



Social Analysis of Moral Malpractice Challenging Education Sector in Nigeria

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Original Research Article

Received 23rd January 2014
Accepted 17th march 2014
Published 28th March 2014

ABSTRACT

Several studies have emerged on education being adequately challenged in Nigeria, yet little is known in the literature on the social analysis of moral decadence that has become a common feature of the nation's education system and spread to other institutions like an harmattan fire. Therefore, this article uses data from descriptive source to build upon previous studies in order to address this gap in knowledge. It delves with factors responsible for the prevailing moral dilemma in the nation's education system and also illustrates ways in which the scourge manifests in many spheres of life. Employing a core Sociological paradigm (Functionalism) to diagnose this problem, the study highlights areas of defects and suggests the way forward for the nation's education sector. This lies in the teaching of moral education, rooted in cultural ethics and ethos at all level of education, coupled with godly doctrines. These will not only help to produce pragmatic leaders to bail the nation's education sector out of the current state of oblivion; they will also ensure national development in all areas of human endeavours. The paper therefore, recommends the enforcement of ethics education rooted in the traditional values of Africa in high schools and universities to enhance lost of moral character in Nigeria.

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Keywords: Social analysis; moral dilemma; education.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a key component of personal development [1,2,3]. It is the process of becoming the best people can be in life [4]. Not surprisingly, there is a high correlation between individual progress and education in modern societies [5]. Hence, educated persons more successful in life than illiterates. This is because the skills learnt in institutions of learning make them relevant in work organizations and businesses than illiterates. However, the more people succeed in work settings and personal businesses the more society itself advances. Thus, no society can progress without an adequate input of her manpower assets. It is high level human capital assets that drive the nations' economies and ensure rapid transformation [6]. The stock of highly-educated individuals produced by tertiary institutions therefore, plays an important role in the innovation and sustainable development of any society [6]. In other words, education provides mankind with knowledge and information which could bring about desirable changes in the way they think, feel and act. Nevertheless, the attainment of these virtues seem to be depend on the contents of education, teaching methods and willingness of people to learn, coupled with positive character. However, this paper lays much emphasis on positive character because it serves as the yardstick for the success of other factors in ensuring societal advancement [7].

[8] views character in terms of the following six co-existent features: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship. Good character is said to be in existence by [8], in societies or institutions, where the above features are constantly and positively exhibited while bad character manifest in milieus where the reverse is the case. From the military incursion into politics, [8] argues, Nigerian education system has been infused with negative characters, as clearly demonstrated in the plight of tertiary institutions today. It is not unreasonable to note that good character that was in existence in higher institutions, prior to military incursion into politics, turned into bad character due to poor funding of education, poor remunerations and conditions of service for members of staff. In an attempt to survival, many manpower assets in academia migrated to greener pasture en mass [9] while the majority of faculty and staff left behind began to engage in dubious means that undermine academic excellence. Gradually, students, parents, proprietors, security personnel etc joined forces with them and formed an unbeatable combination that makes all efforts in sanitising academia fruitless, leading to the current moribund education sector.

Quality education in Nigeria has therefore been a bone of contention in the last four decades. As a result, a good number of literature on the sector being adequately challenged are found [1,3,5,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20,21,22,23,24,25,26,27,28,29,30,31,32,33, 34] yet little is known in the literature about the prevailing moral dilemma, which has gradually become a common feature of the nation's education system. Although the work of [35] on "Beliefs and Character: Theology and Ethics of Road Safety in Nigeria" highlights salient issues bordering on moral dilemma but the study only addresses "Ethics of Road Safety" and ignores other moral decadence prevailing not only in the education sector but in many spheres of life in Nigeria. It is on this note that this article is conceived. The study among other things x-rays factors responsible for the endemic moral malpractice in the education sector, uncovers and expresses lucidly the prevailing manifestations of moral malpractice in daily life.

It could be argued that education can only be useful and meaningful when it empowers people to face life-challenging situations, resulting in positive changes in their lives. In recent

times, it is often very difficult to differentiate between educated Nigerians and illiterates. Thus, many holders of degrees are not worthy in learning and in character as claimed by the institutions that awarded their degrees [27]. In other words, the process of securing education in Nigeria is faulty. Consequently, the education system is of little or no effect in handling day-to-day challenges of life, bringing to bear the view of [36] on Nigeria being rich but poor; has oil but imports the same at higher price to the detriment of poor masses [37]; blessed with vast arable lands but imports her most basic foodstuff and her huge oil resources are being misappropriated, wasted and looted by the elite class [38,39,40,41].

