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RELIGIOUS AND MORAL EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: GLOBAL IMPLICATIONS

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ABSTRACT

No country is self-suffIcient, hence the needfor exchange of goods and services. This entails sincerity and honesty to be able to comfortably combat peculiar and identical challenges. Furthermore, there are increasing populations with limited resources to caterfor the needs of the people. Exploitation of the available resources and environmental degradation instead of development among others are used in the name of globalisation to directly or indirectly under-develop some countries . Nigeria, for instance, has everything it takes to be developed but is constrained due to moral and ethical issues with the connivance of foreign collaborators. This has rendered the nation solely dependent despite her endowed natural human and material resources. The paper argues for the use of religious and moral education to sensihze Nigerians on how to live and ensure sustainable development of their environment for the sake of posterity. Religious and moral values can serve as the antidote to greed, selfstmess and un-sustainability in the society so that the much sought sustainable global development will not be an illusion.

KEYWORDS: Moral education, Sustainable development

L\'TRODUCTION

The world is becoming a global village with peculiar and identical challenges. One of such challenges is increasing population with limited resources to cater for the needs of the people. In most cases, the available material resources are used for personal interest without considering other citizens' needs. Meanwhile, every citizen

needs food, health care, shelter, water, and other basic amenities to keep body, soul and environment stable. These needs are very scarce and almost unaffordable as a result of greed.

Another challenge is the exploitation of the available resources. This is the case with most developing nations like Nigeria. There has been systematic exploitation of natural and human resources, with international collaboration. For instance, as a member of Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), Nigeria still exports her crude oil for refining. While the country gets petroleum product back, she losses other minerals that could be used for development. This implies that some individuals and countries are benefitting maximally from other minerals in the crude oil which the Nigerian National Petroleum Cooperation (NNPC) cannot account for.

Again, another challenge in the Nigerian society is environmental degradation instead of development. The environment is no longer Sustained as a result of several activities. One of such activities is agriculture, which is the main occupation of most Nigerians. The manner and approach of using chemical substances for clearing farm lands, weeding and crop growth are detrimental to the soil and environment. This is also applicable to livestock farming. It appears that National Agency for Food and Drug Administration Control (NAFDAC), Standard Organisation of Nigeria (SON) and other relevant bodies have little or no control over these for whatever reason(s). Other activities that aid and abate environmental degradation include deforestation, industrialization, over fishing and abuse of freshwater supply, among others.

Due to these challenges, the authors advocate the use of religious and moral education to sensitize Nigerians on how to live and ensure sustainable development of their environment for the sake of posterity. Similarly, the inculcation of religious and moral values can serve as the antidote to greed, selfishness and un-sustainability in the society. Science and technology have vital parts to play but without religious and moral impetus, the much sought sustainable global development will be an illusion

CONCEPTUAL FRAME WORK

Although religious and moral concepts have common characteristics and goals, we shall briefly discuss them separately. In addition, globalisation with emphasis on its actualization in developing nations like Nigeria is also discussed for sustainable development.

Religious Education

Religious education is the teaching by a professionally trained teacher of a particular

:eligion such as Christianity, Islam, and African Tradition in Nigeria and its varied bpects. These aspects include religious beliefs, customs, doctrines, rites, rituals, and personal roles. Sandwell.gov.uk (2018) says religious education makes a distinctive contribution to the school curriculum by developing learners' knowledge and understanding of religion, religious beliefs, practices, language and traditions and aeir influence on individuals, communities, societies and cultures. It enables !earners to consider and respond to a range of important questions related to their ou'n spiritual development, the development ofvalues and attitudes and fundamental questions concerning the meaning and purpose of life. It is therefore an essential component of a broad and balanced education.

