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CONTRIBUTORS

Dr. E.S. Akama (senior lecturer)- teaches church History and African Traditional Religion in the department of Religious Studies, University of Port Harcourt.

Rev. Dr. V.G. Nyoyoko (senior lecturer)- teaches biblical studies, Christian theology comparative religion in the department of Religious studies, University of Port Harcourt.

Rev. Dr. S.I. Udoidem (senior lecturer)- teaches Ethics, social/political philosophy and philosophy of science in the department of Philosophy, University of Port Harcourt.

Dr. D.I. Ilega (senior lecturer)- teaches church history and Islamic studies in the department of religious studies, University of Port Harcourt.

Dr. A.R. Kilani (lecturer)- teaches Islamic studies in the department of religious studies, University of Port Harcourt.

Rev. Dr. D. Udoette (lecturer)- teaches Biblical studies in the faculty of theology, St. Joseph major seminary, Ikot Ekpene, Akwa Ibom State.

Sr (Dr) A. Essien, (lecturer)- teaches Sociology of religion in the department of Religion, University of Uyo.

Ibrahim Olatunde U. (lecturer)- teaches Islamic Studies in the department of religious studies, Coilege of Education, Ikere Ekiti.

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EDITORIAL

Many years ago, precisely since the middle of the twentieth Century, there was a widely held opinion that God was dead and that religion as an institution was an anachronism. But as the twenty-first century unfolds, what one witnesses is the ever pervasiveness of religion in nearly all cultures despite the much trumpeted scientific, technological society and consequent globalisation. This situation has put scholars from various disciplines on the alert towards resolving or at worst explaining the relationship between religion and culture.

Our new journal seeks to explore this relationship between religions and culture in the context of social changes and interaction. Scholars in the arts, social sciences and humanities have argued that one of the key factors in explaining this interaction is the rapid process of inter-culturation associated with economic, political and religious changes. These changes have created conditions necessary for the pervasiveness of religion in every culture in every age.

These studies, therefore, now provide valuable information about objective factors, which have continued to influence the position of religion in different cultures. Our Journal aims to share in this discourse. Developments which brought religion and culture into sharp focus depended on social, political and religious changes as well as on growing interest among scholars in the concept and phenomenon of inter-culturation. To achieve this end, our journal intends to be inter disciplinary in approach in order to take in all shades of opinions on the interaction of religion and cultures in all societies.

The fallacy of a causal relationship between religion and society can equally apply to assumption about the relationship between religion and culture. Scholars who identify society as a phenomenon of prime importance may argue that the religion members of a culture group pursue are integral to their society. The legacy of ideas about the connection between religion and culture continues to exert a powerful influence on the construction of this link and leads many to argue, not so much about religions of cultural groups but about culturally oriented religions. Although it is perfectly possible to show that links do exist between a particular cultural group and their religion in specific cases there is no more a one-to-one relationship between religion and culture than there was between society and culture.

The discredited legacy of connection between religion and society continues to influence ideas about the relationship between society and culture and by implication, the link between religion and culture. Studies of the religion of cultural groups clearly show that their belief systems may encompass a variety of societies especially when members of a cultural group or a cultural category define themselves with reference to some conceptions of shared descent and similarity of outward appearance as well as common culture.

This situation leads to theories of modernization and paradigms of sociocultural change often assume a unilinear direction and a unitary outcome. Dichotomous

Conclusion

Libation is characteristically marked by realistic depiction of the community or family situations. In this way too, it provide a relief by understanding the truth that an individual member of the community or the family is often remembered even after death. The people used libation to articulate many of their deepest and most enduring feelings. As valuable as cultural consciousness, it is to the libation text that one must refer to comprehend our fore-fathers world view, for it is in the text that the present generation can find a medium which resembles in many ways the cosmology of their ancestors. Invocation during libation shows that the people consider the gods to be very close to them, ready to respond to their needs. The most persistent image the libation text portrays is that of cultural people. Certain aspects of our culture confronts us with evidence which indicates that however seriously the imported religion may have tried to diminish the central communality that had bound all libation together, it has never been able to destroy it totally or leave it psychologically defenseless. But for the most, when our people look at the cosmos, they see man, nature and God as a unity distinct but inseparable aspect of a sacred whole. The notion of sacredness gets at the essence of the texts and through them at the essence of the people's world-view. Libation according to libation people is a powerful spiritual operation, which when properly utilized, could be of immense benefit to mankind.