2. MEANING OF EDUCATION

In the view of [32] education is for life and for living. It is an investment in people which pays untold dividends to the society. When that investment is inadequately made, the society suffers a loss. This perspective lays emphasis on education being properly funded for the advancement of human race. Therefore, a country which is unable to develop the skills and knowledge of its people due to poor funding will have nothing to utilize for national development. Such a nation will remain underdeveloped. Hence, [32] posits that formal education system is the principal institutional mechanism for developing knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and aspirations, which will enable individuals to function effectively as agents of change in the society. Changes in many spheres of life are constant and they could be aided through education. On this note [33] considers education as a major instrument of effecting meaningful change and ensuring social reconstruction [34]. Besides social reconstruction, it is an instrument for conserving, transmitting and renewing culture as evident in South-East Asian nations [35].

In another development, it should be noted that education includes the living expressions and traditions that people in every part of the world receive from their ancestors and pass on to their descendants. In this regard, [36] submits that intangible cultural heritage provides communities, groups and individuals with a sense of identity and continuity, helping them to understand their world and giving meaning to their lives and their way of living together. In other words, culture helps in giving meaning to life in man society. This meaning could be fully expressed by people in collaboration with sound education.

Contrary to the above view points, [1] perceives education as the aggregate of all the processes by which people develop the abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviour which are of positive value to the society, where they live. Dwelling on [1], skills development are not enough for societal advancement, moral values are expected to compliment it. Where moral values are lacking, just as it is in Nigeria, development could be virtually impossible. In line with this, [14] views education as the action exercised by the adult generations over those that are not yet ready for social life. Its purpose is to arouse and develop in them a certain number of physical, intellectual and moral states which are demanded of them both by the political society as a whole and by the specific environment for which they are particularly destined.

Although many people are developing physical and intellectual skills in modern societies, but moral development is relatively lacking in many underdeveloped societies. Positive attitudes and behaviours, such as sound integrity, humility, concern for others, probity and accountability, diligence, respect for elders, perseverance that traditional societies were known for prior to colonialism are no longer in existence in these societies. Gone were the days when our forefathers would leave their merchandise on the road for sale and come back to find both the money for goods sold and the unsold goods intact. With the introduction

of formal education, one would have reasoned such an attitude would be improved upon, but past studies show that Nigeria is worse today in moral integrity than pre-colonial era [42,26, 43]. The elite class is largely responsible [44] for this problem. The rate at which the majority of them perpetuate immorality is alarming and worrisome [45,46].

3. THEORETICAL INSIGHTS

Functionalism is one of the Sociological paradigms that explain how man society works, using social life realities. The theory is a major approach to understanding the usefulness of education in human society, behavioural and social sciences. Its origin could be traced to the works of evolutionary scholars such as Comte [47,48]. Later scholars like Durkheim [49] and Talcott Parsons refined the theory [44].

Functionalism views society as a system that has several parts, which are related to one another and at the same time functions independently, but contribute their quota to the maintenance and survival of the entire system. Upon this, there exists harmony, order and stability in the system. This could further be attributed to the independent nature of each part as well as existing values and norms governing its operation. The combination of these brings about co-operation and consensus in the system [44].

In the view of functionalists, therefore, education as an institution has positive functions for the success of every society. The purpose of these functions according to these scholars is to maintain societal stability. Durkheim most especially argues that education is a vital agent of socialisation whose function is to transmit common values of the society from one generation to another. Similarly, [50] argues that schools act as a bridge between the family and a wide society within the role of education being to promote universal values such as achievement, individualisation, competition and equal opportunities. In advanced industrial societies, [50] view becomes relevant. In these societies, people are being judged in terms of achieved status and universalistic values that education provides. Hence, people are rated in terms of what they achieve and not ascribed to them by their families. Schools according to [50] prepare people for achievements and success. This is possible because in institutions of learning conduct is measured against the rules and regulations guiding students' conduct [51]. [52] adds that education reinforces norms and values in a way that individual achievement is rewarded with praise, good grades and good jobs. In societies, where emphasis is placed on merit, students who perform brilliantly in school are rewarded with good jobs, which go to ensure their high statuses in the society.

Deducing from the above, education contributes to the maintenance of the society in the following ways:

Firstly, education helps maintain society by socializing young people into values of achievement, competition and equality of opportunity. Socialization is a term generally used by the social scientists and educationalists to refer to the lifelong process of inheriting and disseminating norms, customs and ideologies, providing an individual with the skills and habits necessary for participating within his or her own society [53,54]. In other words, socialization is 'the means by which social and cultural continuity are attained'. [55] argues that it is the process by which human infants begin to acquire the skills necessary to perform tasks as functioning members of their society and it is the most influential learning process one can experience. Comparing this experience with other living species, whose behaviour is biologically set, [53] noted that human beings need social experiences to learn their culture and to survive. This experience could be reinforced by education. Many scientists

equally believe that socialization essentially represents the whole process of learning throughout the life course and is a central influence on the behaviour, beliefs and actions of adults as well as of children [56].