From the on-going, it is affirmed that the objectives of religious education are numerous among which are to :

1 provide opportunities for learners to learn andto achieve their goals
2 develop an understanding of the meaning and purpose of life as advanced by different religions
3 promote leamers' cultural, moral, social and spiritual development and prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of the present and fbture
4 encourage informed dialogue among various cultural and religious organisations and groups to foster harmony and peace among people of diverse beliefs and customs within the society
5 establish anentitlement and standards
6 encourage a critical and reflective approach to religious beliefs and practices 7 promotecontinuity, coherence andpublic understanding
8 encourage appreciation andrespect forvariousbelief systems
9 create an awareness of the diversity and communality that exist in religions

>Ioral Education

Moral education starts from birth. Parents are given the responsibility to train their children on what is acceptable and not acceptable or what is right and wrong at home. In the school, teachers, irrespective of their areas of specialization are expected to abide by certain codes of conduct. They are expected to transmit these codes to their students in turn. This is why Rather and Upadehyaya (20 1 5) postulate that morals are something which need to be inculcated rather than taught. By the help of it, one learns the right way of conduct. It is like a programming language which when learnt properly enables individuals to develop efficient programs to fulfill the needs of the users or general public. In addition, moral education has much importance in human lives. It teaches the best way to live life which always matters. According to Kiss and Euben (2010)> moral (or perhaps immoral) education goes on constantly, if not

always self-consciously. Aristotle captured this insight when he argued that every association has a moral end, a hierarchy of values, which is cultivated through its everyday norms and practices.

In a simpler form, Elkind (2014) views moral education as helping people acquire those virtues or moral habits that will help them individually to live good lives and at the same time become productive, contributing members of their communities. In this vein, moral education should contribute not only to the students as individuals, but also to the social cohesion of a community. The classic work on the moral judgment of children was done by Jean Piaget. His work was laterelaborated by Lawrence Kohlberg. It can thus be said that both unilateral (objective) and mutual (subjective) authority and morality are important in everyday life. This implies that all subjects should incorporate moral education into their curriculum. To support this view, De Ruyter and Miedema (2015) argue that moral education should not necessarily be taught as a separate topic in schools (although it is possible to have

il lessons in character education), but can be part of other curricular subjects as well. It is also true that the moral development of students is not only furthered in lessons, the ethos of the school as well as rules and regulations in the school are also strengthened.

Globalization

The term globalisation is beautiful but also very complex to comprehend and actualize especially in developing countries. From the economic perspective, it is understood to be grounded in the theory of comparative advantage, which states that countries that are good at producing a particular good are better off exporting it to countries that are less efficient at producing that good. The question is what are the accrued benefits especially to the exporting countries? The responses may scholarly differ as in the definition of the term or concept. For example, Gibson (2014) defines globalisation as the process of changing to an integrated world from an isolated one, It can be summed up as a long-term change towards greater international cooperation in economics, politics, ideas, cultural values, and the exchange of knowledge. Ideally, these parameters are of great importance to all nations ofthe world if handled sincerely; hence, the need for religious and moral education to sustain the development. This implies that the actors or those saddled with the responsibility of governance have obligations to perform.

In addition, managementstudyguide.com (2018) sees globalization as the free movement of goods, services and people across the world in a seamless and integrated manner. This sounds nice and beautiful; however, there are many obstacles. For security and other reasons, there have been restrictions of movement

from one country to another. Goods are inspected, restrictions are placed and some foreign policies are not flexible enough. Services are sometimes rendered for selfish reasons and on exploitative bases especially in Nigeria. These observations motivated the authors to argue for religious and moral education to sen'e as a propelling factor in the achievement of the objectives of globalisation in Nigeria.

