

MAJAC

MAKURDI JOURNAL OF ARTS AND CULTURE

Vol 12 June, 2014

ISSN: 1117-3440

MAJAC

MAKURDI JOURNAL OF ARTS AND CULTURE

Vol. 12 June, 2014

Editorial Board

Editor-in-Chief

Professor Charity Ashinem Angya

Editor

Gowon Ama Doki, Ph.D

Editorial Advisory Board

Prof. David Ker

Benue State University Makurdi

Prof. Alex Asigbo

Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

Prof. James Alachi

Benue State University Makurdi

Prof. Toryina Varvar

Benue State University Makurdi

Dr. Abdulrasheed Abiodun Adeoye

University of Ilorin, Ilorin Nigeria

Dr. Naomi Nkealah

University of Limpopo, South Africa

Dr. Tor Iorapuu

University of Jos

Dr. Iyav Ben Due

Benue State University Makurdi

Editorial Address

The Editor,

Makurdi Journal of Arts and Culture

Department of Theatre Arts

Benue State University, Makurdi

Phone: 08036366634

e-mail: theeditormajac@yahoo.com

Trinity
Media

No. 3 First Avenue off Benson
Upah Street Nyiman Layout,
Makurdi Benue State Nigeria

08032163258

johnnykiaatrinity@gmail.com

Copy Right 2014 © ISSN:117-2440

Department of Theatre Arts

Benue State University, Makurdi

PARENTHOOD AND CHILD UPBRINGING AMONGST THE YORUBÁ OF SOUTHERN NIGERIA

‘LAYÒ ÒGÚNLOLÁ

Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages
University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.

Abstract:

There is no doubt that globally today, moral decadence level is on daily increase. In the homes, schools, offices and so on, there are lots of social vices. People put the blame variously. Some say the parents are to blame while others believe it is the manifestation of the interference of foreign cultures and the attendant civilization. This paper examines the roles of parents in bringing up the child. It observes that most parents have failed in their duties to their children leaving this very important duty in the hands of the school teacher. They probably do not realize the fact that the child spends more time with the parent than he does with the teacher. The outcome is not favorable to the child, his parents and the society at large. The paper highlights some of the factors militating against parental care and its effects on the child's upbringing using the Yorubá people of Nigeria as example. The paper then concludes that unless parents are ready to face reality, the future of the children and indeed the entire society may be in jeopardy.

Introduction:

The issue of parental care is a global one; the method though differs from one ethnic group or from one nation to another. The Yorubá people for instance believe that parental care is paramount to the success of any child in life. Despite their strong belief in the existence of man's destiny, they still hold the belief that parents have vital roles to play in the fulfillment of a good destiny and the amendment of 'bad' destiny on earth.

Yoruba say “*àjẹjẹ owo kan ò gberù dọrí*” meaning “a single hand cannot lift a load to the head. This implies that one should

always seek help in doing a task which cannot be done single handedly.

This paper examines among other things, what parenthood is to the Yorùbá and its relevance to the child's upbringing. It discusses briefly the role of the extended family which is very noticeable in the Yorùbá culture. It also discusses the cause(s) of lack of parental care in most homes. Furthermore, the paper discusses the effects of parental care on the child's behaviour. This is necessary because the rate at which societal vices are on the increase is alarming and if not cautioned, may lead to total disintegration and deterioration of the societal moral values. The paper is aimed at promoting cultural awareness in the society using the Yorùbá society as yardstick. This will invariably help in enlightening parents of their responsibilities to their children vis-à-vis the children to the parents in turn. When this is accomplished, the child's success in life is prevented from being jeopardized and the society benefits.

Among the Yorùbá for instance, parental care forms the background upon which the child's future is determined. If this aspect is not properly taken care of, the child's success in life may be jeopardized. The main objective of this paper therefore includes the following:

- (1), to examine the causes of societal vices with specific reference to the role of parents in the life of the child.
- (2). to discuss why parental care is very important to the child's upbringing and
- (3). to discuss the likely effects of absence of parental care on the future of the child and the society as a whole.

The paper is divided into parts. The first part which is the introduction, briefly examines what parental care means. Part two examines why and how parents should take care of their children. In the third part, we examine the likely effects of parents not taking proper care of their children. The final part is the conclusion and suggestions for improvement.

Before colonization, the Yorùbá people had their way of doing things. For instance, they had the Yorùbá Traditional Education System known as "*Ètò Èkó ibílẹ̀ Yoruba*" the main objective of which was to make the individual an '*omolúàbí*', i.e. a person

who is of good behaviour in all its ramification. (Awoniyi 1978, Abimbolá 1975, Ode tókun 2010, Ìsò lá 2009).

