

**Islamic and Modernism: Issues and Challenges of Child Upbringing**

**BY**

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**ABSTRACT**

Everyone is found of wanting to be modern, even those who are locally brought up. The appearance of many people who proclaim it are either educated or illiterates, rich or living below standard of economy, young or old. Knowing fully that every parent bears in mind that in future their children will be a source of peace of mind for them, but this is becoming issue of doubt. This is been abhorred by an undermined known enemy of “modernity”. This paper, then aims at having a succinct look into what modernity is and its palatability or otherwise with the Muslim child upbringing. It (the paper), as well is proffering Islamic alternative of proper child upbringing which intends at realizing glorious family representatives. At the end, recommendations will be made to emphasize the writer’s stands on the issues discussed and to encourage readers to apply Islamic alternative of child upbringing herein highlighted, in order to have a well prepared future leaders.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Modernity is a term that has acclaimed several definitions from numerous definers. Though, each definer sees it according to his perspectives about the term. Asike (2014:26) sees modernity as the condition of being new and modern, of present time or recent times.

Okediji (2007:291) quoted Blankeship to have defined modernity as the idea of a modern world brought into existence by science leading to an ideology of materialistic beliefs.

Then, modernity could be understood as an idea of being social, current, distinct, up to date, and stand out in the temporal endeavours in order to meet up with borrowed foreign culture regardless of considering religious implications and native unpalatability.

Child upbringing is simply put as the natural duty of nurturing a young person by parent or accidentally by guardian, right from birth to the age of maturity when he/she becomes independent physically, psychologically, spiritually, etc.

## **ISSUES AND CHALLENGES OF MODERNITY**

It doesn’t sound absurd or unIslamic to be modern, but it is when one who claims such behaves abnormally and resulted into being oddly beleaguered. Many homes are built on foreign ideas, coordinated according to foreign laws and lifestyles, and that has overpowered their native and religious cultures negatively. In the same vein, Bologun (2007:4) buttresses this when he says:

..... through the instrumentality of modernization, occasioned by science and technology, ways of doing things have considerably changed and all aspects of human life have been affected.

On this, the following have been looking into and discovered to be effects of modernity that render future of many parents and communities hopeless:

## **MODE OF DRESSING**

Dressing is beyond ordinary culture that could be taken up carelessly but it portrays one's sense of belong and preserves one from nudity and embarrassment. No wonder that an adage says; the way you dress, you shall be addressed. But due to influence of peers, movies, society, etc. boys and girls are accustomed to illicit cum half naked dresses outside their homes as a means of showing off that he/she is modern. Mode of dress of some parents worsens this whereby they put on wears made for domestic use while going out of their domiciles. That doesn't only transfer shameful signals to the responsible persons but on contrary passes deceitful lessons to some other ones.

Few weeks ago in the morning while going to my place of work driving with my wife, I saw a mother of two female children who wore a crop top that didn't reach her waist with a tri-quarter Jeans trousers. Could you please imagine what a kind of lesson such a woman was imparting into her young children who were following her? At the same time, some are found of wearing "crazy jeans", as that implies, yet they would be furious with anyone who dare refer to them as mad persons. Wears of such are common; slim-fitted, pencils, leggings, etc. though one learnt that such wears are more expensive that the normal ones.

## **CONSUMABLES**

It is naturally universal norms to consume food or drink, solid or soft, natural or cooked. Human environments determine what could be considered traditional meals, medicines, as well method to apply to ingest or inject them. Many communities share the same traditional meals while many others only adopt consumables of another community based on their benefits through mutual interrelationship or colonization.

What seems pathetic, in this is the fact that some persons ingest or inject some local and foreign consumptions abnormally with the aim of wanting unnatural result for certain action, while some apply such unprofessionally and the result of which has worsen their health condition beyond simple medical attention. For instance, it was related on the net thus:

Or, what do we think of such recent case of a student of Junior Secondary School student in Ohafa, ..... who was reported to have died after he allegedly took ten tablets of Tramadol tablets? He purportedly took the tablets to enhance his performance during his school's inter-house sports competition where he was billed to compare. He could, however, not live to see the event as he died shortly after taking the drugs.

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At worst are the cases of people consuming or inhaling waste products, marijuana, cocaine, substances made for craftworks, alcoholic wines, and what have you.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

ICT has been playing greatly significant roles in globalization and modernization via which easy access to international and local information is realized. This new channel of dissemination and transmission of ideas on all facets of fields has factually come to stay that no one could imagine its end, as much that the space remains and man exists on the earth. This grand electronic device permeates the nooks and crannies of the globe with both true and false information, negative and positive information, concerned and non-concerned information, beneficial and unbeneficial information, spiritual and materialistic information, etc.

