

# Morality: The Panacea for National Development in Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT:

The development of science and technology has been identified as paramount in the building and rebuilding of any nation. The fact remains that it is perceived that technology transfer or revolution cannot be done without the improvement of both, agricultural, industrial and recreational resources. To develop, therefore, science and technology is identified as the bedrock. Without doubt, this fact cannot be easily debunked; but valid questions must be asked mostly when there is a deliberate attempt to engage in such revolution if a successful attempt is to achieve such as: Does revolution occur in a vacuum? What are the factors of a successful revolution? It is to answer these questions for a better understanding of the concepts of morality and national development as indispensable partners that this work is committed to the concept examined in this paper include: morality, development, national development, technological revolution and or transfer and autonomous moral education.

**Keywords:** morality, development, education, national development, autonomous morality.

## INTRODUCTION

Policy makers and agents of national development are often quick to forget or ignore the fact that national development itself is a moral concept hence when they engage in their attempts to introduce their development agenda, mention is not made of morality. Contemporary discussions and policies of development mostly in developing countries are therefore centered on science and technology; consequently, development programs border on science and technology such as scholarship for science students, special allowances for science teachers, sponsored debates and quiz for science subjects and so on. Unfortunately, these times are done with life or no attention given to the moral development of the citizens even from the school growing age.

The obvious question remains “can there be national development without autonomous moral education?”

Anywhere or time development is taught of, what quickly comes to mind are concepts like happiness, conflict or stress free condition, security and all the other good conditions. This implies that whether man’s effort of development are evidenced on roads, schools, health, recreational facilities, sufficient food and so on, it is expected that these material structures will translate or lead to happiness, employment, increased income, balanced diet, peace and so on. It then suggests that development in any language cannot be divorced from morality because it’s meaning and agents are intended to build a moral society or in a simpler language a good or livable society.

The forgone explains in its volumes why efforts aimed at development should not stop at science and technology. The basis for a successful science and technology is morality. Science and technology, apart from the fact that it is supported by absolute dedication, carefulness, sacrifice, security and peace, is capital intensive which dependent on morality. One therefore wonders how the two can be separated or any treated in isolation. Technology transfer is also not possible in a vacuum. There must be an enabling environment which is not determined by the availability of infrastructure or science alone but also on peace. No development can be possible in a conflict or riot ridden society. Neither can a high rate of immorality support any development.

## THE CONCEPT OF MORALITY

All the definitions of morality point to the fact that it is concerned with the principles of good and bad or right and wrong and a preference for the good and bad or right and wrong and a preference for the good and the right. It is the difficulty of determining what actually is right or wrong that has made the concept an academic issue that has informed a lot of theories.

However an examination of a few of the definitions will make good our claim. The BBC English Dictionary defines morality as: “the belief that some behavior is right and acceptable and other behavior is wrong and unacceptable”. In the New Webster’s English Dictionary, it is “upright conduct”. It is to clarify the concept of

upright and acceptable conduct that schofield (1976: 274) explains morality as: “a behavior that is acceptable by society”. While it is easy to defend that schofield has made the definition simple in that it has a scope, the concept, is further exposed to the problems of relativism.

The reasons being that, there are societies and within a society, the concept of time is paramount. For instance, what may be acceptable this year may be rejected in the next two years. Slavery and apartheid are now looked upon as evil. Capital punishment is no longer in vogue. These constraints make it philosophically difficult to define morality when it is meant to represent a lasting definition (ought to).

It is to save scholars from these problems of relativism that Omoregbe (1993:71) explains the concept as a means to an end in his words:

To perform an action is to use the action as a means to an end: that is, as an instrument employed for the attainment of a certain objective. If the end aimed at is evil, the action as a whole is evil even if the means employed is good for a good means cannot justify an evil end.

To Omoregbe therefore, morality is a means to an end. Given this background, it could be explained that morality and or immorality does not reside on any action but the purpose intended for an action. An action will serve moral purpose if it is intended to serve the good of the good of the people irrespective of personal interest or emotions.