The works of social Psychologists, such as "Erik Erikson: critical times, critical theory" as cited by [57]; "In a different voice: Psychological theory and women's development" by [58]; Socialization, personality development and the child's environments by [59]; "The Development of Modes of Thinking and Choices in Years 10 to 16" by [60] and others, give credence to the discussion above. Education inculcates moral values of the society on the young ones through socialization. Students according to [61,62] learn these values in school. Their behaviours at school are regulated based on rules and regulations until they gradually internalize and accept them. This brings to bear disciplinary measures put in place to instill discipline on students in elementary, higher and even, some, private Mission tertiary institutions in Nigeria [51].

Secondly, skills-provision is an important aspect of education that sustains economic and family institutions in the society. Education teaches the skills needed for the economy to flourish. For example, literacy, numeracy and IT for particular occupations are obtainable through education. After imparting skills on people, education allocates them roles to appropriate jobs for their talents, using examinations and qualifications. Although interactionists argue that a person may be misjudged or have not had the best chance at education but when given a good chance, may be able to do a better job. The person may have had personal problems so could have achieved better in examinations but there is still no better way of examining students than examinations. [63] examine the usefulness of education in roles allocation and argue that education selects talented individuals and allocates them to the most important roles in society. Skills acquired in the process of education permit people to function in work settings, by producing goods and services needed to maintain life. It equally allows these personnel to earn income in order to sustain their families so as to save man's society from extinction.

Examining the above functionalist ideas in Nigerian context, it could be deduced that roles of education in attaining development has not been fully realised. In areas of socialization, westernization that heralded education has eroded most of the Nigerian rich cultural heritage. Instead of maintaining and transmitting it from one generation to another, it has been eroding these heritages on a daily basis through acculturation. This could be largely attributed to the faulty process of socialization, which is no longer what it was prior to colonialism. Most parents are not available to train their children due to their engagements in white collar jobs, businesses and other economic activities [58]. The deviation of parents from their traditional roles of child upbringing has been prompting children in Nigeria today to learn from nannies, housemaids and relations or reflect what they watch in television programmes and modern day communication technologies [64]. Such children are at a risk of developing dysfunctional and psychopathic behaviours, which may affect them in institutions of learning. In families, where parents are available, children are often led into evil habits like cheating, rigging, cultism, prostitution etc [65] for monetary rewards and it seriously affects the quality of students in primary and secondary schools, which form raw materials for tertiary institutions.

In respect of skill provision in meeting economic requirements for national development, past studies show that education has remained less responsive to the actual needs of the Nigerian society [66]. Therefore, many people are unable to fight against-poverty, ignorance and disease. An indication that education sector in Nigeria has not been able to impart

“technical know-how” or skills on people to translate her enormous natural resources into sustainable and peaceful development [67]. A clear case in point is the inability of the nation engineers to build refineries to refine her abundant crude oil for the benefit of the suffering masses. In spite of being the world’s 13th largest oil producer and the 6th largest in OPEC [67], Nigeria imports refined products for home consumption at a higher price. This brings to bear the view of [9] that Nigeria is retrogressing. Although functionalist theorists maintain that education is fair and provides every individual with equal opportunities, this view could be applied to developed nations, where meritocracy has been in practice for decades. Certainly, it is not applicable to Nigeria, where federal character, quota system, favouritism, tribalism and nepotism hold sway in determining people’s placement in workplace. More often than not, certificates do not matter in job placement; the status-quo is whom you know.

However, [68] condemns functionalist scholars on the ground of education being fair and providing equal opportunities for everyone. This author argues that education is an ideology of the capitalists to legitimize inequalities in the society that education helps to produce. To this end, [69], a scholar of Marxist extraction argues that education is not a meritocracy because the higher class can afford private tutors with one to one attention, whereas if a family cannot afford this, the people with private tutors will have better education. This author continues that the economic system (Capitalism) has to be propagated from one generation to another and to say each new generation has to be taught the skills, knowledge and ideas required for them to take up positions in the workplace. [69], therefore concludes that education is an instrument of class oppression and domination but excludes institutions like the mass media and religion because they still perform their roles of cultural reproduction in different ways. However, [70,71] disagree with [69] on this ground and argue that education helps to reproduce the power and domination of powerful social classes through a combination of what he termed habitus and cultural capital.

In spite of the above critique, laudable contributions of education to the advancement of mankind cannot be easily ignored. Although, it has not propelled Nigeria to advancement, but certainly, it has been the bedrock of advancement in developed world. Hence, the backwardness of Nigeria is not rooted in the education per se; it is located in the endemic moral decadence behind its operations and it serves as the basis for the present article.

4. FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR MORAL DILEMMA IN EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

Originally, Universities were created to serve as sources of truth and honesty [41]. Places where students are shaped not only academically but also morally [72]. It may therefore be argued that tertiary institutions have a crucial role to play in training competent graduates with a sense of civic responsibility, morality and social justice [41]. In other words, graduates who are ready to ‘do the right thing’ at the right time are expected to be products of these institutions. This was practically in place three decades ago, when quality education in Nigeria was the pride of the entire black race and envy of many developed nations [29]. Then, it was alleged that an American degree was equal to a Nigerian sixth form certificate. After about three decades of military imperialism and corrupt political dispensations, the quality education began to decline. This could be attributed to several factors, which border on the following salient factors.

According to [73], one of the major factors responsible for the present moral dilemma in education in Nigeria is a steady decline state of the-art-facilities. These include physical

infrastructure-lecture theatres, laboratories, hostel blocks and residential quarters for teaching and support staff. In fact, a detailed investigation into the existing facilities in many Nigerian tertiary institutions indicates a low level availability [73], except in some private institutions like Covenant and Landmark Universities. In other institutions, lecture theatres and class rooms are not enough to accommodate the existing large number of students. Therefore, these classrooms are always jam-packed with students. More often than not, students struggle with one another in order to get seats during lectures. In fact many students sit outside lecturer rooms while others hang on windows. It is therefore not surprising that the products of these institutions often fail to rise up to the occasion when put to task [73]. Indeed, many of them never had the opportunity to acquire the skills that their certificates claim they possess. The condition at which they study is not conducive for learning and it could impart on students' incompetency in handling tasks, rushing or struggling for limited resources / facilities. If students become addicted to this problem on campus, it may prompt them to apply "the survival of the fittest syndrome" to similar situations in the larger society. This may account for why most workers rush to board buses, in most cities and towns in Nigeria, instead of queuing up in a decent manner. It may also explain why many Nigerians behave indecently in filling stations, when people want to buy fuel, either during scarcity or not. It may equally be associated with a rowdy manner in which brethren observe the sacred meal (Holy Communion) in some Faith-Based institutions. In stadiums and other social gatherings across the nation, it may provide a clue to why Nigerians conduct themselves in uncivilized manners.

[74] tries to build on the above view by associating the moribund state of the nation's education sector with the poor quality of students graduating from primary schools to tertiary institutions. It seems that most of them are not ready to learn. Learning involves subjecting oneself to the authority of the teacher, being patient and ready to obey instructions always. These qualities are dying in the lives of modern day students. [19] attributes this problem to the failure of some parents to give their children the right upbringing. According to this author, *If a daughter is bad to her mother, she will be bad to her teacher, husband etc and will produce bad children who in turn will cause mayhem and crises in the society.* Most of the children who enroll in elementary schools lack home training or proper upbringing. They are not better, when they get to higher institutions. Thus, there is a rapid and constant decline in the quality of the secondary school graduates who form the raw materials for tertiary institutions [73]. Consequently, Nigerian schools and campuses have become breeding grounds for social vices [51,74]. There is a strong indication that students who graduated from these institutions may not behave decently in the larger society and it may not be unconnected with the escalation of armed robbery [75], prostitution [76], terrorism [77], kidnapping [78] etc, in Nigeria today.

Besides, members of staff, who inculcate knowledge in students, are expected to be the best in learning and character. Quite unfortunately, the reverse is the case in Nigeria, where the quality of many staff is poor [79]. In terms of character, many faculties and staff lack credibility. Past studies show that many faculty and staff of tertiary institutions are associated with evil prevailing in many campuses, which include sexual harassment [80], examination misconduct [81], academic dishonesty-plagiarism [82]; terrorism [24,8]; cultism [83]; prostitution [84], corruption [44] etc. The rate at which lecturers exploit students either through handout or different forms of corruption is alarming [85]. Recently, it seems to be very difficult to determine, who cheat more between teachers and students at all levels of education. To worsen the precarious situation, students seem to be at home with this evil practice because it causes them to engage in poor study habit [85].

Another factor closely related to the foregoing is insufficient number of faculty in many higher institutions of learning. Going by [37] there are at least 30,000 academic vacancies in Nigerian Universities, excluding the nine new Federal Universities established in April 2011. The quantity of qualified lecturers is another yardstick for measuring quality education. This is determined by students/lecturers ratio, which is the number of students who attend an institution divided by its number of lecturers. For quality teaching, a low student/lecturer ratio is the best for students but this is only obtainable in developed societies. Lecturers/students ratio in Nigeria has worsened greatly compared with developed societies (Table 1).

Table 1. Students / Lecturers Ratio in Some Countries.

| Countries | Institutions | Lecturer/Student Ratio |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| United States | Harvard University. | 1/7 |
| | Massachusetts Institute of Technology | 1/9 |
| United Kingdom | Cambridge | 1/3 |
| | National Open University | 1/363 |
| Nigeria | University of Abuja | 1/122 |
| | Lagos-State University | 1/144 |
| | University of Calabar | 1/20 |
| Kenya | Maseno University | Minimum of 1/7 and |
| | Kenyatta University | maximum of 1/18 |

Source: [86].

