

The Decay of Moral values among Nigerian Youths of the 21st Century

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Abstract

The decay of moral values among Nigerian youths in the 21st century is so alarming to the point of attracting attention from all sectors of the Nigerian society. Research has shown that Nigeria as an African society cherish traditional and religious values. Children at the early stage of life are taught the traditional values and the moral virtues. The traditional African societies placed a high premium on moral development and character of the children. The coming of Westerners into Nigeria brought formal education, civilization and urbanization. The advancement in science, innovations and technology in this 21st century cause tremendous change in ideas and attitudes of the youths. This infiltration of western values negatively affected the reasoning of the youths toward our traditional moral values. To analyze this problem effectively, the author used relevant materials including journals and the Internet to plumb

the causes of moral decadence among Nigerian youths. The results show that the falling moral standards of Nigerian youths are traceable to westernization via-mass media and ICT which devalues the importance of the traditional values and cultures resulting in materialism, misplacement of values and the wrong choice of ethical values. The paper therefore concludes that to curb the menace of moral degeneration, Nigerian traditional value system must be promoted. This can be achieved through re-orientation of the youths with regards to cultural and religious values. An application of the above would help Nigerian society to progress and develop unimpeded.

Keywords: traditional values, moral decadence, morality, mass media, ICT

Introduction

Traditional societies have well cherished culture and religious values, which instill good morals, beliefs and values in their children. These are passed on from one generation to another through oral tradition in the absence of written scripts. This transmission of moral values is done primarily to shape the ideas, characters, habits and behaviours of the younger generation in order to be well behaved, reasonable and responsible, and to develop sound personalities. Every society has a set of values that guide it. The traditional society, before the coming of western civilization, had well-organized code of discipline and religious values. These values play regulating roles in human conduct. They also act as the stabilizing factor of

any society; but civilization brought incoherent structures that destabilized the moral conduct. This brought about great changes, from the traditional moral context to the modern ideas of liberal attitude towards morality. This affected the moral values and the structure of the traditional society, and results to the unruly behaviours we are witnessing among the youths of today.

In this 21st century, most of the norms and values we hitherto held in high esteem are gradually being eroded because of the negative impact of civilization, globalization and urbanization. This paper, therefore, explores the clarifications of the concepts of moral, morality and value. It also examines the causes of moral decadence among Nigerian youths, highlights the importance of maintaining a high moral standard and holding positive values, and suggests that imbuing positive values is very significant in curbing moral decadence among Nigerian youths. It is this knowledge of positive values, norms and their implementation that will help Nigerian youths to appreciate themselves, achieve the desired growth

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and form a well-developed personality.

Clarification of Concepts

Moral

Moral relates to or is concerned with the principle or rules of right conduct or the distinction between right and wrong (Dictionary.com 2018). It is also holding or manifesting high principles for proper conduct (Oxford Dictionaries 2018). Etymologically, the word 'moral' comes from the Latin word 'mores', meaning 'habit' (Vocabulary. com 2018) and 'customs' (Okwueze 2003). Primarily, moral is concerned with principles of right and wrong or conforming to standards of behaviour and character based on those principles (Vocabulary. com 2018). Agha (2015) stipulates that "moral is related to conduct or character from the point of view of right and wrong. It is the quality of being morally right or virtuous" (65).

Pratima (1979) emphasizes that "the conception of moral good is the conception of motive, attitudes, dispositions, character and state of affairs involving human relations which are consistent with the conception of the greatest good" (15). For Olowo (2009), "Morals are seen as that which defines the pattern of behaviour that the society wants from people" (357). From the above definitions and views on morals, it is apparent that moral has to do with the principle of right behaviours. People in different societies have strong beliefs about what is right and wrong, which emanated from their feelings. Certain behaviours are considered to be desirable by a given society, while others are considered to be undesirable; that is to say that moral varies from culture to culture. What the society wants is basically what they value. Every society has traditional values and moral standards. These build up what is known as 'morality' in a given society.