In traditional Yorùbá setting, the child was to be under the tutelage of the parents and family relations from birth. He spends more time with his parents than with any other person or group of persons. At school age, the teacher joins in the crusade of helping the child to prosper. After marriage, the child is still a full-fledged member of his/her family. He partakes in family meetings, and he/she is relevant in decision taking.

Most people think that the father and the mother are the child's parent. To the Yorùbá people of Nigeria, parent includes the biological father/mother and old members of the child's family. These people are saddled with the responsibility of monitoring and directing the affairs of the child's growth physically, morally and spiritually.

This notwithstanding, the effect of the introduction of foreign religions with their attendant civilization on the issue of parenthood calls for questioning. For instance, Adeye mi (2006:53-56) asserts that the kind of civilization brought as a result of the political domination of Africa in general by the British and the French people affected the socio-political, economic and religious life of the people. The Yorùbá was and is still more affected.

Quoting one Gelfeard, Awoniyi (1975:363) writes that:

Many people nowadays like to eulogize our Western civilization to the detriment of all others and forget that the less developed communities may be able to teach us something too.

What Awoniyi is saying here is that we should not discard our culture on the basis of the civilization brought to us by the Whites. We would like to state that the idea of abandoning one's culture for the imported culture cannot do the nation any good. The earlier we discard a culture that would not benefit the populace, the better.

These issues are discussed and at the end, suggestions are made as to what the society can do in order to promote better understanding between parents and their children in the area of giving respect to parents' instructions and control over their

children. This will ensure a better future for the listening child, consequently, the society as a whole will benefit. This is because according to Awoniyi (1975:365):

If a man does away with his traditional way of living, and throws away his good customs, he had better first make certain that he has something of value to replace them.

The Child as the Pivot:

The position a child occupies in the world's view cannot be underestimated. When one labours vigorously on something, definitely such a thing must be of great importance to the person. To the Yorùbá people of Nigeria, the child is the end-product of all wealth, hence the saying 'Omo ni igbèyìn olà' literally meaning 'a child is the end-product of all wealth'.

In their thinking, a childless marriage is a failed marriage and indeed, a total waste. The Yorùbá people believe that he who comes to this world and bears no fruit of the womb (has no child), does not deserve to come to the world at all. When the Yorùbá say 'o ò nǹ kú láéláé' meaning 'you shall not die forever', what this means is that you shall not die childless. Quite a number of Yorùbá sayings testify to this claim. A few examples are given below.

Iná kú, ó feérú bojú
Ògèdè kú ó fò mo ró pò

- The fire dies, the ash covers it
- The banana tree dies, a younger one replaces it

Bí a bá kú tán
Omo eni nǹ wolé deni

- After one's death
- It is the child who takes care of the home.

General Prince Adekúnle, a notable Yoruba Jùjú Musician, in one of his albums titled 'Omo Niyi' (1987), literally meaning, 'the child is a pride' sings:

Bí wón bá rí e lode
Won ò ní bèèrè as o
Won ò ní bèèrè owó
Wón a láya re ní ko
Wón a tún lómo rè ní kó
Omo lèrè ayé wa

If you are seen outside
They will not ask of your cloth
They will not ask of your money
They will say how is your wife
They will also say how is your child
The child is our reward on earth.

Apart from this, the Yorùbá believe that death though inevitable, is not designed for young people by the Creator, but for the aged.

Therefore, when a young person dies, they mourn and associate it with the handwork of some evil forces such as witches and witchcraft who are opposed to the well-being of the people and so they try to find out the cause(s) of the affliction with the aim of finding a lasting solution so as to prevent possible re-occurrence (Ògúnolá, 2004: 119-125).

Let us quickly add that this belief is not peculiar to the Yorùbá. The Holy Bible and the Quran, respectively record that God, the creator of mankind does not destine man to experience bad happenings. Also in Psalm 9, verse 10 and Suratul Haji Quran 22 v.5, the Holy Bible and the Holy Quran respectively, record that God has destined man to spend at least seventy years on earth. No wonder why people frown at the death of young people (teenagers). This may account for why the Yorùbá people are bent on investigating the cause of a young man's death.

Bánjo (2009:131) states that:

The Greeks believe that education is not the business of parents or informal society but of educational institutions set up by the state. On the other hand, the ancient Jews laid more emphasis in parental and informal societal influences, hardly surprising as character formation, in their view, was to be based on the Bible: scriptures; particularly by the Torah and generally the Old Testament.