Sustainable Development

T}rere has been a disconnect between the available natural resources and the rate of utilization or consumption; this is un-sustaining and there is need to balance the equation. To do this, the concept of sustainable development was coined. Amacker (20 11) recounts that sustainable development was a term first coined in 1980, which means to conserve the earth's natural resources. The World Commission on Environment and Development defined sustainable development as "the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs". The question one may ask is how feasible is this? To address this, Gess and Pidlisnyuk (2005) note that sustainable development depends on systems of governments that are transparent, participatory, and accountable, with full access to relevant information and decision-making processes by all stakeholders. This is where religious and moral education becomes imperative because dishonest and greedy government officials will not allow sustainable development to take place. Mahatma Gandhi thus rightly observed that rhe earth provides enough to satisfy every person's need but not every person's greed"

Sustainable development is the organizing principle for meeting human ::\-elopment goals while at the same time sustaining the ability of natural systems to ::o\'ide the natural resources and ecosystem services upon which the economy and $3ciety depend. The desired result is a state or society where living conditions and ::source use continue to meet human needs without undermining the integrity and $=bility of the natural systems. Fundamental human needs such as the availability =d quality of air, water, food and shelter are also the ecological foundations for iIstainable development (White, Stallones, & Last, 2013). Therefore, sustainability === be defined as the practice of maintaining processes of productivity indefinitely ::rural or human made) by replacing resources used with resources of equal or ; eater value without degrading or endangering natural biotic systems (Kahle & ::rel-Atay> 2014). In brief, it is the holistic approach and temporal processes that ii: to the end point of sustainability (Shaker, 20 1 5).

: Jiscussing this topic, several indices have to be considered. Legrand.com (2018)
:';_:3tiates that sustainable development implies the fulfillment of several

conditions: preserving the overall balance, respect for the environment, and preventing the exhaustion of natural resources. Reduced production of waste and the rationalisation of production and energy consumption must also be implemented. Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals (REACH) regulations came into force on 1 st June 2007 in Europe and America excluding Nigeria. Its main objective is the protection of human health and the environment against the risks that can be caused by chemicals. In addition, the management of Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE), represents equipment operating on electrical current or electromagnetic fields, as well as equipment that produce, transfer, or measure such currents and fields and Restriction of Hazardous Substances (RoHS).

To achieve sustainable development, there are many major challenges to be addressed, They require a re-thinkingof moral attitude to economy and growth in favour of a society that is more economical in its use of raw materials and energy. Some of these challenges according to Legrand.com (2018) include climate change, energy consumption, waste production, threats to public health, poverty, social exclusion, management of natural resources, loss ofbiodiversity, and land use.

GLOBAL IMPLICATIONS

On the international front, religious and moral education or instnrction came under severe attack in Europe and America in the 19th century. Intellectual leaders and writers were deeply influenced by the ideas of the English naturalist Charles Darwin, the German political philosopher Karl Marx, the Austrian neurologist and founder of psychoanalysis Sigmund Freud, and the German philosopher and poet Friedrich Nietzsche, and by growing strict interpretation of the separation of Church and State doctrine (Stateuniversity.com, 2018). Consequently, many crimes considered to have been outdated started to resurface even in developed societies. Hence, the need to revert to status quo though under a different umbrella called character education.

In America for instance, Stateuniversity.com (2018) reports that the impetus and energy behind the return of character education to American schools did not come from within the educational community. It was fueled, first, by parental desire for orderly schools where standards of behaviour and good habits are stressed, and, second, by state and national politicians who responded to these anxious concerns of parents. During his presidency, William Clinton hosted five conferences on character education. President George W. Bush expanded on the programmes of the previous administration and made character education a major focus of his educational reform agenda. One of the politically appealing aspects of character education, as opposed to moral education with its religious overtones, is that character education speaks more to the formation of a good citizen. A widely

repeated definition (i.e., character education is helping a child to know the good, to desire the good, and to do the good) straddles this issue.

In fact, moral reasoning is also subjected to situational influences (Doris, 2010), and these influences might be used to enhance the level of reasoning as well as moral behaviour. This could be attributed to differences in persons or societies, among others. Each person's universe is different from that of another, setting up a unique personal moral grammar for the social life (Narvaez, 2011) that shifts among engagement, security, and imagination from moment to moment, situation to situation, relationship to relationship.