With this aspect of the condition of ICT, many persons have been exploiting such advantage in several ways that prompt scholars of various fields to look into its (ICT) barriers and consequences. Few abusive acts that crept into the use of it are the following:

- I- Yahoo – Internet fraud
- II- Blackmailing persons, organizations, authorities, etc.
- III- Personification
- IV- Blasphemy between inter and intra religions
- V- Corruptive and indecent teachings through audio and visual device
- VI- Rituals

At this juncture, let me share what a friend experienced on his way to my house sometime in 2017. The friend received an unexpected call from unknown caller, and conversation that occurred between them after greetings goes thus:

Unknown caller: I have mistakenly sent a message of recharge card unto your phone number now  
and please, send it back for God sake unto my phone number.

Friend: Well, I have not received any message yet.

Unknown caller: I did that by mistake meanwhile it was an elderly man I intended sending it to.  
Please send it back to me.

Friend: Ok! (It was on this conversation they were that my friend received a message bearing  
numerous digits, so as a man of God he immediately sent it back to the sender.  
You wouldn't imagine what happened hence).

Unknown caller: Thank you very much. Here by my side is the elderly man to whom I wanted to send  
the message and he wants to pray for you

Friend: Ok, go ahead!

Unknown caller: (Now an elderly man speaks who was suspicious to be a young man). Thank you my

son, God will bless you. I'm Oluwo of ..... and for the goodness you have done to me, I want to reciprocate and listen to me clearly. You get 3 big coconuts, salt, you mix them up, then you remove your clothe praying for yourself. Then, all of sudden the claimed elderly man started talking in tongue..... what is your name was the next to say. It was at this juncture that my friend disconnected their calls.

To unfold instances on this would take the whole time as some could even be on the use of electronic gadget during the prescribed for canonical prayers.

### **UNWANTED CUM TEENAGER PREGNANCY**

Boys and girls of present time are found of being lovers of sex and they consider that as the only means of showing true love to one another and being modern. With this, illegal unprotected sexual intercourse becomes rampant and many have become victims of Sexually Transmitted Diseases and rare not to have a family, be it nuclear or extended, without any issue of unwanted illegal pregnancy. Alas! Young people who ought to be in schools, it was during the school hours we do see them hanging around in a boastful manner, all this in the name of being civilized and modern. Questions which usually come to the mind of well-meaning persons are: Was that as a result of

- I- Lack of parental surveillance
- II- Disobedience to the parents' instructions
- III- Efficacy or effect of modernization
- IV- Freedom to life?

### **LACK OF RESPECT**

It is an adage that respect is reciprocal. I think the same thing happens with disrespect. Right from time immemorial, every community and religion has certain ways of respecting their members and adherents be it young or old. Boohoo! In these modern days, modes of meaningful respect are decaying. In Yoruba tribe to which I belong with pride, it is set for young person to bow down for elderly ones, and that notwithstanding is not suffice as elderly person reciprocate by praying vehemently, hugging, eulogizing, giving surprising gifts and making exclusive help towards the young ones. Though, the vise is the case in this modern age, whereby "modern children" couldn't greet their parents in a complementary manner. Some did not see anything bad in playing around while the parents are busy with the domestic activities. These as a result of what they see foreign people according to their elderly ones.

### **RELIGION VERSUS SACRILEGE**

AbdulSalam (2003:23) defines religion as what depicts man's relation to that which he regards as holy, whether the holy being is supernatural or even personal to the individual concerned. Another effect of modernity of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is the practice of substituting religious rites with the ceremonial parties in the name of wanting to be recognized as a modern person. It is apparent everywhere that people being invited to grace the religious occasion would claim that they would be busy, though if invited to merriment such would be responded to without giving it second thought!.

This has been affecting some religious organizations that they, then incorporate materialistic programs into the religious events, such as intermingling genders in sittings, dancing together, drinking alcohol, letting married women attend vigil or night programs, etc. All these are nothing save effects of misconstruing what modernity is in the Islamic worldviews.

### **ISLAMIC ALTERNATIVE**

It has been highlighted above some effects that modernity has recorded in the private and public life of people, young and old. Here Islamic substitutes to such repercussions of the so called modern lifestyle that people proclaim will be put in black and white. Islam is simply put as a religion that claims monotheism by submitting to, believing in, obeying and worshipping Allah (SWT) as declared in the Glorious Qur'ān and practiced by the Prophet Muḥammad (SAW).

Islam is regarded as an all-encompassing religion of God. It does address every human endeavours, and takes cognizance of everything about all creatures, even this has been catered for prior to human existence. It is scripturally declared that the Glorious Qur'ān is not lacuna (verse 38 of Sūratul-'An'ām) as even assumed belittle aspects of human activities are either discussed in concise or details; greetings and response, visiting hours, manners of conviviality, neatness and dirtiness. As such, every facets of engagements be it private or public, personal or interpersonal are not left at bay.

