sector less attractive. Bythis, only people who want to render selfless service that will emerge as
leaders, and not those with questionable characters who’s intention is for self aggrandizement.

6. Emphases on paper qualification should be discouraged.

7. There should be change of orientation as regards non implementation of policies. Incorporating moral education in the curriculum to be taught as core subject in our schools is therefore expected to help students to acquire the necessary skills to engage in the kind of thinking and moral reasoning required to reach sound conclusions about moral matters.

References