The Yorùbá however believe that an untrained child sells out the house one builds. This stresses the importance of parents support in the socio-political, moral and cultural upbringing of a child. They help in transmitting the norms, traits, behaviours, attitudes and other value systems of the society. If a child's moral and psychological needs are taken care of and there is a clear delimitation of accepted behaviours, rules and regulations, the objective of rearing a child will be met. This is to say that the importance of parent's role in the upbringing of the child cannot be underestimated.

Yorùbá societies attach much importance to child training. To them, children are the heritage of the Lord. The child is a precious gift from God and therefore, must be protected. This is necessary because they believe that an untrained child sells out

the house one builds. Sowande and Ajànakú (1962:2) also testify to this when they write:

Ní ayé àtíjọ, a kò lè rí Yorùbá kan l'óbìnrin tàbí lókúnrin tí kò ní jẹ wí pé bí yóó se bíno ànfàní ní yóó máa fì sàdùrà lósán, lóru. Gbogbo wàhálà tàbí à-ti-ní iyàwó tàbí à-ti-ni-o-ko, kì n se nítorí ohun méjì, bí kò se láti ní o mo.

(In the past, one could not see any Yorùbá woman or man who would not want to have a useful child and this he would be praying for day and night. All efforts to get married were for no other purpose but to bear children).

For this reason, what the parents do is to ensure that the child grows into an '**OMO LÚÀBÍ**'. One of the means of achieving this objective is to give the child '**èkó ilé**' (home training). This is more important to the Yorùbá than anything else. Hence they say "*ilé ni a ti ní kó èsò ròde*" (charity begins at home). They also believe that one of the greatest insults a Yorùbá child can suffer is to be reprimanded as "*omo aláilékòò ilé*" meaning a child who lacks home training. However, in giving the home training to a child, they believe they should live by example. If the parents are morally bankrupt, there is no way the child can be morally good. This is why the Yorùbá say: "*òwú iyá gbòn ní omo yóó ran*" meaning "the child spins the wool beaten by the mother". Unfortunately today, what most parents do is to shift their responsibilities to the child's school teacher. This may not be effective because the child spends more time with the parents at home than he spends with the teacher at school.

In like manner, Sobò Aróbiodu, the notable Yorùbá Poet of late memory, in one of his poems titled '*Sí Ijókòò Alàrédè*', meaning: "To The bride's gathering" sings thus:

Alàrédè ní torí àìbí koko. Okúnrin ní torí àilóyún ko aya rè silẹ Èniyàn dúdú kò rára gba idánwò omo o. Igbàgbó èniyàn dúdú jinlẹ sódò omo, ó rí ràgbàjà. (Lijàdu 1974:60-61)

(Those who engage in white wedding do divorce because they fail to bear a child. Black men have no time for such temptation..... The belief of the blacks in child-bearing is very deep). (Lijàdu 1974:60-61).

When a new bride is brought into a home, the families of the couple, neighbors alike, shall be looking forward to seeing a new baby nine months after their wedding. When this does not happen, they begin to wonder what the cause might be, and when it is getting too delayed, they result into calling the woman names such as 'Akiriboto' and the man 'Es in Inú Iwé', all denoting impotence of the couple. This is borne out of the Yorubá belief that such a lady had messed up her virginity before marriage. The groom's friends and relations alike may advise him to find a solution. All these efforts give us the picture of the importance attached to child-bearing and child-rearing by the Yorubá people of Nigeria and this forms the basic principle behind the concept of parenthood.

In Nigeria, distinction between biological and social parents is made with the former producing the child while the latter raises the child effectively. This makes the difference between the Yorubá culture and the Whiteman's culture. The quality of parental relationship has been found to be significant in the social and harmonious development of the child. There is no doubt that today, many a child may fall victim of bad behaviour because they are deprived of serious parental care. This may be as a result of family instability or other reasons. Where such situation exists, we notice social vices such as delinquency, hooliganism, truancy which results in school drop-outs, and so on. Such children are unhappy and helpless.

The importance of a child in the Yorubá cultural setting can be understood from the several names they give to the child at birth. Adéoyè, (1982:1-2), explains that the Yorubá people in particular have various reasons for giving such names. These include their belief that a child's name guides, controls and determines what the child becomes in life or the parents' wish for the child.