### **THE CONCEPT OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The concept of development has been misunderstood by many and wrongly pursued mostly in the third world countries like Nigeria. For these countries, development means the provision of social amenities or infrastructure. While it is true that one cannot do without infrastructure, it is difficult to defend the thesis that the provision of infrastructure and or industries alone can speak for the development of a place. They will rather lead to fundamental questions. For instance, when a state Government embarks on massive road construction, building of model schools, scholarships, hospitals and so on, fundamental questions must be asked such as; have the problems of traffic congestions and transportation in that place been addressed or tackled? When model schools are built, have the basic problems of education, in that area such as examination malpractice, quality education, truancy and drop out addressed; the same questions will beg for answers in all the sectors if effort stop at the arbitrary distribution of infrastructure and the answer will be no. Then can such ventures be termed developments which do not create any positive impact? There is the need therefore to understand what development is all about to enable a sufficient explanation of national development.

Development has been explained differently by different scholars but all the definitions hinge on one concept, ‘change’ that is all round. Seers (1992: 98) for instance defines development as:

A multidimensional process involving the reorganization and orientation of the entire economic and social systems. In addition to improvements in incomes and output; it typical involves radical changes in institutional social and administrative structures as well as in popular attitudes and sometimes even customers and beliefs.

It is clear from the above that central in development is change which is not only expressed on the infrastructure; that could be described as replacement, addition or growth, but that which is intended to also reflect on attitude, belief and cultures development implies increased skills and capacity, greater freedom, greater self discipline, responsibility and material well being. It is to confirm this position that Jhigen (2007:5) explains development as “growth plus change”. Industrialization is identified as a major source of development not because of its strength to influence science, technology, infrastructure and even food but because it is also able to positively influence change in all the sectors. Okodudu (2007:3) states that: “once there is technology, change either through transformation or transfer, on other sectors will positively be impacted spontaneously hence national development will ensure.” The place of industrialization in development has been emphasized because of this capacity in clear terms by Aminigo (2003:137)

Thus:

It is common knowledge that economic growth and development come through industrialization, industrial development itself means more wealth, more employment and lessening economic depression. Thus industrialization promises growth to any depressed region of the world.

What is central in any effort of development from the foregoing is purpose, intention, aim; which must be bettering human life, else it is not development but a waste. Roads, schools, hospitals and so on built without an intention to better the lots of the people are wastes therefore they are always abandoned and allowed to wear out. It is in the same vein that industries cited for selfish interest or as an avenue to loot the treasury cannot create any change in the society but will be abandoned. Development is therefore built on moral considerations hence a moral agenda. Development is also an effort in a society that has the capacity to bring about positive change in all sectors.

### **MORALITY AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The explanation and definitions of development hover around the concept of change which implies that change is central in the existence of development and what change, it should be positive – ie, that which will positively impact on human life which is good. Change itself presupposes dissatisfaction with the present, which informs anyone that, change is a practical and visible attempt to improve or make things better. Accepting this as a base implies that change, is premised on an intention to make things better. If this is anything to go by then change cannot be separated from morality mostly as conceptualized that morality is about the intention and not merely the action.

This is evident in the fact that provision of infrastructure without intentions to improve life in the sector cannot serve a development purpose. It is clear therefore that development whether national or otherwise stems from morality even as observed above.

It has been observed also that a society is developed when there is positive change in all sectors. Evidently, there must be improved transport, nutrition, healthcare facilities, education, recreation and so on. For sustainability, there must be funds and the right attitude. Facilities must not only be purchased but must also not be vandalized for empowerment and improved social life but must also be equitably distributed for development, there must be a sound moral base. Jhingan (2007:35) explains this relationship thus:

Moreover, administrators, managers, politicians and policy makers belong to the privileged and dominant classes of society. Since such persons do not have the best talents, they stand in the way of good governance, clean administration and in the efficient working of large-scale enterprise. They lead to nepotism, bribery, favouritism and inefficient administration whether to private or public enterprise makes economic development all the more difficult.