Morality

The term morality is derived from a Latin word '*moralis*', which means manner, character, proper behaviour (Long & Sedley 1987). Morality is seen as the most important code of conduct put forward and accepted by any group, or even by an individual (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy 2016). Morality connotes that quality in human act which is called right or wrong, good or bad (Fagothey

1963). Olowo (2009) defines the concept thus: "Morality means generally accepted code of conduct in a society or within a sub-group of society" (357). Temple (1969) sees morality as "the differentiation of human actions into good and bad in accordance with accepted norms of human conduct" (117). Okwueze (2004) sees morality as "a specific form of social consciousness, of awareness of your relatedness to others without which societal life would be impossible" (68).

From the above definitions and views, it is clear that morality is mostly concerned with desirable attitudes and human conduct that satisfy valuable needs for harmonious personal and societal life. Morality, therefore, is that good conduct that is in conformity with the moral values of the society as relates to the social control that holds in a given society for societal welfare. Morality helps one to embrace good human conduct, which merits praise, while shunning negative behaviour that attracts shame and blame. It is also a body of standards and principles, which involves the idea of good or right conduct which is contrary to bad or wrong conduct. According to Okwueze (2003), "Morality involves a more or less clearly articulated set of beliefs about the nature of man, ideals about what is good or merely desirable or worthy of pursuit for the sake of orderly co-existence" (67). Agha (2003) observes that "morality is significant because it leads to self-awareness, responsible self and crime control" (48). These can be achieved through the recognition of the accepted societal values.

Value

Value simply means the worth of something. Ilogu (1974) defines value as "the quality of a thing that makes it more or less desirable or useful" (119). Falade, Akinola and Adejube (2009) see value as "the attitudes, beliefs, behaviours and actions that are cherished in a particular society" (482). These attributes help in sustaining that particular society. This means that some specific code of conduct is considered relevant and acceptable to the growth and development of a given society. Every society has sets of values, covering every aspect of human endeavour. According to Obiwulu (2016), value refers to "the quality, which someone or a thing has, which makes him acceptable, interesting and worth seeking" (252). In most human society, people go

for what is valuable and worthwhile. This makes whatever that has value an object of desire.

Furthermore, values reflect the personality of individuals and also the expression of cultural tone and moral, marked by family, the school, the institutions and the human society (Ukaegbu 1991). Values are the cherished and accepted standards of behaviour that give rise to feelings of solidarity and unity among the members of a given society. They are the guiding principles found in every society, which differ for persons and from one society to another. Human societies have various beliefs, attitudes and standards that form the value system, which are promoted and protected by the society's norms and laws. Some values are more important than others. That is what makes the value system of a society to be hierarchical based on the order of importance. There are some classifications of value as noted by Obiwulu (2016). According to him, "philosophers classified values into intrinsic and extrinsic; subjective and objective" (252). These classifications show the varieties of values. These variations of moral values and ideals are taught by parents, teachers, religious leaders, politicians and others (Argyle 1982).

In a model integrated and stable society, all members internalize the values and the rules. They act in conformity with the rules in pursuit of these values and any tendency towards deviation would be countered by the operation of social control mechanism (Adibe 2009). Adibe (2009) further observes that "value is built into the system of the members of the society for the good of the society" (9). To elaborate more in pursuit and protection of value, Obiwulu (2016) remarks that:

In most human societies, ethical and moral codes of conduct are made to protect, promote and foster what is good and regarded as valuable. Behaviours or code of conduct that are deemed good and valuable are protected and promoted through laws and commands while those deemed inappropriate and valueless are discouraged through prohibitions and sanctions. The destruction of any value, material or immaterial is normally frowned at. (252)