For instance, they believe that if a child is given a bad name, he/she is likely to experience bad happenings. This is to say that their expectations for the child are reflected in the names they give the child. Examples of such names include the following:

- | | | |
|-----------|---|-------------------------------------|
| Omo layò | - | The child is one's joy. |
| Oríyo mí | - | My destiny saves me. |
| Bámitálé | - | Stay with me for life. |
| Aníyíkáyé | - | One who is dignified the world over |

Oyindámó lá - Honey mixed up with prosperity

When a child is ill, the parents are troubled and would have wished that the ailment is transferred to them. A popular Yorùbá Jùjú musician, Chief Commander Ebenezer Obey, in one of his albums titled '*Ètò Ìgbéyàwó*' (1986) meaning 'marriage ordinance' confirms this when he sings:

<i>Oko lè ko ni</i>	the husband can divorce
<i>Baálé lè lé ni</i>	the husband can eject
<i>Ipòkípò ta wà</i>	whatever condition we are
<i>Ló jó jije, ló jó àiríje</i>	in days of plenty and in nothing
<i>Nínú igbádùn tàbí ló jó is òro</i>	in enjoyment or in days of trouble
<i>Òbí eni ò lè ko ni</i>	one's parents cannot reject one.

This is the situation among the Yorùbá and wherever this does not happen, certain things must have gone wrong. Whenever the child records any bad incident, the parents strive to get to the root of the matter (whether such child is married or not) with the sole aim of finding a lasting solution to the problem.

Nevertheless, despite the importance attached to a child, the Yorùbá still prefer to be childless than to have a child who will not yield to control, instruction and directives from the parents.

The Yorùbá believe that evil forces co-exist with man. The evil forces are believed to be associated with evil imaginations and any bad occurrence is usually taken to be the handwork of those evil forces. (Ògúnolá 2004:119-125). We have heard, seen and watched in plays where people become a witch (Àjé) so as to protect their children from evil. The Yorùbá refer to these set of witches as '*Àjé Abiyamo*' meaning 'a motherly witch'. This also can be said to reflect the position a child occupies in the mind of parents, especially mothers.

What we are saying in essence is that there is nothing the parents cannot do to secure peace, security, satisfaction, long life and all other good things in life for their children and the children also see this as their birthright. However, some factors as mentioned above had militated and are still militating against the effective performance of this noble function by the parents. These are discussed in the next segment of this paper.

Caring and Nurturing the Child

To some people, parents are the biological father and mother of the child. This may be true to some extent, however, in some cultures like the Yoruba culture, the child's parents include the biological father and mother, the elders of the extended family and in fact any other person or persons that may have blood relation with the child.

In this section of the paper, we examine why and how parents should care for their children. How do parents go about this and what does the situation look like today?

As earlier said, expectations of most people after marriage is pregnancy. The news of pregnancy is greeted with great joy and the expectant mother is specially cared for. It is ensured that she obeys all myths, legends and taboos, thus ensuring safe delivery. A few examples are given below:

(i). the pregnant woman should not go out when the weather is too hot/especially at the peak of the dry season or late in the night. It is believed that evil spirits go about around those periods and may come in contact with the woman and replace the child in her womb.

(ii). the pregnant woman should always tie coins at the edge of her wrapper. This is to scare evil spirits that may want to disturb the baby in the womb. Examples are many and we cannot exhaust them here.

The care of the baby is a joint responsibility of all members of the child's family and indeed the entire society.

Dada (2009:59) asserts that:

The whole community was responsible for the up-bringing of the child and his integration into the society. The up-bringing was achieved through parental discipline, peer-group interaction, close supervision by the adult world, provision of worthwhile examples, transmission of knowledge, rules, regulations, customs, mores, conventions, traditions etc by means of instruction, moonlight tales, practical demonstrations, apprenticeship.

communal and individual discipline, proverbs, adages, etc.

This is in line with Bánjo's (2009:139) opinion that:

When a child does not go to a school which constitutes a highly civilized community, characterized by pursuit of the highest ideals in human refinement, it is difficult to reconcile the ideal with the concept of such school as a liberal institution.

On page 142 of the same work, he goes further to say that:

For an individual to engage in productive labour, they require the kind of education which develops in them, the imperatives and enlightened self-interest in which in the process of fulfilling themselves, they are at the same time actively contributing to the development of the society. This can be achieved through a sound moral training which the parents and the society are expected to inculcate and the school to reinforce.

To both parents and members of the child's family, it is of utmost importance to train the child to be successful in life. The concept of good character is entrenched in the child as this forms the basis of the Yorùbá Traditional System of Education known as "Ètò èkó ibilẹ̀ Yorùbá" which is as old as the Yorùbá race with functionalism as its guiding principle. (Fafunwa 1974:1, Awóniyi 1978:1-2).

The main objective of the Yoruba traditional education therefore, was to produce an individual who is honest, respectable, skilled, co-operative and conform to the social order of the day. Yoruba people are sociable people who live together in harmony in such comparatively confined places with a large number of people. They have an elaborate code of manner and etiquette, though not written, the observance of which serves to reduce the strain and frustrations of inter-personal relationship. The goals of the Yoruba traditional education can be summarized among others as follow:

1. To develop the child's physical skills
2. To develop the child's character.
3. To develop intellectual skills.

4. To acquire specific vocational training and to develop a healthy attitude towards honest labour.
5. To develop a sense of belonging and to participate actively in family and community affairs
6. To understand, appreciate and promote the cultural heritage of the community at large. (Isola 1989:74).