Under National Universities Commission's regulation, only professors and PhD holders are expected to lecture in the Universities [20] but only seven Universities have up to 60% of their teaching staff with a PhD (Table 2). Previous studies show that about 45% of all Nigerian professionals including technical educators have left Nigeria resulting in a brain-drain [9].

Table 2. Universities that Have up to 60% Teaching Staff with PhD Holders

| SN | Institutions |
|-----------|--|
| 1 | Ondo-State University of Science and Technology, Okitipupa |
| 2 | University of Ilorin |
| 3 | University of Calabar |
| 4 | Imo-State University |
| 5 | National Open University of Nigeria |
| 6 | University of Port-Harcourt |
| 7 | University of Uyo |

Source: [22]

Consequently, M.sc and B.sc are usually considered for teaching positions as assistant lecturers and graduate assistants respectively. Even with that, the number is not sufficient to handle large numbers of students in Nigerian Universities. In other words, it is certain that public Universities are grossly understaffed and it may prevent students from obtaining quality teaching or education.

The competence of leaders in tertiary institutions is a strong factor in determining qualitative education. Dwelling on [9], leadership is more or less like an engine that propels man's society to either advancement or backwardness. The type of leadership prevailing in any organization could therefore determine its success. Merit is one of the yardsticks of choosing

good leaders. In Nigeria, it could be observed that merit is no longer a factor in appointing Vice-Chancellors and Provosts of Universities and Polytechnics respectively. In most cases, more often than not, Nigerian government appoints their cronies, whether competent or not as the VCs and it adversely affects administration. This demonstrates the arbitrary interference in the university administration mostly by the military governments and their authoritarian handling of university matters, usually without regard to constituted statutory structures of the system. It also galvanized the problems of university autonomy [87]. The appointment of sole administrators (Military and Civilian) to run the universities (late Major General Mamman Kotangora (rtd) for Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and Professor Gomwalk for University of Nigeria, Nzukka, from 1995 is a clear case in point [87]

Similarly, the poor funding of education (Table 3) has turned Nigeria higher institutions of learning to arenas of absurdity. Funding of education in the country as indicated in Table 3 below is one of the worst in the world.

Table 3. Some selected countries annual budgetary allocation on education

| SN | Country | % Budget Allocation to Education | Position |
|----|---------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | Ghana | 31 | 1 st |
| 2 | Cote d'Ivoire | 30 | 2 nd |
| 3 | Uganda | 27 | 3 rd |
| 4 | South Africa | 25.8 | 4 th |
| 5 | Swaziland | 24.6 | 5 th |
| 6 | Kenya | 23 | 6 th |
| 7 | Botswana | 19.0 | 7 th |
| 8 | Morocco | 17.7 | 8 th |
| 9 | Lesotho | 17 | 9 th |
| 10 | Tunisia | 17 | 10 th |
| 11 | Burkina Faso | 16.8 | 11 th |
| 12 | Nigeria | 8.43 | 12 th (Last) |

Source: [88]

Dwelling on Table 3, Nigeria spends less than 9% of its annual budget on education when smaller, economically less endowed African nations spend much money on sector (education). In addition to this, remunerations and conditions of service of Universities staff were very poor for many years. These led to an endemic brain-drain that seriously affected the education sector [9]. Although, the situation is changing in recent times but it can't be compared with what is obtainable in developed societies. On this note [88] claims that 500 lecturers from Nigerian Universities continue to emigrate each year, particularly to Europe, America and other African countries where the condition of service is relatively better.

5. Analysis of Moral Decadence in Nigeria

According to [65], Nigeria is gradually turning into a lawless country, where many persons violate law with impunity. The term lawlessness means lack of order or refusal to be controlled by the law. This is a serious moral decadence, which many Nigerians have perceived as normal part of social life, irrespective of academic qualifications. The elite class more often than not, uses the state power to disobey the law of the land [84]. According to this author, some of them have repeatedly defied summonses to appear before the panel to answer allegations of rights abuses [89]. In filling stations, stadiums, on the road, bus-stops, Faith-Based institutions etc disorderliness reign supreme in Nigeria. Recently, the rowdy

manner in which Nigerian graduates usually conduct themselves manifested and resulted in the painful death of some applicants in the Immigration Service Aptitude Test tragedy that took place in all the venues where the test took place across Nigeria [90]. More often than not, any little obstruction usually prompts many people to throw morality to the dustbin. At this point, no one knows who is educated or not. On roads and bus-stops, activities of miscreants, touts popularly known as 'agberos' and area boys are largely disturbing [91,92]. 'Agberos' are a group of jobless and ill-mannered persons, either educated or not, normally found in bus-stops across the nation getting commuters for drivers in order to get money. They propel drivers to increase transport fare to the detriment of the masses. Also, they encourage drivers to violate traffic rules as long they are ready to offer bribes. No government has ever reacted to their nefarious activities and put them in check [93,94]. Instead, many discredited politicians engage their services to rig elections or cause commotion during elections and campaigns. This problem of disorderliness is not limited to the above classes of people, Nigerian lawmakers and government functionaries are heavily involved. Many of them lack discipline and decorum [45]. More often than not, proceedings in the state and the national assemblies are characterized by free-for-all-fights [95,96,97,98] while activities of most of them outside the assembly complex are enmeshed in sexual immorality [99].