It is evident therefore that poor implementation of policies and delivery of services is not a function of poverty but sometimes a function of immorality. Godfatherism, man-know-man and so on which are common concepts in developing or third world countries are all immoral concepts. The defense or justification for the efficacy of this argument hinges on the fact that development is capital intensive hence is dependent upon huge savings. Embezzlement and selfishness are therefore anti-development.

Omoregbe (1993:127) has explained the place of morality in savings thus:

Any Government made up of dishonest and fraudulent people whose main purpose if coming to government is to enrich them is not a government but a gang of thieves and treasury batters. In other words, once morality is taken away from governance we do not have government any more we have criminals or a gang of thieves with the key to the national treasury in their hands.

When this background forms the political base of a country, policies are hardly implemented. Most of the projects abandoned are at the instance of wrong location or poor handling or bad intention or both because of emphasis on selfishness. No industry can be supported for revolution or transfer when the key to the treasury is not in the hands of national interest but selfish interest.

It is also evident that even within the system itself it will be difficult to have results because competence and prudent discharge of service will be lacking. Companies, government parastatals and agencies will be synonymous with looting, sabotage and collapse. In Rivers State of Nigeria, companies that sustain the economics of other countries have been abandoned. The Atali farms, Ubima Palm and so on have been destroyed. The Pabod breweries were forgotten for years. The Olympia hotels are now occupied by the police and other agencies. The list is endless. It is therefore not the income per se, not policies not even science and technology but sound morality that can be depended upon for sustainable development. Jhingan (2007:81) therefore said it all for stakeholders when he emphasizes that for any nation to develop;

People have efficiency, diligence, orderliness, punctuality, frugality, scrupulous honesty, rationality in decision or action, preparedness for change, alertness to opportunities as they arise in the changing world, energetic enterprise, integrity and self-reliance, cooperativeness and willingness to take the long view.

It is obvious that for national development to start and remain there must be a sound moral base because the above concepts are all central in the existence of morality. However, beyond these concepts and for their sustenance is another concept that has been argued strongly as a moral concept-discipline. The role of morality in national development demands that discipline is paramount in any nation that has chosen to toe the part of development. Franz Brentano holds the view. According to him “Somebody’s feeling displeasure in the bad is good.” Stump and Fieser (2003:338) explains Franz Brentano’s theory of organic unities simpler quoting Bentham thus:

All punishment, Bentham writes is in itself evil because it inflicts suffering and pain. At the same time, the object which all laws have in common is to augment the total happiness of the community. If we are to justify punishment from a utilitarian point of view we must show that the pain inflicted by punishment must in some way prevent some greater pain.

Thiroux (2004:132) does not deviate from the utilitarian position but writes slightly different while answering the question, “why does crime require punishment?” According to him, “punishment is required in order to re-establish the balance of morality which is disturbed when someone violates laws or moral rules” Anywhere morality is given price of place, the secret is respect for discipline. Discipline intended to bring about correction is therefore not just a moral concept but an enabling moral concept. Societies that are characterized by immorality are first lawless. James Ibori for instance was discharged in Court of Nigeria for lack of case but pleaded guilty in Britain. Between these two countries, one does not need any further evidence to reveal which respects morality. No company or country develops between the West and third world countries gets deeper because of the difference in respect for morality.

It is also widely accepted that no country develops without peace. Violence is a reliable base for underdevelopment. The reason is not only the absence of security of lives and property but it precedes lawlessness. Many companies fled the Niger Delta in Nigeria despite the availability of raw materials – oil, because of violence which led to rape, looting, vandalism, assassinations, kidnappings and so on. Infrastructure and industries do not subsist in a vacuum. They are constructed and operated or used by human beings and located in communities. Nobody works in a society that is synonymous with crises. The Boko Haram States for instance can no longer host any industry neither can any construction work be done. It is therefore clear that the availability of raw materials, science and technology, policies and income will not serve any development purpose in a society void of peace, justice, equality, freedom, rule of law, responsibility, honesty among others etc. the home for these concepts is morality.