Macintyre (1999:91) testifies to this when he writes that:

What those who perform the role and function of a good parent achieve is to bring the child to the point at which it is educable, not only by them but also by a variety of other different kinds of teachers. And this is the first step towards making the child independent as a reasoner.

What this infers is that every parent wants his/her child to be of good character and they pursue this objective with vigor. It begins from the time a child starts to imitate his/her parents and elders in the community who direct and instruct him.

The Yorùbá also believe in the sayings of the Holy Bible (Proverbs 22.v5) that one should train a child in the way he should go and when he is grown up, he will not deviate from it. The task of doing this rests mostly on the child's parents especially the mother with whom the child stays most of the time and the entire people of the child's community. It is in three dimensions namely; *èkó ilé* (home training), *èkó isé* (vocational training) and *èkó ilú* (community training). The belief is that if the child imbibes good habits, it is not only the parents but the entire community that benefits. The objectives of these kinds of training include among others:

(a). Physical, mental and social development: Through plays, the child's mental reasoning is stimulated. He understands actions, purposes, customs and traits through mimicry. At home, children are given responsibilities such as washing of dishes or sweeping of floor, cooking, home making and so on. At the golden age of memory, between nine and eleven years, the males go to the farm to help their fathers on the farm. At the age under discussion, they are good sportsmen; they like fishing and are also noisy.

(b). Character Development: This is considerably emphasized by the Yoruba traditional education system. Character training

and religious education are identified as two main objectives of Yoruba education, while other objectives are pursued through the latter. This training of the child is based on the Yoruba common saying that "*enikan nĩ bimo, gbogbo eniyan nĩ tò ó*" meaning that character training among the Yoruba is the joint responsibility of the entire members of the society. This is because everybody wants his or her child to be sociable, honest, humble, courageous, respectful and obedient. Gruenberg (1956, p.115) states that the goal of character development is unchanged: to help children become men and women whose conduct is guided by the highest principles and integrity of character.

Furthermore, Yoruba believe in the saying that "*esin iwájú ni tẹ̀yìn n' wò sàré*" meaning the front running horse regulates the speed of the following one. Apart from the education a child receives at home, a Yoruba child has ample opportunity for learning. At the village head's place, the child listens to the palavers of the elders, to the settlement of lawsuits and to the arrangement of commercial transactions.

The Yorùbá teach moral values through various means such as folktales, namely: the tortoise and the co-wife tales, proverbs, traditional and religious songs, myths and taboos, stories and legends and so on. All these are effective means of transmitting good moral values in children. (Ògúnolá 2002:44)

Folk stories though are believed to be fabricated lies (*iró ló n' jé àlò*). Yet they give the child a wide knowledge of his/her environment, literature and culture. It helps the child to think of a way out of whatever problem he is facing. Yorùbá proverbs, on the other hand, are used to condemn bad behaviours and in strong terms too. There are proverbs against stealing, laziness, and disrespect for elders/constituted authorities and parents, societal myths taboos and so on. For instance, to a lazy man, the Yorùbá will say "*bole ó kú e jé ó kú, kíkú àti àikú òlẹ̀ kò dà nrikan fúnni*" meaning that if a lazy man would die, let him die. His death or being alive does no one any good. To a backbiter, they say: "*asòrò ké lé bojú wògbé, as ebùburú, e kú ara fu*" meaning that backbiters are always full of suspicion. (Ògúnolá 2002:42-49).

The Yorùbá verbal Artists also play major roles in the training of a child. (Olájubù (1978:685) writes:

Yorùbá verbal artists occupy a unique position in the society. They serve as 'moral police' and are therefore free from arrest or punishment for offences committed during the cause of their performance

They have several songs for categories of people and behaviours. Such songs are rendered without fear or favour and without hesitation. Yoruba has a salutation for every conceivable occasion and situation in which he may find a fellow man anytime of the day while sitting or standing, when at work or at play, when carrying a load, in cold or warm weather, and so on. Olupona and Falola (1970) add that this respect for elders and peers goes to those who are in authority, especially the chiefs, cult leaders, diviners, relatives and other neighbours. This respect goes deep down to the respect for their ancestors, who happened to be seen as functioning members of the lineage and clan. They honour their ancestors by offering them sacrifices and behaving in such ways which they would approve of.