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THE PROBLEMS OF CHILD ABUSE AND ISLAMIC SOLUTIONS

I. O Uthman

Introduction

The neglect of the child is an international malaise that cuts across all the continents of the world, it is also not peculiar to the contemporary societies alone but has its root in ancient societies. For instance, the Patriarch in biblical history had absolute power over the life and death of any child born to him and he determined whether the child should be allowed to live or be condemned to death. Constantine, the great even permitted the sale of a child when the parents could not support him or her and infanticide, buying and selling of children were also rampant in Western Europe till about 1000 A.C. (Hammudah, 1977). Such was also the attitude of the Arabian society before the advent of Islam where young female children were buried alive for fear of shame or poverty. The male children on the other hand were sent into the business of minding cattle and trading from the tender age of 12 (Qutb, 1979). Coming nearer home, in most parts of Africa, children were and are still regarded as economic assets for the parents. (Harke, 1972), They are obliged to assist in raising the income of the family by working on the farms (Ibid).

In modern times, however, the abuse of the child has taken a new shape. This began when women were compelled by the economic situation then to give up their maternal duties at home and go out to earn a living and she had to toil throughout the day. she could no longer perform the duties of training her children satisfactorily and she could no longer breast feed the child long enough for it to derive sufficient protein, calcium and other antibodies (Maududi, 1968 and Harke-, 1972),

Definition of Child Abuse

It is as diverse as what constitute child itself. While according to the United Nation charter on the right of a child, a child is any person below the age of 18, (United Nation, 1990), the social development policy for Nigeria on the other hand holds that a child is any person from age 0-12 years (Federal Government, 1989). some of the definitions enunciated on child abuse are:

i. Those acts of Commission or Omission which deprived the child of its physiological safety, belongingness and love, esteem, self actualization and cognitive, needs (United Nations 1990)

ii. Any behaviour or attitude which is detrimental to the physical and psychological welfare of the child (Daily Times, May 27, 1991).

Kinds of Child Abuse and Their Causes

In classifying child abuse, the Incidence and Intensity are taken cognisance of. As a result of this, it is classified into the following:

Emotional/Psychological Abuse:

This is the denial of a child the opportunity to develop its intellect and mind in a normal manner that ensures a stable and pleasant personality. It includes all acts that make a child to lack self control and actualization and puts him in a permanent and constant state of inferiority, it is usually brought about by the exposure of a child to ugly situations at a very tender age. One such instance is lack of paternity. A child with no father will continuously struggle against the feeling of inferiority by inventing for himself, a father who does not exist, a father, he goes to in his imagination, a father in various forms and shapes, (Freud and Burlingham, 1942). Another instance is a kid at day care homes where the nanny has more children than she can look after and because of lack of attention, the baby cries all day. A parent who takes her baby to such day care homes has deviated from the ideal up to about 40% (Daily Times, December 25, 1991 p. 16), Children who have not obtained adequate love, protection and security from their parents end up suffering emotional and Psychological instability and this also affects their cognitive development. Other instances include child marriage, verbal abuse of the child and inadequate care and attention for disabled children.

Physical Child Abuse is the intentional, non accidental use of force or intentional non accidental acts of Omission on the part of parents or any other caretaker in his interaction with a child in his care aimed at hurting, injuring or destroying the child. Parents tend to use physical force on their children in an attempt to correct them when they go wrong. Some of these Children as a result of this adopt the culture of violence and hatred. Instances of this abuse includes child panning and battering, excessive beating and forced feeding. Closely related to the physical abuse of the child is child labour. Child labour has been defined as the exportation of the child in jobs that are monotonous, strenuous, harmful and unduly prolonged (Ebigbo, 1990). It includes employing a child as a farmhand barmaid, househelp, mechanic, apprentice or guides to beggars (Vanguard May 3, 1990). Most of these children are forced to fend for themselves at a very tender age, and they, then, contend with adults on jobs that are essentially meant for adults.

Nutritional Abuse refers to any act that impairs the health of a child and it includes lack of adequate medical care, poor nutrition or malnutrition and infant mortality. (Sunday Times January 26th, 1992). Exposure of a child to bottle feeding

which is unsterilized, giving it an artificial formula over-diluted with unclean water and feeding a child with guinea cornpap which lacks protein, calcium and other antibodies makes it susceptible to any of the major killer disease in infancy (Daily Times, October 20, 1988). Diseases such as cholera, tuberculosis and other enteric diseases can be transmitted through street foods.

"Traditionally, infants used to depend Solely on their mothers for food where they were breastfed for 3 to 4 years of age. While weaning, food will be tasted first by the mother and when found unwholesome, it would not be given to the children. But now many kids especially on their way to school buy food from street vendors who might not appreciate the importance of wholesome food. Some households even eat their meals from these streets vendors" (Okpara, 1990).

Poor nutrition or nutritional abuse is responsible for a high rate of infant mortality in Nigeria. According to a survey, it was observed that 25% of Nigerian kids were undernourished, of which between 10% and 15% were severe. (Daily Times, October 20, 1988).