## ON THE NEED FOR AUTONOMOUS MORA EDUCATION

The development explanations of morality and national developments reveal that to any sustainable national development, it must be founded on moral values. Discipline is also added as a moral value. This implies that those values must be understood by those committed to national development and the entire society. If education serves to create the society of human desire and or the individual desired by the society, then it has a stake in national development as its functions attracts to it all ventures that are synonymous or dependent on first understanding basic issues for a foundation. It is on this note that national development does need autonomous moral education to equip the populace with moral requirements because morality remains the foundation for national development.

The need for autonomous moral education and not just moral education is not far fetched. Amaele (2010) conducted a study to find out how moral education was taught in Nigerian schools. He found that no school taught the discipline. Only few values were taught but as mathematics, social studies physical education and so on. Consequently, ultimate moral questions cannot be directed to anybody because none can be held responsible. Aminigo (1999:1) has argued that every discipline is invented to answer specific questions. Since no course is invented, there will be none to answer moral questions. If a subject is to be relied upon for moral questions and answers it should be designed to solely answer moral questions which is possible only when the discipline is autonomous. The failure of the schools in Nigeria to graduate students with the desired moral values is not an indication that the school lacks the capacity to do so but that it lacks the discipline to address moral issues. It is not surprising that the average Nigerian graduate is ignorant of the basics in his institution. Many Nigerians have failed employment interviews because of failure to recite the national anthem and pledge.

The introduction of autonomous moral education offers the educational enterprise with the opportunity to readily address moral issues without coming through any other roots. This will eliminate all distractions that cannot be avoided if the discipline is taught along other disciplines. This will save strength, time, knowledge and by extension income. This will also give the system the opportunity to match policy and curriculum with action. This becomes more important as on every certificate, it is written, "worthy of learning and character" but without a discipline squarely teaching character development in any of the schools. This national policy on Nigerian education states that the goal of Nigeria's education is: "to develop and inculcate in the individuals the proper values through research and development." The statement on certificates is therefore a claim that they have achieved their goal; but can there be an end without a means?

The doubt in the claim by school administrators is further confirmed in the fact that the method of teaching the discipline through other values cannot yield the desired academic results. Nduka (1983:3) has categorically stated the bias in the Nigerian curriculum conference which makes the school handicapped in inculcating the right values. According to him,

The national curriculum conference has brought about since the early 70's workshops of the Nigerian Educational Research Council on the Curriculum content and methods of inculcation of various other subjects... no comparable attempt had since been made to identify the right types of values and attitudes.

For morality to take a centre stage in Nigeria there is the need to introduce discipline in schools because it is specific.

## CONCLUSION

The desire and zeal with which stakeholders search for national development in Nigeria is not synonymous with the search for a right start. Consequently, science, technology and income have over the years been over emphasized against other factors mostly morality and moral education portends a direct fight against the perceived determining factors. The result is, the more input for national development, the less output. The fact that national development demands capital and human resources presupposes prudent use of income and availability of homes and responsible men and women to pave way for savings, dedication to duty, peaceful environment and by extension a successful industry. These are moral requirements hence for any national development; the bedrock should not be science and technology or raw materials but, first, moral education and sound morality.

It implies therefore that scholarship awards, incentives and motivating initiatives should also be directed towards moral education and students and scholars to provide the enabling ground for national development and for a profitable emphasis on science and technology. The introduction of autonomous moral education in Nigerian schools will set the pace. It is then clear, beyond reasonable doubts that for sufficient implementation of the policy and true achievement of educational goals an autonomous moral education be articulated in the curriculum and taught as a compulsory subject in all the tiers of education mostly now that immorality is identified as the most threatening monster in Nigeria.

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