As the child grows, the parents monitor his or her behaviour. For instance, in the Yorùbá tradition, it is a disgrace for a girl to loose her virginity before marriage and this is the first test a new bride had to undergo the day a marriage is consummated. It is referred to as '*Ìbálé*' (meeting at home) meaning virginity intact. A girl who passes the test at her first sexual meeting with her husband is honored. The parents also are highly respected. On the other hand, a bride who is found to have lost her virginity before marriage was subjected to serious ridicule. Her parents would be insulted and disgraced by their kinsmen and women alike. Therefore, to ensure that they are not disgraced, the parents ensure that their wards are given all necessary moral support on how to live a decent life. This does not exclude the male child too.

Apart from the above, when a child is matured, it is the parents who assist in the choice of a wife/husband to ensure that the child does not make a wrong choice. They inquire from *Òrúnmìlà*, the divinity believed to be in charge of man's destiny, and secondly, through an intermediary called '*Alárinà*'.

The '*Alárinà*' is the match-maker who investigates thoroughly into the family their son or daughter is dating. (Olájubù 1978, Adéoyè 1979). The outcome of the '*Alárinà*'s' findings determine

whether the marriage will be contracted or not. This points to the fact that unlike the Whiteman's culture, Yorùbá people does not engage in marriage without the knowledge of all stakeholders in marriage. The child usually does not go against such findings. (Dàramólá and Jéjé 1975, Adéoyè 1979, Olajubu 1978).

Another fact is that if eventually a lady has problem in her matrimonial home, she refers back to her parents and resides with them. This in the Yorùbá tradition is called 'Dálémosú'. Although the Yorùbá frown at such situation and would not want it to happen to their ward, yet they believe that such child is still a full-fledged member of the family since in Yorùbá culture, marriage does not alienate a child from her family. For this reason such a lady is accommodated.

The child is trained to be differential to seniors. Politeness demands that the second person plural of the personal pronoun be used in addressing elderly people and persons in authority. It is also a bad taste to offer something to another person with the left hand.

Intellectual training

If by intellect we mean the power to integrate and if intellectualization is the process of reasoning abstractly, Yoruba traditional education can be said to encourage intellectual growth and development.

According to Taiwo (1968:8-10), the Yoruba child is introduced early in life to counting by means of concrete objects, counting rhymes, folklore, plays and games, at home and on the farm. In counting, Yoruba have names for every counting number however large. For example, ten thousand is "egbaáarun-un" meaning "igba márùn-un loná méwáá" (i.e. $200 \times 5 \times 10 = 1000 \times 10$), fifteen is twenty less five, forty-three is twenty in two places plus three ($20 \times 2 + 3$), one tenth is "idámewáá", half is "idáméjì" or "ààbò". Length is measured by "ese bàtà" or foot-length, mile/kilometer is "ibuso". There are some games and toys that call for physical and intellectual skills. These include "okoto", "ayo", "ere òsúpá" and the likes.

In addition to the above, proverbs, folk stories and riddles constitute a formidable intellectual exercise. Proverbs are sometimes used in order to avoid giving a blunt, direct answer which is a necessary thing to do when expressing one's opinion

before elders even when such opinion has been directly solicited. But most frequently, the proverb is used in bringing out clearly the meaning of obscure points in arguments. (Fadipe, 1972:302). Apart from proverbs, Yorubá make use of riddles and tongue twisters for intellectual training. Example is "*ègè migin kóngó*" meaning "*èmi kó*" (I am not the one).

Babalola (1964, p.33) opines that poetic verses such as Yoruba mathematics, *ijala* chants, *oriki*, *ekun iyawo*, incantation can be seen as another act of intellectual exercise. *Ijala* chant is one of the most important intellectual spoken arts developed by the Yoruba. *Ijala* is the oral poetry of the Yoruba hunters and it is one of the various genres of the spoken arts of the Yoruba people. It is a type of speech utterance with rudimentary musical characteristics, rather than spices of song. It is uttered from memory in chanting style but it is essentially a type of verbal art dominated by the theme of verbal salute to particular linages and distinguished persons.

Vocational training

This can be divided into three major groups namely: Agricultural education, trades and crafts such as leather works, mat-making, carving of doors and figures for shrines, building of houses, blacksmithing and goldsmithing, weaving and poetry, dying and so on. In the past, children were given as apprentice to learn one trade or the other. However, it was ensured that such master is the one who is morally upright. The belief is that the children not only learn the trade, he also imitates the behaviour of his master and this is part of what qualifies him for graduation.

Causes of Lack of Parental Care.

A number of factors account for why lack of parental care is common within the society today. One of such factors and which could be referred to as the major factor is the introduction of foreign cultures which dominate the entire socio-political, economic and religious traditions of Africans in general and the Yorubá people in particular.