Values function as restraints, which control and

inhibit certain spontaneous patterns of behaviour by regulating and stabilizing the society. Values hold society together because they are shared in common and any person who is averse to common values would be a misfit in the society (Worsley 1973). Therefore, it is the morality of the individual that guides his choice of value. Since the focus of this paper is on moral decadence, moral value is considered very important because it sets a standard of behaviour for the society. It also takes precedence over any other type of values such as economic values, etc. (Obiwulu 2016). This is elaborated more by Thompson (2010) cited in Obiwulu (2016) that "values are considered moral if they reflect a person's values and those of the society" (252). Obiwulu (2016) concludes that "moral values are those values that are considered within the context of morality as differentiated from other types of values" (256).

Moral Decadence

Moral decadence as defined by Afolabi and Loto (2009) is "audacious flouting of the lawful orders of a society and doing undesirable and unethical things joyfully, regardless of their consequences" (380). The standard of morality in this 21st century has fallen very low. This is because the youths of nowadays embrace the negative aspect of Westernization. They have been brainwashed in the name of civilization and urbanization into imbibing negative values, which dwindled our moral values.

An individual is said to be morally sound and upright if the person is not corrupt and makes right choices. By this an individual can demonstrate decent and decorous conduct for the worth of human life and the dignity of human person, have high sense of responsibility and eagerness to discharge duties with promptitude and efficiency for the common good of the society, respect constituted authority, and show love for orderliness in maintaining interpersonal and human relations.

A morally depraved person is a person who flouts the lawful order of the society with effrontery. Such a person is seen as corrupt and, through misplacement of value, is dominated by wrong choices of selfish desire. The person prefers vice over virtue, takes joy in seeing injustice override justice and right of the people being trampled upon,

shows no respect for human life and human dignity, and shows disrespectful behaviour towards those in authority. Agha (2015) observes that “our society has come to emphasize pecuniary motives and values so much that the society has been organized around the satisfaction of individual needs and interest at the expense of national or community goals and purposes” (65). A desire for quick money attracts dishonesty and indecent life, which encourages embezzlement, prostitution and drug offences, among others. This shows that moral values are neglected. That notwithstanding, there are some worthwhile values which have been either forgotten or lost.

The Background of Moral Values and Moral Degeneration in Nigeria

Over the years, human society had passed through different stages of development. Cultural practices from the onset are prone to change, in the sense that they continue to adjust and adapt to new cultures. From different historical periods, cultural groups emerged with their peculiar world view, belief system, life styles and cultural practice. In Nigeria, there are several cultural values, which can also be found in other African countries. These values cover the whole aspects of the society including the value system. Value system is the cultural outlook of the people and the understanding of the value system of the people is the understanding of both the belief system and cultural system of the people in question (Kanu 2010).

Before the advent of western civilization, there were moral values in the traditional Nigerian society. Some of these cherished traditional moral values in Nigerian culture according to Obiwulu (2016) include the following: “respect for human life, justice, honesty, fidelity in marriage, human freedom, right to own property, hard work, sincerity, among others” (257). These traditional values are of great importance to the people because they set a standard of behavior to which every member of the society adhered. These values can be observed and maintained at various levels of the society *vis-a-vis* family, village, community, ethnic group and national levels.

Prior to the arrival of the Europeans on the African continent, African values were very practical, pragmatic and humanistic in nature.

Africans had indigenous cultural values that are rooted in the human consciousness of what is good and evil. These values are constructed in form of social order that secure the societal cohesion, which promotes peace, harmony and unity in the traditional society. However, the arrival of the Europeans in the 19th century with western ideology brought many changes to African culture. The westerners incorporated their values into African traditional values because, for them, the traditional society is backward and uncivilized (Madukwe 2016). This caused a dethronement of cultural pathway in African culture and life-style.