Indeed, there are tremendous advantages of globalisation. However, they have adverse implications if religious and moral education is not properly cultivated in the lives of the actors. The following implications are briefly discussed with insight from Collins (2015), Futureofworking.com (2015), and Greengarageblog.org (2018) on economic, health, political, social and cultural lives of the nations and her citizens.

On the economic front, globalisation is expected to promote global economic growth, create jobs, and make companies more competitive. Competition between countries is supposed to lower prices but countries manipulate their currency to get a price advantage. Furthermore, the idea of free trade is supposed to reduce barriers such as tariffs, value added taxes (in 161 countries), subsidies, and other barriers between nations but the big G20 countries added more than 1,200 restrictive export and import measures since 2008. This has adverse implications for Nigeria and other developing societies. Religiously and morally, globalisation is supposed to provide poor countries a chance to develop economically which is presently very difficult making the rich richer while making the non-rich poorer.

Health wise, globalisation is not working for the majority of the world as a result of inequality. This is worsened both internationally and within countries as the United **X**-ations Development Program reports that the richest 20 percent of the world's population consume 86 percent of the world's resources while the poorest 80 percent consume just 14 percent. It is also leading to the incursion of communicable diseases . Deadly diseases like HIV/AIDS are being spread by travelers to the remotest corners of the globe.

Politically? the much desired democracy seems to be going hand in hand without colonialist designs. Gradually, there is a world power that is being created instead of compartmentalized power sectors. There is now a worldwide market for companies and consumers who have access to products of different countries. Multinational

corporations are increasingly influencing political decisions instead of commercial activities. Large multi-national corporations have the ability to exploit tax havens in other countries to avoid paying taxes, which is morally wrong. They are accused of social injustice, unfair working conditions (including slave labor wages, living and working conditions), as well as lack of concern for environment, mismanagement of natural resources, and ecological damage.

Knowledge wise, there is more influx of information between two countries, which do not have anything in common. Since countries share financial interests, corporations and governments trying to sort out ecological problemsfor each other only through talking is seen more than trying. Legrand.com (2018) posits that although the energy intensity needs of modern economies are gradually falling, enormous quantities of energy will be required to improve living conditions in developing countries. The energy sector itself occupies an important place in the world economy in terms of employment, income, and trade. The USA (accounting for 5% of the world's population) consumes 25% of the world's oil production! Most
specialists agree that, at current rates of consumption, oil reserves will run out within 50 years

Socially, globalisation is open and tolerant towards other people who live in other parts of the world as they are not considered as aliens. Most people see speedy travel, mass communication and quick dissemination of information through the internet as benefits of globalization. There is cultural intermingling and each country is learning more about other cultures. Globalization has led to exploitation of labour. Prisoners and child workers are used to work in inhumane conditions ignoring safety standards in order to produce cheap goods. There is also an increase in human trafficking, which could successfUlly be handled with religious and moral education.

CONCLUSION

There are several advantages and disadvantage in developing globalised societies. This has implications in the areas of economy, health, politics, knowledge dissemination, social and cultural lives of the people. Therefore, it is like a huge investment that certain modalities have to be put in place for Nigerians to see the dividends of sustainable development. These vital indices are religious and moral education to be able to tame greed, selfishness, the rich getting richer while making the non-rich poorer syndrome.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the on-going, the paper recommends the following:

1. Governments at federal, state and local levels should take advantage of economic growth by appointing technocrats, reputable and honest individualsas heads; remove unreasonable tariffs and value added taxes that end in personal treasuries; ensure good working conditions for Nigerians and non-Nigerians alike; manage God given natural resources
2. Every Nigerian has a social responsibility to perform for the realisation of sustainable development. Religious and moral instructors should teach and live exemplary lives for others to emulate. They are also to rebuke and encourage those they teach to report defaulters to the appropriate quarters for **redress**.

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