Similar to the above is the menace of 'omoonile' which literary means *the son of the land*. They are found in different parts of Southern Nigeria, mostly in the South-West and Niger Delta. In South-West, activities of omoonile are pronounced among the 'aworis' in Ogun-State [100]. They are fond of making life miserable for land buyers and house builders. This problem has reached an endemic stage, where these miscreants collect bribes from people forcefully before they bury their bereaved. In Niger-Delta, this nefarious activity is very common among the Urhobos and the Ijaws in Warri and other places in the region. In Ekpan (Warri) Delta-State, they are called 'Ekpan youths', their major work is to collect money for development forcefully from investors or house builders, which usually go to their private purses, for their selfish interests [100], which include ridding on flashy cars, drinking beer, throwing parties, carrying ladies etc. This money has never been used to attend to poor persons, who are living in abject poverty in their thousands in the region. Any builder who tries to avoid giving them bribes is dealt with brutally. They usually reply any investor or builder who refuses to comply with their notorious activities "for wee land, wee no go gree" [100].

In the north, the menace of almajiris is evident and it has been a strong concern to the peace of Nigeria. The term 'almajiri' is derived from the Arabic word 'Almuhaji run', meaning someone who leaves his home in search of knowledge in Islamic religion [101]. In Nigeria today, the word has been used interchangeably to mean street urchins, uncared for, disowned, fatherless and motherless children begging for alms always. They are all static illiterates numbering 9.5 million [101]. They spread over the entire Northern Nigeria. The almajiri system which started in the 11th century under the leadership of Kanem Borno, the then emir of Brono, aimed at training future scholars of high moral behaviours [102] for the propagation of Islam. Quite unfortunate, it has become a platform for breeding vulnerable male children who live under some greedy Islamic scholars whose agenda are basically to financially exploit them while they fend for themselves through alms begging. Worse still, it has become a ground for radicalising children for misguided missions [101] such as political and religion riots in the North.

Another moral and ethical problem in Nigeria society is impatience and it has eaten deep into the fabric of the society. Nigeria according to [43] is a country, where "being on the fast

lane” even in an evil course is encouraged and being “patient” in the pursuit of honest ventures is ridiculed or laughed at. Therefore, any elite who fails to use his position to amass wealth to favour his friends, family and community is often adjudged a failure, who can never become rich in life. In Nigeria of today, people want to be rich quick and it is normally achieved through crooked means-looting the state resources or duping innocent persons. More often than not, people express their inordinate ambition to get ‘a lion share of the national cake’(resources of the state) without any consideration for the cake to be baked and put in good shape. Impatience equally manifests in lack of self-control. Many Nigerians are gradually losing grips on this virtue. That is why many people are often caught in the web of quarreling and fighting under a slight provocation. This is common among the lawmakers and government functionaries [103,104]. Ministers of God and pastors are not exempted from this bad habit [105].

The flagrant display of arrogance and self-centeredness are another character defects peculiar to many Nigerian elites [106]. Rudeness or arrogance manifests in disrespect for elders. The olden day rich cultural heritage of respect for elders, in greetings, manner of approach, giving and taking something, assisting etc is no longer in vogue [107]. According to [108] Nigerians have misplaced their priorities by losing the values for hard work, respect for their elders, truthfulness, honesty, contentment, humility, patience and other moral virtues. As a matter of fact, money dictates who is to be respected in Nigeria today. What people do to get money is immaterial to such persons, what matters is money. This is very common in the South-East and South-South where most people worship money. The ugly situation is now spreading like cancer in the South-West [108]. In terms of selfishness, Nigerians are worse today than pre-colonial era. The then spirit of communality seems to have been replaced with selfishness. Thus, not many people want to acts as their brother’s keeper anymore [43], which explains why the money meant for national development is often siphoned by the elite class to the detriment of the people [38]. The majority of the Nigerian populace is after his or her selfish interest [109,110]. Such persons know how to protect their own resources from destruction but are always skeptical about other persons resources, mostly that of the state. Anything that is publicly owned is treated with contempt. Such resources are being used indiscriminately. When such persons are reprimanded, they fire back by saying ‘*are they your father’s properties?*’ Nigerians have suffered untold hardship in the hands of selfish individuals who proclaim themselves as leaders [108].