This incorporation of values constituted a clash between African and western cultures. This is very evident in Chinua Achebe's novel, *Things Fall Apart*, which has Okonkwo as the protagonist. Achebe clearly describes the conflict between the traditional religious values and the western Christian values, and how western values influenced the people, especially the youths (Achebe 2008). The westerners achieved these through western education and Christianity. Kanu (2010) remarks that:

The west (colonial masters) with the introduction of their educational system saw nothing of value in African culture. This led to crisis in our culture and value system. Crisis of a culture implies process of development or degeneration introduced through a particular education procedure. In latter context, the west introduced an educational procedure which as a culture-transmitting process fashions out an attitude that neither respects the core values of our culture nor leads the younger members of the community to acquire the accumulated knowledge of the 'folkways' of their community with pride. The educational process directed their minds and thought away from home cultures; equipping them with a type of education that is antagonistic to the African cultural traits and thought patterns (150).

With the introduction of Christianity, the social and religious lives of the people were altered. Christianity brought some positive as well as

negative social changes to Africa and Nigeria in particular. Part of the positive changes Christianity brought is formal education and stopping of the killing of twins, which impact positively on living. On the contrary, western education eroded morality as defined by the traditional African social order (Dosumu 2010). These social changes emanate from a negative representation of African culture. Simoko (1986) also observes that "The missionaries proceed to change entirely the moral code of black kingdoms: what is wrong and what is right. To the missionaries, everything in the black man was wrong; the way he married, the way he governed" (79).

The introduction of new culture by the Europeans through colonialism eroded the traditional value system of African people. The fact of the issues is that most Africans after the colonialism continued to imitate their colonialists in most areas of life. This brought cultural confusion between the traditional cultural values of Africans and western cultural values. The western values gradually dominated and destroyed the cherished African value system. It also eroded the social order, which leads to perversion of morality.

The cultural confusion that marked the end of colonialism had contributed in creating the moral vacuum found in all strata of the African and Nigerian lives (Dosumu 2010), in that some of the cherished traditional moral values of Africans have been replaced by western tradition. This also leads the African youths of the 21st century to be over-dependent on western culture and the situation seems normal to most of them. The importance attached to various cultural values like sacredness of human life, integrity, honesty, justice, respect for elders and people in authority, sense of hospitality and religiosity have been trampled upon. Most of the traditional values are negatively affected by the encroachment and irruption of the western value system. Virtues have been dropped and vices have been advanced.

In this contemporary time, the society has been organized around the satisfaction of individual needs and interest at the expense of national goals and purposes. People have devised wrong ethical values and chosen vices to enable them achieve their ulterior motives. That is why moral decadence among Nigerian youths continues to assume an upward trend.

Some Cherished Traditional Values in Nigerian Society Affected by Westernization

For any given society to achieve meaningful, important goals and objectives, there must be observance of relevant values. The traditional society had certain values that are intact. These values include sacredness of life and dignity of human, honesty and integrity, justice and respect for elders. These values were appreciated and remained unshakeable until the invasion of western trend.

Sanctity of Human life

Human life was highly valued in nearly all, if not all, societies, be it primitive, developed or undeveloped. Sacredness of life and dignity of human persons were common to all societies, Nigeria inclusive. The Nigerian society of the 21st century is structured along pecuniary motives and values; the quest for money has made human life valueless because of materialism. It has become a common practice for people to kill in order to make money through ritual killing, assassination of business partners and kidnapping, among others. People trade their children and other human persons, mutilate human body parts and organs, and sell them for money. In order to make quick money or gains, some of the titled men and women are dishonest and untruthful. This misplacement of values in our society today is known as 'the sale of moral conscience' (Agha 2003).