Factually, this is the basis of the fact that Islam proffers alternatives against effects of modernity. It must be said that Islam doesn't frown at being modern, but what it considers modern is being socio-religiously responsible. This is tailored towards child upbringing hence, each family serves as microcosm which later metamorphoses into macrocosm. In other words, integration of various families amounts to community while the world is made up of the existence of numerous communities. See Sūratul-Ḥujurāt verse 13.

Furthermore, charity begins at home and operation catch them young are of the watchwords of Islamic policy on child upbringing. In the Glorious Qur'ān, several narrations of many parents who took good care of their wards, what was the fruit of their efforts, repercussions experienced by those who abused their children and what was the vile end of disobedient children are depicted.

Islam considers the parents as fundamental source of lifestyle and life-mirror for the children. It saddles them with responsibility that if discharged would make the children complete men in the future. In other words, Islam enjoins certain assignment to the head of the family (father) for the smooth running of his family, i.e. catering and providing for the family members in such a way that he serves as an interface between them and their needs, at the same time, promoting good morality tirelessly. See

verse 34 of Sūratun-Nasā'. Mother, on the other hand, has domestic assignments to discharge in collaboration with that of the father in order to make their family ambassadors worthy of emulation, i.e. utilizing and protecting the home amenities, carrying the father along of every happening and nurturing the children. Joint efforts of the parents would definitely accord paramount success in their parental roles toward their children. (See Sulyman, 2011:27&28).

The following are the main Islamic parameters towards deactivating the epidemical effects of modernity and realizing good representatives of the family:

- 1- Proper prenatal care, this will enhance wellbeing of the fetus as an expected member of the family prior to his appearance. It is recommended that prayers are offered for safe delivery and good child. This in accordance with the narration of the Qur'ān about Prophet 'Ādam in Sūratul-'A'rāf verse 189.
- 2- Proper feeding with naturally nutritious and healthy meals right from birth till become self dependents. This is discussed by Allah in the verse 233 of Sūratul-Baqarah
- 3- Beautiful and meaningful names must be given to the children. Even, some scholars see nothing unislamic if one decides giving names to an expected baby right from womb life, hence Allah had declared names of some Prophets before their birth. (See Sulyman, 2011:30&31).
- 4- Letting them have access to beneficial education; conventional, craftwork and/or Islamic. The first thing Allah did to Adam immediately after his creation was giving him education about everything. Verses 31-33 of Sūratul-Baqarah.
- 5- Counselling, disciplining and guidance. In Sūratu Luqmān verses 12-19. Oloyede, while asserting the benefits contained in those verses, said:

The Islamic model revolves around spiritual upbringing and  
Character formation whereas the other model places no  
premium on character formation and spiritual development.  
(Oloyede, 2003:670&671)
- 6- Releasing them to marrying religiously responsible person when they maturely due. See Sūratu r-Rūm verse 21.
- 7- Frequent prayers must be offered for the offspring. With this, divine intervention would be manifest throughout their lifespan. See Sūratul-Baqarah verse 126.
- 8- Displaying good mentorship traits to the children within the family and outwards.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

So far, we have discovered that Islam does appreciate being modern with moderation that is void of dogmatism. Several ways by which effects of modernity manifest and mislead future leaders are highlighted with convincing evidences. Then, the Islamic child upbringing policy is suggested to curb the epidemic trend of modernity from grassroots. With this, the Allah's expectation of having best generation ever raised will be realistic.

You are the best peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining

What is right, forbidden what is wrong, and believing in Allah.

If only the People of the Book had faith, it were best for them:

among them are some who have faith, but most of them are

perverted transgressors. Sūratu 'Alī 'Imrān verse 110.

It is recommended that:

- 1- The parents should provide the basic needs for their wards , hence that will caution them against being influenced by unworthy outsider(s)
- 2- The parents should make unconditional surveillance upon their wards since that will help to discover any silly juvenile character at early stage and necessary correction(s) will be carried out
- 3- The parents should display an exemplary lifestyle because seeing is believing
- 4- Governments at all levels should be more up and doing, by:
  - I. Providing enabling environments for their citizens
  - II. Making enforcement agencies more ethically proactive so that they would curb any illicit activity discovered prior becoming epidemic
  - III. Not shunning any report given about anybody being instrumental to the public nuisance; celebrity or nonentity
  - IV. Appreciating well-behaving children with meaningful scholarship or judicious appointment
- 5- Children, on their part,
  - I. should only imbibe religiously positive culture in order to add value to their lives
  - II. should use their modern exposure to serve Allah obediently, serve humanity mutually and explore the nature for the betterment cum progress of all
- 6- Finally, there is nothing that the prayer can't do, hence it a psychic weapon that effects its doer's wishes through Allah's permission. So, prayers should routine for both the children and parents and should be directed towards realizing a best family.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

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