It is an indeed a thing of shame and reproach to observe the way many Nigerians have been applying ‘not my father’s business syndrome’ to cogent issues of state, bordering on national development. This is an obstacle to progress and development [100]. It specifically led to the destruction of development projects such as Ajaokuta and Aladja Iron and Steel Companies, Nigerian railway, Nigerian airways etc [111]. Through this menace, facilities such as piped water, electricity, office equipment etc are badly affected [112]. Dwelling on [113,114], high level of decay in areas of physical infrastructure in tertiary institutions is largely attributed to poor maintenance culture of staff, faculties and students. In their contributions to this discussion, [115,116] analyse the poor maintenance culture in Nigeria and highlight its effects on the nation’s power generation stations. According to these authors, the thermal generating plants at Sapele, Afam (Delta-State) generate less than 50% of their installed capacities, while Ijora plant (Lagos) was at 0%. The low output of these plants was attributed to poor maintenance [110]. Constant power supply is very essential for industrial growth of any nation [117,118,119]. Its epileptic supply is causing companies and private persons in their houses to spend heavily on generators and diesel in order to generate light for industrial and family use. Even with that most companies cannot meet up, hence their relocations to other neighbouring countries [119]. The sociological implication could be very

grievous on the large number of unemployed persons in the labour market. The problem of poor maintenance culture has also put Nigerian road network in a bad light with attendant effects on road accidents [120] claiming 162 deaths per 100,000 yearly [121]. It is on this note that Nigeria was rated the second highest road traffic accident fatalities among the 193 countries sampled in the world [122]. The same menace is largely responsible for the destruction of sports facilities such as Abuja national stadium [119]. Health facilities across the nation have equally been affected and it has led to the untimely death of many Nigerians [123].

Apart from the above, another moral problem associated with Nigerian elites is uncivilized manner and culture manifested in abusive words, which they use while addressing people [124]. Such includes, "You de craze," "goat," "orietidaru" (you are mad) abumonu, (curse), Onyeori (theft), Ogainghiadirinamma (it will not be well with you) *mumu*, (senseless) and *jaki* (*work and die*). In South-West geo-political zone, curse has become a regular part of daily life. People are so used to offensive language, which includes 'oloriburukun' (bad egg), konidarafun babaee (your father will not prosper), omoaale (bastard) etc. [125]. These are uncivilized utterances that should not be identified with 21st century learners. They are mainly used to cause deep feelings of worthlessness, pain and anger in the lives of other persons. It usually takes a lot of grace to be calm and not to react negatively, when affected. By these bad behaviours, Nigerians are telling the world that they are barbaric and uncivilised. The level of barbarism is terribly reflected in the way subjective meanings are being attributed to things and other persons, mostly the less privileged and physically challenged persons in the society. These persons have suffered unjustly in all spheres of life, due to the stigma of uselessness placed on them [126]. Dwelling on these authors, a child born with disability is not welcome to the family. Consequently, his or her parents dump him or her in the dunghill [127]. A physically challenged child, who survives the death verdict, passed on him or her at birth is often neglected, discriminated and left behind in the development process [127]. It has been observed that many Nigerians fail to reason and act in line with [128], who believes that If somebody is not disabled in his or her mind then his or her physical disability is nothing. Therefore, "*the mind is the citadel of every living being...*" in dealing with the physically challenged persons in the country. The fact that many physically challenged persons are endowed with extraordinary talents [129] which could be useful in nation building is often forgotten.

In another development [114] associates the moral problem of lack of foresight of the elite class with persistent poverty and retarded growth of the country. This is evident in all spheres of life but much emphasis is placed on agriculture in this article. Prior to the discovery of oil, agriculture was the mainstay of the national economy [130]. Gradually, it became the last in terms of its share of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). After two decades, Nigeria transited from self-sufficiency in basic foodstuffs to a net importer of food, due to poor foresight of the elite class. Immediately oil was discovered, Nigerians abandoned agriculture for illiterates in rural areas. Instead of embarking on extensive farming with oil money, elites in power spent the money on frivolous projects like FESTAC 1977 [131]. The high level of lack of foresight and planning might have prompted one Head of State to say- "Money is not Nigeria's problem but how to spend it". Today, Nigerians rely heavily on imported food such as rice, tomato, fish, poultry, and substitutes for those things the nation used to produce in the past [130]. This has a grievous implication on the national economy. For example, Nigeria spends an average N1.3 trillion annually on food importation [130], which ordinarily should not have occurred if the agricultural sector is in good shape. Putting this figure in context, it represents almost a third of the 2014 budget at N4.92 trillion. Additionally, Nigeria food import bill nearly double the Federal allocation to the three tiers of

government for January 2014 [132]. The negative implication of poor foresight of the elite class manifests in the destruction of the following past agricultural landmarks in Nigeria:

- The textile factories of Kaduna, Kano and Gusau, Dadin Kowa and Vegfru,
- The agro processing factory in Bauchi,
- The Irish potatoes of the Plateau and the bounties of the Mambila Agriculture Belt.
- The Wheat Belt and Chad Basin Area or Hadejia and Ja'maare Agricultural Belts.
- The coffee and cocoa plantations in the West,
- The rubber plantations in the West and Mid-West.
- The groundnut pyramids in the North.
- The livestock ranches and other related economic activities across the whole of Northern [130].