Based on the importance attached to human life, it is to be respected and considered sacred. Murder of any form is forbidden. Homicide is a very serious offence. Anything done to destroy or terminate life attracts severe punishment. For instance, in Igbo traditional society, any kind of willful killing and unintended killing attracts going into exile for seven years and a replacement is made through marrying for a deceased family as restitution (Achebe 2008; Chukwudozie 2016). This is because it is an abomination to shed blood especially the blood of a kinsman. From Igbo traditional perspective, Oraegbunam (2010) postulates that "life is believed to have come from God. Therefore, any shedding of another's blood under any circumstances is an abomination (*alu*)" (18). There are legislations and regulations that were made to check and control unnecessary

shedding of blood, which is contained in the *omenala* (laws and customs of the land). These control measures promote the respect of human life and human dignity because life is considered precious and sacred. Nwala (2010) observes that “the life of a member of a community is interwoven with the other through the common blood which they share and through the web of economic and social interdependence which practically exists in the community” (61).

Honesty and Integrity

Honesty is a value that is appreciated everywhere. It is being truthful, choosing not to lie, steal, cheat or deceive people in any way. Honesty leads to trust and faith. Similar to it is integrity, which is thinking and doing what is right at all times no matter the consequences. It is important to act with integrity in whatever one does, to be compassionate, friendly and loyal, and making sure that one does what is right. Honesty and integrity both mean 'to live openly' and 'that which can be relied upon to be genuine'.

Honesty is required in all aspects of human endeavours. For instance in public service, taking oath of office requires honesty. But today the reverse is the case since most titled men, politicians, civil servants, businessmen, those in leadership positions, and supposed men and women of honour and integrity are very dishonest in handling of public issues. Some of them embezzle public fund and cover it up with manipulated accounts. All these are as a result of wrong ethical value.

Justice

Justice is a moral concept that deals with administration of fairness. It is an inherent aspect of life in traditional African society. Justice is a concept of proportion between what a person merited, and the good and bad things that befall or are allotted to that person (Encyclopedia Britannica 2018). It could be moral apportionment of rewards or punishment to each person, which is being given what he or she is due (Nitisha 2018). Justice is a virtue as well as a value. Justice as virtue is treating people the way they are supposed to be treated, that is trying to give people their due. For instance, if someone contributes positively to another person's life, such should be treated with kindness and

respect. If an individual is very destructive, they should be treated in a negative way. As a value, justice is when people get what they deserve. For instance, if someone commits a crime, that person would be forced to pay for that crime proportional to the damage inflicted. The distinction here is that the virtue of justice is limited to personal treatment and the value of justice is the idea that people will get what they deserve.

The concept of justice differs from culture to culture because of history, mythology and religion of that culture. Justice exists in the context of social reality. In Igbo traditional society, the issue of justice is very significant. Igbo system does everything possible to make sure that justice prevails by bringing justice to the people and sustaining it permanently; human rights are protected and entitlements are given. The Igbo system of reward and punishment gives a fair chance to all. This can be seen in their traditional artifacts of *ofò* and *ogu* which symbolically represent justice and equity. *Ofò* in Igbo is a symbol of Justice. Women and children are given their rights and privileges. For instance, issues of domestic violence are treated with utmost seriousness in the family setting. This involves both families to ensure that there is justice. In the village setting, every married male child is given his own portion of land and family properties are shared accordingly. The principle of justice is giving each person or group, whether weak or strong, what is his or her due, and demands the contribution of each on the basis of equal consideration.

Today with the trend of Westernization and wrong ethical value, there is so much partiality and injustice being perpetrated in various aspects of the society, ranging from families, communities and societies at large. Some people have sold their conscience because of greed and become so impervious to truth. Partiality and injustice have taken over the normal practice of justice and meritocracy. This has resulted in protests for denial of justice, which is the order of the day in so many countries in this 21st century, Nigeria inclusive.

