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African Moral Education and Poverty Reduction for Inclusive Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

The issues of inadequate attention to African moral education and poverty have been a strenuous concern in Nigeria. African moral values have lack to promote mutual welfare, growth, creativity, and meaning, striving for what is good over what is bad and what is right over what is wrong in our contemporary society. Hence, nonchalant attitudes of parents, society, school and government with regards to African moral education have resulted to high rate of broken homes in our societies, rapid population growth which caused reduction in per capita income. The issue of poverty in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. The researcher used descriptive phenomenological approach in this work. It was discovered that most parents are unable to train their children due to some cultural beliefs; consequently, moral education has been skipped in Nigerian educational system while government has failed to diversify the economy in order to create job opportunities for eradication of poverty. Meanwhile, if adequate attention is given to the necessary policies enacted by the government to tackle poverty and moral education, Nigeria would experience boom in all the sectors which will bring about inclusive development.

Key Words: Moral, Education, Poverty, Reduction, Development

Introduction

Nigeria is a country located in West Africa with an estimated population of over 200 million people. Despite the country's rich cultural heritage, it faces several challenges. These include poverty, poor education, disease, and several other vices. To address

these challenges, various initiatives have been put in place, including programs aimed at promoting African moral education, and poverty reduction.

African moral education is built on the idea that values and morals should be an integral part of a person's education. This type of

education emphasizes the importance of respect, compassion, cooperation, and community spirit. It aims to promote positive behavior, raise moral standards, and foster discipline. Several programs have been put in place to promote African moral education. The Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council have included moral education as part of the country's primary and secondary school curricula. Non-governmental organizations such as the Centre for Ethics and Self-Value Orientation have also been established to promote African moral education.

Poverty in Nigeria remains a significant issue, with a high percentage of the population living below the poverty line. However, several initiatives have been put in place to address poverty in the country. These include, according to Khorravi and Karimi, (2010), “job creation programs, youth empowerment initiatives, and social protection programs. Non-governmental organizations and international development partners such as the World Bank have also been involved in poverty reduction efforts in Nigeria”. There is hardly any Government that is not concerned about its nation's economic growth and the development and welfare of its citizenry. In fact, many scholars have argued that the essence of any nation's

economic policy is to achieve economic growth (Fadare, 2010). African Economic Outlook (2012) posits that though the Nigerian economy grows at an average of 7.4 per cent, the growth has not impacted significantly on unemployment and poverty in the country. The economy remains unable to produce enough jobs to justify the robust economic growth. The Nigerian economy grows at an average of 7.4 per cent per annum while unemployment rate and inflation hovers around 24% and 7.9% respectively. Statistics have shown that about 70% of Nigerians live below the poverty line of USD 2 per day (Ucha, 2010). It is not unexpected that economic growth should impact positively on the citizenry wellbeing measured in terms of improved standard of living and reduction in unemployment rates amongst other indices. The inability of the economic growth to make positive significant impact on the citizenry can be explained off on the huge contribution of the oil sector to the GDP because the oil sector is not labour intensive. Several schools of thought have been expressed as to why economic growth is not a reflection of the citizenry's wellbeing (Forgeard et al., 2011). First is the traditional view that believes that the favourable or unfavourable structure of the economy as defined by institutional and policy

frameworks determine the growth pattern of the economy.

In conclusion, Nigeria has a rich cultural heritage, but the country continues to face several challenges. Initiatives aimed at promoting African moral education, girl child education, and poverty reduction play a significant role in addressing some of the challenges faced by the country.

Abata, et al (2012) opine that “all over the world, there is no consensus as to the extent of Government’s involvement in the economy”. It is an undisputable fact that one of the primary responsibilities of the Government is the creation and sustenance of an enabling environment that guarantees justice and fairness, equity and economic stability in promoting growth and development. Hence, this paper tends to look at how African moral education, girl child education and poverty reduction has brought about an inclusive development in Nigeria.

African Moral Education

There are many problems in Africa today which could be addressed, partially or wholly, through moral education, among them corruption, poverty, hunger, Aids and war. “Morality deals with how humans treat other beings so as to promote mutual welfare, growth, creativity, and meaning, striving for

what is good over what is bad and what is right over what is wrong” (Thiroux 1998, p. 28). There are different kinds of morality. For instance, we have individual morality, customary morality, social morality and reflective morality (Chatterton-Hill 1971, p.185). On its part, the lifelong process of education is meant to make us intellectually and morally better. Apart from being knowledgeable, a truly educated person is also expected to be morally competent.