Adeyemi, (2008:53-57) asserts that the political domination of Africa by both the British and the French was so great that Africans in general lost their identity. The true picture of the situation can best be understood in Ògúnsínà's (1995:299) work on T.A. Ládélé's *Ìgbà Ló Dé*. According to him, the introduction of

Christian Religion totally eroded the powers of the Kings. He writes:

The Colonial masters have seized power from him and he lived in morbid fear of the 'Ajélè'. He is often filled with a deep sense of uncertainty and insecurity. Whenever the 'Ajélè' visits 'Ògbòjò', there is always one problem or the other.

This is to suggest that even the powers of the 'Obá' or 'Baálè', the number one citizen of the community were virtually taken from him. It is therefore not surprising that today; the Yorùbá concept of parenthood is not respected in many African homes. Most parents do not behave as parents. This accounts for why cases of thuggery and other social vices are on the increase daily in our society today. Parents no longer have time to train and nurture their children. Experience has shown that in cities such as Lagos, Ibadan, Kano, to mention just a few, a child hardly knows his/her father. This is because the father leaves home very early before the child wakes up and he arrives late at night after the child is asleep. They give more time to their business than to their children. The children are kept with nannies whose backgrounds are not known.

At the introduction of formal education, the teaching of moral values was not given prominence in the school curriculum. Its objective then was the bible and the training of Evangelists. African people in general and the Yorùbá people in particular do away with their tradition, throw away their customs without having something of value to replace them.

Ìsòlá (2009:100) writes that:

The cultural education of the child cannot succeed in a culturally hostile environment. We must therefore adopt a holistic approach to cultural reorientation in the society to create a friendly atmosphere for the child to internalize the humane virtues in our cultural heritage.

In the area of marriage, children of today do not respect parents' view on marriage. Many of them contract marriage without the knowledge or consent of the parents. Consequently, this results in marriage instability that is noticed in many homes today. The few who had the parents' blessings in marriage are being brainwashed, hence they do not allow their parents a say in their

family affairs. In the churches today, parents are warned to stay away from newly wedded couples. Most ladies capitalize on such advice and would not allow any of their in-laws to have a say or even to have access into their matrimonial homes for any reason.

Such people forget that the idea of 'me and my husband' in marriage is alien to Africa in general and the Yorùbá race in particular. Before the couple realize that their wisdom alone cannot carry them through, it would be late. The result of course is marriage instability and lack of proper parental care. Children from such homes perform poorly in behaviour, in education, and so on. They form the bulk of those who join gangs and become thugs, hooligans, fraudsters and so on.

Bánjo (2009:135) is of the view that:

Indiscriminate cultural borrowing may produce deleterious effects and the degree of impersonality which results from large aggregations of diverse cultures may subtly encourage disloyalty to one's own culture, particularly when little is done to reinforce that culture.

Experience has shown that many of such marriages crumble within the shortest possible time. This is to confirm that such teachings are alien to the Yorùbá in particular because as we earlier pointed out, the role of the parents in helping the child to succeed in life cannot be undermined.

Ògúndèjì and Àkàngbé (2009:5) say: Though there could not but be some changes and modifications to the traditional system in the modern context, the changes and modifications should be guided so that the good aspects of it that has to do with the soul and existence of the Yorùbá as a people will not be eroded. The argument is that Western education should be properly domesticated and adapted to the Yorùbá world view.

Today, the level of discipline among school pupils has deteriorated. Erring pupils especially those from rich and highly placed in the society are not punished. Instead, of being encouraged to be hardworking, they are pampered and are also encouraged to have their eyes on the parents' properties/wealth. This is contrary to the Yorùbá believe and the saying that "Agbójúlógún fí ara rẹ̀ fún osì ta" meaning "he who depends on inheritance subjects himself to serious poverty". This also accounts for why societal ills are on daily increase.

Bánjo (2009:139) commenting on the deteriorating moral level in our society today says:

For many, fraud has become the way of life manifesting itself, for example, in fake drugs and piracy. Some of the perpetrators have even infiltrated foreign countries and are giving the country a very bad name.

We have said it that before a man can do away with his tradition and throw away his customs, he should better be certain that he has something of value to replace them. This, our society has failed to do. Many marriages crumble because of peoples' disrespect for their traditional marriage ordinance. To such people, words of elders are no more words of wisdom. The resultant effects no doubt are detrimental to the progress of the society.