Respect for Elders

Respect for elders is another important value that was cherished much by many African societies. Some aspects of the traditional values are being

observed through imitation. The child watches the actions of the elders and imbibes them by mimicking those things he witnesses the elders doing. This value of respect is infused in them and becomes part of their life. Respect for elders is an integral part of African's life. It connotes respect for those in authority like the king – Oba, Obi, Emir, Chiefs, heads of clans and village heads; and those in different sacred positions like the diviners, seers, *Ezemmuo*– chief priest and messengers of oracle, among others. For instance, the Yoruba would prostrate at the feet of their elders to show respect. Respect for the elders does not stop at greeting alone; a child would be strongly reprimanded for intruding into the conversation of elders or parents without being permitted to do so. It is also impertinent for a person to give or receive anything with the left hand. These behaviours are considered disrespectful and rude, and should be avoided.

African culture places the elderly in a very strategic position of being the custodian of truth, sincerity and exemplary living worthy of emulation. Most elders have shifted from their responsibilities and duties to commit evil and do injustice. There are some elders that are cruel, arrogant, abusive, and irresponsible. With such character, the issue of showing respect is unobligated because respect is reciprocal.

Factors that Increase Moral Decadence in the 21st Century

Apart from the African cultural contact with the West, there are other factors that contribute to the low level of morality and encourage rise of the trend in Nigerian society today. These factors include the following:

The Mass Media: Mass media being a medium of communication through newspapers, radio and television contributes to the rise of moral decadence among Nigerian youths. The media is connected with the two basic senses of hearing and sight; because of the curious nature of man, children emulate the behaviours of people they watch on the television screen. In a situation that portrays bad character, children tend to copy and exhibit such bad conduct erroneously thinking it is normal and a worthy way of life. This increases the degeneration of morality among the youths. Some media houses

also show some sensational films in their television stations, cinema halls and video centres. These entertainment houses have polluted the minds of our youths thereby promoting anti-social behaviours.

Nigeria's social problems could also be traced to excessive exposure to western media. According to Dosumu (2010):

The western society is filled with media materials that glorify corruptive tendencies. The vogue in advertising promoted by the western media is the skimpily dressed female. This tends to encourage Nigerian ladies to ape this mode of appearance. In most western movies, acts and scenes are especially dedicated towards promoting eroticism and violence. The sights that usually greet movie viewers are kissing and wild demonstration of sexual relationship. The impact these have is the promotion of the deception that those erotic and violent scenes represent civilized behaviour (314).

From the above observation, it is clear that most of the behavior exhibited by youths today is the outcome of what they get from the media.

The entertainment industry also plays a role in the decline of traditional values especially in sexuality matters. In this regard, Ojo (2005) notes that:

In visual arts, in films, advertisements and in popular home videos, the print and electronic media continue to emphasize the erotic nature of sexuality and to reject any regulation about sexual behaviour. The sexual revolution in the west has relativized the morality of sex once sexual intercourse is between consenting partners and both partners derive fun from the act (4).

Some newspaper agencies allow the publication of irrational magazines with pictures of naked women. This promotes pornography, homosexuality/lesbianism, prostitution and rape, among others. The vulgar and filthy languages used by hip pop musicians have much disparaging influence on the choice of language among the youngsters. All

these contribute to the moral bankruptcy of our youths of the 21st century.

ICT: The acronym means Information Communication Technology. This technology influences the life of Nigerian youths in a very negative way. It encourages pornography, fraud, hacking, violence, terrorism, militancy and online gambling.

Furthermore, the mass media and ICT play the role of brainwashing African youths in the sense that the media are used as an instrument to promote the ideology of the ruling class. They are also used to perpetuate the false consciousness of the masses (Mander 1991). These in essence kill the traditional customs, rituals, practice and destroy the traditional rites of the indigenous Africans. Through mass media and ICT, the youths give up the traditional cultural values to favour the new technology by becoming acculturated and assimilated into western culture. They consider the traditional culture as barbaric and outdated.

Materialism: The Nigerian society of the 21st century is highly materialistic to the point that people have compromised honesty, truth and justice for self-centeredness and self-pursuit. Materialism is the quest or desire to pursue wealth or other things that can give physical comfort. The youths have embraced materialism and forgotten moral values. This encourages negative values like selfishness, jealousy, greed, and so on. This is responsible for the high rate of corruption in contemporary Nigeria society.