The negative effect of the above is now prompting massive importation of products, which the nation used to produce in the past, at a higher cost.

The dislocation in Nigerian economic growth and prosperity expressed above, is rooted in the skewed and shortsighted choices made by the nation's policy makers over the years [130] and it brings to the fore the comparative economic history of Nigeria and Indonesia. It illustrates the effects of policies adopted by both countries. Both Indonesia and Nigeria have large, ethnically diverse populations. They are endowed in natural resources such as oil and have a long history of agro-based economy. As of 1967, Indonesia's per capita Gross National Product (GNP) was roughly half of Nigeria's. This stride could be attributed to the right policy initiatives backed by appropriate political will. However, Indonesia's GNP doubled that of Nigeria by 1980. That same disparity was witnessed in poverty alleviation, industrialization, life expectancy and adult literacy rate in which Indonesia had recorded greater strides than Nigeria. In these identified areas, Nigeria's poor position has not improved currently. Clearly, the elite class turned Indonesia's oil revenue into a development miracle while the elite class is 'un-developing' Nigeria [9], which means developing in a wrong direction (being perfect in perpetuating moral decadence). Like most of the eight Asian tigers, Indonesia focused on an export-oriented industrial policy. Nigeria, on the other hand, adopted an import substitution strategy that heavily depended on importation. Furthermore, Indonesia's macro-economic policies, through the seriousness of her elite class resulted in economic parity as opposed to the inequality that characterizes the Nigerian economy.

Politically, incursion of military in politics assisted Indonesia to develop compared to Nigeria where military rule significantly retarded the country's growth potentials, stunted her key institutions and deepened those vices and values that continue to divide and hold the country down. Finally, Indonesia invested heavily in human capital development, particular in functional education, qualitative health care and other basic infrastructure. Investment in education in Nigeria is the worst in the world [87], which propels Nigeria's best brains being scattered all over the world [9].

6. SUMMARY

In this article, the moral challenge inherent in education in Nigeria was brought to bear. People possess certificates without moral value to complement with because Nigerians seem to have lost their moral integrity to modernity. Modernity according to [80] began with the enlightenment and it symbolizes separation from the past and requires a process that

usually goes from traditional to modern. In an attempt to be modern, evil ways of life such as fraud, prostitution, and perversion of injustice, not known in pre-colonial era were inculcated into the Nigerian culture. The leadership of the country since independence could be largely held responsible for this menace. Dwelling on [9] a nation with poor leadership is doomed. These authors argue that '*when the leader of soldier ants misses his way; his followers become stranded*', which concurs with [133,134] who believe that when a leader of a given society lacks character, it invariably affects his followers and the entire society. Consequently, it is what goes on in the society that is being reflected in the educational sector. Nigerian tertiary education system is therefore exhibiting moral decadence inherent in the society, culminating in what Ghandi called education without character; it does no society any good [7].

7. CONCLUSION

Nigeria is currently being challenged by backwardness not because there are no resources to ensure her greatness but largely because of moral decadence among the elite class. The nation is blessed with abundant natural resources and manpower assets, but the human capital assets needed to manipulate forces of nature to the advantage of Nigerians absolutely lack moral value. To make the situation worse, other institutions and agents responsible for character education, are the same institutions and persons eroding values and causing character debasement [134]. The moral education sector if properly funded and effectively organized has the capacity to raise a new generation of leaders to develop the country in all walks of life. Politically, economically and technologically, Nigeria will be able to move forward since, these young leaders will be responsible, accountable, trustworthy, innovative and creative and help the country to transform her abundant natural wealth of oil, gold, bitumen etc to finished products and be able to compete with developed countries. This will go a long way to arrest high rate of unemployment, which rose from 21.1 per cent in 2010 to 23.9 per cent in 2011 [135] and abject poverty that are responsible for crimes and other social evils, granting Nigeria an unenviable distinction in the comity of nations worldwide. It is therefore concluded that teaching of moral character rooted in cultural ethics and ethos at all levels of education, coupled with godly doctrines will not only help to produce pragmatic leaders; it will also ensure national development.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Authors propose that the Nigerian government, with all seriousness, develop a legal enforcement of morality or develop a framework for teaching ethics or bioethics in high schools and Universities to enhance character development in the country. Further, it is recommended that faculties in social, behavioural, management sciences and humanities should consider moral development among students a priority and it should be seriously pursued in all institutions of learning.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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