Moral Abuse is the omission or commission of any act that impairs the development of a child without any moral justification. Instances of this includes infanticide, termination of pregnancy and child abandonment. The right to live is a God-given right of any child and should not be usurped or abused. Child abandonment has been found to be a very rampant form of child abuse. Oral and carnal intercourse with a child, fondling his/her sexual organs and involving him/her in any pornographic activity with or without his/her consent is an abuse (Federal Governments 1989)

Factors that Contribute to Child Abuse in our Society

Economic Factors: This is the major contributing factor to the high rate of child abuse. As a result of the dwindling Nigerian economy, many people cannot afford the basic necessities of life (Hyavyri, 1988). In order to make ends meet, many parents and even children do things that affect adversely the children. Many kids who take part in street hawking do so because they have no choice. If asked why they are not in school or why they should risk their lives along busy highways, their excuse is that they have no means of livelihood or paying their school fees. There was an incident of a student whose father had an accident and became paralysed. He had to become the breadwinner of the family at age 10. A friend invited him to the motor part but before he knew it, he had become adept at picking pocket, then at knifing and later at using a gun. At the age of 20, he became a gang leader (African Guardian, September 12, 1988). In most middle class families and even upper class, the mother have been forced to go out and work fulltime in order to augment the fathers earnings. The situation has been worsened by the introduction of the structural Adjustment Programme In 1986. As a result of the parents absence from home, children no

longer receive proper training and monitoring especially in the formative years. They now play truancy at school and keep themselves busy with drugs and crimes. Some parents even deny their children adequate attention and guidance, not because of poverty but because of their love and greedy lust for sensate living. To them, "many luxuries have artificially become necessities of life" (Maududi, 1968).

It is unfortunate, however, that despite the material comforts parents provide for their children, because of their failure to provide them with adequate attention and care and to monitor them in constructive pursuits, the children have found alternative pursuits in drugs and crimes (Federal Ministry of Justice, N.D). It is noteworthy that in an attempt not to wallow in poverty and to live fine, many children are exposed to the possibility of being killed by a speeding vehicle, being raped by a deceitful buyer and being lured into crimes, drug trafficking and prostitution. This cannot but happen when the children engage in street hawking or work in motorparks and brothels and when they are denied adequate attention, care and guidance where both parents go from morning till nightfall in search of work, contracts and any other business engagements.

Family Factors: Children by their nature required to be guided in the socialization process and parents need to be cautious on how they go about it. Many parents and guardians beat their wards brutally so much that they are at times forced to run away and where they do not, they find it difficult to communicate with their parents. When these children have any problems, they rather discuss with their friends who may mislead them. Such parents usually subject their children to excessive beatings, wounds and injuries. Others over indulge and pamper their children. This inability to caution and reprimand children when they make mistakes make them grow out of control. Children are also made to suffer when parents quarrel with each others. Women and children are at times driven from home by the husband thereby disrupting the children's education, socialization process and feelings of being loved and wanted. When such cases go to court, the children are subjected to psychological and traumatic disorder. (Federal ministry of Justice, N.D).

Absence of either, parent may also affect the emotional and psychological development of the children. The father for instance in an attempt to silence a crying child may use unnecessary force and this can make the child develop excessive aggression. The absence of the father may also lead to the child developing inferiority complex with lack of self control and normal child growth (Freud and Burlingham, 1942). Friends of the family have also been identified as playing an important role in the growth of a child. In the recent past, a family friend was caught trying to rape the child of his friend (Federal Ministry of Justice, N.D).

Social and Cultural Factors: Ignorance among the Nigerian populace has contributed to the abuse of the Nigerian child. Since about 75% of the population is

not educated, most people are not aware, for instance, of the medical implications of child marriage such as damages on the female parts known as Rectum Vagina Fistula (Federal Ministry of Justice N.D) Most mothers are also ignorant of the benefits of breastfeeding which is regarded as the most nutritious and complete food for the baby. (Sunday Times, January 26, 1992). The use of T.V sets and video players as agents of socialization formation of ideas and values has been acclaimed. What is not known by most people is that children spend most of their time watching film shows which has led to both a broad decline in their performance and increase in violence away from them. (Awake, May 22, 1991). It has also led to looseness in morality since men and women are sometimes shown on the screen in nude or in actual sexual acts, The Kids do not hesitate to translate these shows into practice and this probably account for the increase in teenage mothers and fathers.