Materialism also encourages flamboyant or conspicuous lifestyle, which involves taking titles (Christian titles, religious titles and academic titles), buying and driving expensive cars and moving in convoy and escorts, among others, in order to show one's class. With this view, everybody wants to get rich irrespective of the source. This gives rise to get-rich-quick syndrome and other forms of corrupt practices. More so, the get-rich-quick syndrome negates the traditional values of hard work, respect for human life, respect for the dignity of man, honesty, justice, truthfulness and so on.

Recommendations

With a view to curbing the problem of moral decadence among the Nigerian youths of the 21st

century, it is deemed pertinent to make the following recommendations.

- Youths need proper guidance and counseling to avoid wrong decision making. By this, parents and guardians should train their children according to the cherished values of the society. This training should be a collective effort by members of the society. Since the family is the first agent of socialization, family heads should start from the cradle to teach their children the values of the society like respect, tolerance, compassion and love. Parents should inculcate in their children the morals that will help to build them to be responsible people to achieve a morally sound society. Parents should also be role models for the children. It is from this early foundation laid in the family that the child finds himself or herself competent or incompetent to live in his or her culture.
- The three major religions in Nigeria, the traditional religion, Christianity and Islam should go for value re-orientation and educate their adherents on the importance of respect for human life, human dignity and other positive moral values. It is religion that sanctifies morality by giving it significance and supernatural sanctions.
- The mass media should take up the responsibility of promoting moral values in our society, hereby serving as a watch dog of the society. Media houses should improve in their role of informing, educating and entertaining the masses in a more positive way. The mass media should educate the youths on the evil effect of materialism, apathy and bribery and corruption in the society. On the other hand, the ICT as a trend in the digitized world should not be ignored with regard to morality. Instead, the negative aspect of modern technology should be monitored when used by our children to avoid abusing the trend.
- Government should be strict in enforcing its law on bribery and corruption, homosexuality, terrorism and kidnapping, among others. Government should place embargo on the importation of pornographic films and other sensational movies that disparage our cherished traditional values. Posters with nude pictures and other irrational magazines should be

strictly prohibited. Nigerian Censorship Board should be more active and diligent in their job. The board should censor films and music that are morally objectionable. Nigerian government should regard worth, reward good and punish evil, and should not operate double standards.

- It is of great importance to re-examine, re-establish and re-emphasize value reorientation for the youths. This can be achieved through proper education. The three levels of educational system – primary, post primary and tertiary should include in their curricula moral instruction, civic education and other related courses that would discharge social value bankruptcy and moral laxity in our country. These courses would help to inculcate virtues and eradicate social vices, and make the youths to develop balanced personalities for themselves and for the country. With these we should be able to guard our cultural values and curb the evil menace of moral decadence and embrace growth and development in the Nigerian nation.

Conclusion

Every society has its culture, traditional values and moral standards. These societies also have various ways of inculcating such moral standards and values in the life of the younger ones. The incursion of foreign culture into the indigenous traditional cultures of the people has left deep regrets because it brought about what we see today as moral decay and moral laxity among Nigerian youths. With the advancement of science, innovations and technology in Nigeria, our traditional cultural life is undergoing tremendous change.

The values of the traditional society are anthropocentric. That is why respecting human life and human dignity are *sine qua non* for human existence, which is the basis for African value system. From the subject matter of this paper, “The Decay of moral values among the Nigerian youths of the 21st century” no one would doubt that immoral values cut across every sector of Nigerian society. This encourages unproductivity and lack of progress, thereby making the country stagnant in development. It is paramount to re-orientate the Nigerian youths on moral virtues and values

because they are very significant and serve as important ingredient for progress, and economic and moral development of every nation. Therefore, Nigerian traditional value system must be promoted.

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