Hence, Moral education involves the development of the capacity, knowledge, freedom and willingness to subscribe to ethical values in one’s daily decisions and consequent actions. Oduor (1990, p.16) distinguishes between “moral education” and “moral training”. For him, the former refers to “efforts aimed at helping a child attain an understanding and appreciation of the need for him/her to lead an ethically upright life”, while the latter denotes “efforts aimed at causing a child to adhere to a set of moral rules regardless of whether or not he/she understands and appreciates the functions of such rules”. So understood, moral education affirms the dignity of the human person by encouraging a rational approach to the determination of right and wrong, while moral training dehumanizes the individual by

indoctrinating him/her into a parrot-like compliance to societal dictates.

Nigerian leaders have sometimes overlooked the importance of African moral education, as they often focused more on the western style of education, which emphasizes cognitive development at the expense of moral and emotional development.

African moral education is rooted in the cultural values and traditions of the continent, and it emphasizes holistic development, moral values, and ethical behaviour. It is essential for creating a sense of collective responsibility and social cohesion, which are vital for the sustainable development of the continent.

Some Nigerian leaders have recognized the importance of moral education and have taken steps to promote it. However, more needs to be done to ensure that it is given the attention that it deserves and integrated into the educational curriculum at all levels. This will require a change in mindset and a commitment to prioritize moral education as a crucial component of Nigeria's educational system.

Thiroux (1998) cited that if African moral education is given precedence in Nigerian educational system, it will make vital

contributions to inclusive development in several ways such as:

1. Community: Central to African moral education is the concept of community. African societies are built around strong social ties and interdependence, which fosters cooperation, empathy, and respect for others. This sense of community is evident in the emphasis on contributing to the well-being of others, caring for the elderly, and the collective responsibility to maintain order and respect for authority.

2. Resilience: African moral education emphasizes the importance of resilience in overcoming adversity. African societies have endured numerous challenges, including colonialism, civil wars, and economic instability. Despite these hardships, African communities have persevered and maintained their cultural values and traditions. This resilience is fostered through the promotion of determination, perseverance, and hard work, which are emphasized in African moral education.

3. Respect for nature: African moral education stresses the importance of respecting nature and all living things. In many African cultures, the natural world is seen as sacred, and humans have a responsibility to protect and nurture it. This

respect for nature is reflected in the emphasis on sustainability and conservation practices, which are essential for maintaining a healthy planet.

4. Personal development: African moral education places a strong emphasis on personal development, with an emphasis on developing a strong moral character and a sense of self-worth. This is achieved through adherence to cultural norms and values and the cultivation of qualities such as honesty, integrity, and humility.

In conclusion, African moral education would make significant contributions to society by promoting community, resilience, respect for nature, and personal development. These values are essential for the well-being of individuals and the community as a whole, and can provide a framework for building a more just and equitable world.

Poverty Reduction

What can be done to alleviate poverty?

In thinking about what can be done to alleviate poverty, there are at least two ways to address this question. The first is to take a look at what one as an individual can do to reduce his or her own chances of experiencing poverty. The second is to focus

on what can we do as a nation to reduce the overall extent of poverty in this country.

Individual Strategies

With respect to the first question, one thing that is absolutely clear from the research is that those with greater human capital (e.g., education, skills, training, etc.) tend to be more competitive in the labor market, and as a result, will run a lower risk of experiencing poverty. Individuals possessing more education, skills, and training are typically more competitive when it comes to landing higher paying jobs. Consequently, one way to reduce your individual chances of experiencing poverty is to increase your amount of human capital. By doing so, you will make yourself more attractive to employers, resulting in a reduced risk of unemployment or working at a lower paying job, which in turn results in a lower probability of poverty.

A second individual way for individuals to cope with poverty is by being financially prepared when economic shocks occur. It is quite likely that at some point you may experience one or more of these setbacks. These could include losing a job, families splitting up, health emergencies, or other events that can lead to economic turmoil. When economic insecurity strikes, do you

have enough savings and accumulated economic assets to carry you through such difficult times?

It turns out that many of us have had difficulty with respect to our savings behavior. For example, a recent study from the Federal Reserve found that 37 percent of Americans did not have enough money saved to cover a 400 dollar emergency expense. Other research has shown that a majority of the population do not have enough liquid assets to keep them above the poverty line for three months should they lose their main source of income.