Our Social Adjustment System which does not cater adequately for children has subjected them to various forms of abuse. Children who join their mothers in our prisons and juvenile offenders in our remand and reformatory homes are harassed and victimised once they are screened away from the public view. Many of such children come out of the homes more hardened than they were before, (Federal Ministry of Justice, N.D). Many executors of a deceased will in our society, misappropriate his property even with legal backing by obtaining letters of administration from the law courts. Some men even deliberately allow their children to suffer by willing out all their legacy to concubines and girlfriends Denial of Women the, custody of their children in disputes of paternity between legal and natural fathers and during divorce suits is also one of the anomalies and ugly incidents in our socio-cultural interactions (Federal Ministry of Justice.N.D).

Effect of Child Abuse in our Society

Many of those who could have grown up to constitute the labour force of our society are today diverting their potentials into unproductive pursuits such as drug pushing, crimes and prostitution. Children are now becoming alienated from the society and are finding solace in liquor, crimes and other social vices. The rate at which they are graduating into hardened and merciless criminals is very alarming. They engage in such criminal act that range from abduction to stark murder. High rate of illiteracy and teenage deaths from unsuccessful abortions are also prominent in our society. Many children mostly because of financial inability have been denied access even to primary education and most often than not cannot make up for it. This implies that the rate in the increase of the floatsam and jetsam of our society is far higher than that of our competent forces. The preponderance of moral license and decadence has also led to the increase not only in teenage deaths but also in the rate of illegitimate children, confusion of paternity, rape and sexual diseases. According to a pathetic report sometime ago, a 15 year old pregnant girl was afflicted with various diseases which was initially attributed to her pregnant condition until it was discovered that she

had contacted Aids (Awake, May 22, 1991).

Islamic Solution

Islam teaches that children should be given adequate attention, love and security. It places this duty primarily on the parents who are ordered to train and bring up their children (Maududi N.D). Where parents cannot shoulder the duty, it falls on the Muslim Ummah and Government (Hammudah, 1977). That is to say, come what may, the child must not suffer and should be catered for under the Islamic dispensation. Some Islamic teachings are hereby given in form of suggested solutions to the problem of child abuse.

In Islam the life of the child is sacred and terminating it for whatever reason is condemned (Quran 17:31, 60:12). Islam makes it clear that the killing of children is an act of foolishness and stupidity (Quran 6:140). For the child can only remain an economic burden if parents and the society fail to develop its creative faculties. In order to release the latent creativity of the child, Islam advocates free and compulsory education at all levels. Alternative technical and vocational education must be provided for those who cannot proceed with formal education. There is no difference between male and female as regards education (Fazlu, 1963). Alongside education, Islam also implores parents to give their children proper medical and nutritional care. Infact, it recommends that mothers should suckle their babies for two years, (Quran 2:223). It therefore encourages women to be full-time housewives in order to fulfil this maternal cares. The Government should therefore assist parents in the nutritional need of their children. Efforts should be intensified in the immunization drive of children. The government and employers of labour must encourage mothers in jobs that will not sap their energies, their resumption and closing time should be different from that of their co-workers. They should also remunerate them in forms of child allowances, interest free loans and provision of recreational centres for their children. Islam also forbids parents from doing things that can injure their children even by way of correction. The Prophet (S.A.W) said "Enjoin your little ones to observe prayers when they are seven and beat them when they are ten but without traces (Fazlu, 1963). It is also on record that Islam encourages and recommends the shaving of babies hair at birth which modern medicine now requires to cure bacteria on the head of a baby and that Prophet Muhammed discouraged female circumcision (Fazlu, 1963).

In taking care of the custody, guardianship and adoption of orphan, motherless babies, abandoned babies and disabled children Islam promises those who carry out such noble responsibility proximity with the prophet in the garden. It gives rules and regulation for their adoption and guardianship and rules that their caretakers should be strictly monitored to ensure that the children are not maltreated. They should also not be denied the inheritance of their parents which they are entitled to whether male or female, (Quran 4:2-10). It also teaches that executors and guardians of their property should not possess absolute power to disburse it and they should also be

made to submit proper record of their stewardship (Quran 4:6). They are also warned about the consequences of misappropriating or mismanaging such property, (Quran 4:9-10). Islam also puts forward early marriage to prevent indiscriminate sex (Quran 24:32-33). All activities that can make the child susceptible to sexual abuse is also forbidden. Government should therefore enforce all laws banning street trading or hawking, prostitution and abortion.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has examined in clear terms what constitutes the abuse and neglect of a child. It has traced the origin of the problem to the ancient societies and listed its various forms and causes. It has also given some of the factors that contribute to it as well as its effects on the society. It is herefore clear the child abuse is in our midst and the I has eaten deep into the fabric of our society. In addition, the Islamic teachings on the correct attitudes to the child have been explained in form of suggested solutions to malaise. In applying these suggestions, however, all hands must be on deck, starting from the parents, government and all members of the society.

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