Consequently, saving a portion of your paycheck can become an important insurance strategy for dealing with that rainy day. Putting aside a set amount of income each month results in some degree of economic security should the need arise.

Policy Strategies

A second way to think about alleviating poverty is to examine what can be done on a policy level to reduce the number of households that are poor. There are at least four broad strategies that can be employed to reduce poverty on a national, state, and local level.

First, there is a need to create enough adequately paying jobs that can support individuals and families above the poverty line. This includes initiatives such as raising the minimum wage to a living wage, increasing the Earned Income Tax Credit, and stimulating the creation of good quality jobs.

Second, it is important to increase the accessibility of key social and public goods. These include quality education (both at the primary and secondary level, as well as at the post-secondary level), health care, affordable housing, and child care.

Third, policies that encourage the building of assets, particularly for those of modest means, is vital. Likewise, building the assets and resources of lower income communities is important.

Finally, providing a strong and effective social safety net is critical in addressing poverty on a national, state, or local level. This would include a range of programs and supports designed to allow families to get back on their feet when economic turmoil strikes.

Can you think of other policies and strategies that would be effective in reducing the overall U.S. rates of poverty? What about

individual behaviors and actions that might reduce the risk of poverty?

Poverty reduction plays a crucial role in achieving inclusive development in Nigeria. Here are some key contributions of poverty reduction to inclusive development in the country:

1. Increased economic growth: One of the primary contributions of poverty reduction to inclusive development in Nigeria is the boost to its economic growth. When poverty is reduced, more individuals have access to resources and opportunities which translate to an expansion of productivity capacity. This, in turn, leads to increased economic growth and development of the country.

2. Enhanced human capital: Poverty reduction programs in Nigeria often focus on enhancing human capital through education and skills training. This investment leads to the acquisition of human skills that aligns with the industrial need of the country. This equips citizens to participate productively in the economic system, thereby contributing to inclusive growth and development.

3. Increased consumption and purchasing power: When poverty is reduced, people have more money to spend, thereby increasing consumption in the economy. This increased purchasing power can drive

economic growth and create more job opportunities, leading to a more inclusive society.

4. Reduced inequality: Poverty reduction helps to make the distribution of wealth more equitable in society. By reducing poverty, inequalities in wealth also come down, which leads to a more just and equal society.

5. Improved standard of living: Poverty reduction programs, such as social protection policies, can help to improve the standard of living for Nigeria's poorest citizens. Providing social safety nets and welfare benefits, such as conditional cash transfers, can help to alleviate poverty and improve the welfare of the poorest members of society.

In summary, poverty reduction can contribute to inclusive development in Nigeria through increased economic growth and consumption, enhanced human capital, reduced inequality, and an improved standard of living for all Nigerians.

Recommendations

1. African moral education: African moral education should be taught in schools to help children understand their cultural background, learn traditional values, and develop a sense of community. This can be

done by incorporating African proverbs and folktales into the curriculum.

2. Poverty reduction: Addressing poverty requires a holistic approach that focuses on improving health, education, and economic opportunities. Programs that provide support to low-income families in terms of basic necessities like food; housing can also be an effective measure in reducing the poverty rate. Additionally, by providing capital and training to women entrepreneurs, we can help to facilitate income generation and decrease poverty rates.

4. Skills Acquisition Programs: To reduce the rate of unemployment, skills acquisition programs should be introduced. This will help equip the populace with the necessary skills needed to start a business.

5. Governmental Support: The government needs to focus on investing in social and economic programs that would lead to job creation and empowerment of the citizenry. Providing education, healthcare, electricity and safe drinking water would be an effective measure in reducing the poverty rate.

Overall, to make the above recommendations as effective as possible, it will demand the collaboration of the government, civic organization and the populace at large.

Conclusion

From all indication, there cannot be any form of inclusive development in both the private and public sector in Nigeria without considering some factors which includes African moral education which has to do with the system of values, beliefs and practices that guides individuals and collective behaviour in African societies. It is primarily based on the belief in communal values, respect for elders, and an understanding of one's place in the community. Poverty reduction which has to do with the government providing adequate and good paying jobs that can support individuals and families to rise above the poverty line, increase in the accessibility of key social and public goods, and policies that encourage the building of assets, particularly for those of modest means. Hence, with these on ground inclusive development in Nigeria is achievable.

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