Conclusion:

We have established the fact that parents have vital roles to play in the life of the child. It has also been established that the concept of parenthood in the Yorùbá sense of it is not limited to a particular time, age or stage in the life of a child, rather, it goes on until death do the child and the parents part. This is one area where Africans in general and the Yoruba people in particular differ in culture from the Europeans. This is to say that parenthood in Yorùbá culture is a life-long affair. Marriage or no marriage, the child is still a potential member of his/her family. He/she enjoys all rights therein. The parents address his/her problems (the nature and magnitude of such problems notwithstanding) and these principles guide the behaviour of the child throughout his/her lifetime.

We believe that if all parents can care for, train and closely monitor their children, and if the children on their part give their consent to their parents involvement in their upbringing, our society will be better than what it is presently. Children must be ready to recognize the fact that their parents have vital roles to play in their lives. The Yorùbá saying that 'Bó mo dé bá lás o bí àgbà, kò lè ní àkísà bí àgbà' literally meaning "no matter the experience a child has, it cannot measure up to the adults experience". Hence, the child must be prepared to respect his or her tradition and do things the right way.

In Akinjôgbín's (2009:17) opinion, the past brings about the present. It is therefore necessary to look at our past so that we can progress. He says:

.....Nínú èyí ní a tí n' kó o mo láti kékeré ní èdè,
 àwò n iwà àti is e tí àwùjò gbà pé ó tò nà
 Ibè ní wó n tí mo èèwò àti ikíni, bí a tí n'
 kó wò fún àgbà, bí a tí n' mójú tó is e e ní,
 ní wó n tí mo oríkì àti orílẹ̀ wo n. Ibè ní
 n tí mò ipa tí o kùnrin àti obinrin n' kó láàrin
 awujo ...

(In this, the child will be taught his language, behaviours and the ways of life which his community approves as good, do's and don'ts, how to respect the elders, the importance of being hardworking, the family's and lineage praise poetry, the roles of males and females in the society etc.)

Finally, what we are saying is that one of the major causes of societal ills among the Yorùbá people of Nigeria today is the total disregard for parent's roles in the life of the child. Unless we go back to the drawing board, our society may not be better of. No matter the level of education or civilization, parents should have a say in the process of molding and directing the lives of their children. It is not a crime to borrow culture, what is criminal is borrowing a culture that would draw the society backward instead of moving it forward.

WORKS CITED

- Abimbo□la, Wande. (1975). "Ìwàpè lé ": The Concept of Good Character in Ifá Litterary Corpus". In W. Abimbo□la (ed). *Yorùbá Oral Tradition*. Ìbàdàn: University press. (pp384-420)
- Adeoye, Caleb (1979). *Às□à àti Ìs□e Yorùbá*. Ìbàdàn: Oxford University press.
- Adeoye, Caleb (1982). *Orúko□ Yorùbá*. (Àtúntè□ Keji). Ìbàdàn: University press limited.
- Aderibigbè, I.S. (1993). "The moral issues in African religion". In *Studies in religious understanding in Nigeria*. Nigeria: NASR.
- Adeye□mi, Lere (2008). "The portrayal of Yorùbá moral philosophy in Yorùbá literature. In *ÈDÈ: Journal of linguistics literature and culture*. Ilorin: Unilorin press.

- Adeyemi, Lere (2013). Children literature and Yoruba literary disability criticism. Ibadan: Matrix publications, (pp.10-15)
- Akínjóbín, Adeagbo (2009). "Kí a wò èyìn wò, kí a lè tẹ̀ síwájú". In Ògúndèjì, A. and Àkàngbè, A. (ed). *Omo lúàbí: Its concept and education in Yorùbá land*. Ibadàn: Ibadàn cultural studies group (pp.11-28).
- Awoniyi, Adedeji (1978). *Yorùbá language in education*. Ibadàn: Oxford University press.
- Awoniyi, Adedeji (1975). "Omoluabi: The fundamental basis of Yoruba Traditional Education" In Abimbola W. (ed). *Yoruba oral tradition*. Ibadan: University press, (pp.357-387).
- Banjo, Ayo (2009). "Tertiary education and imperatives for productive labour". In Ògúndèjì, A. and Àkàngbè, A. (ed). *Omo lúàbí: Its concept and education in Yorùbá land*. Ibadàn: Ibadàn cultural studies group (pp. 129-142).
- Dada, (2009). "The efficiency of the structure and curriculum of Nigerian Education system". In Ògúndèjì, A and Àkàngbè, A. (ed). *Omo lúàbí: Its Concept and Education In Yorùbá Land*. Ibadàn: Ibadàn Cultural Studies Group. (pp. 57-68).
- Daramola, Olu and Jeje, Adebayo. (1975). *Àwọn Àsà àti Òrìsà Ilẹ̀ Yorùbá*. Ibadan: Onibonoye Press.
- Fafunwa, Babatunde (1974). *New Perspectives In African Education*. London: Macmillan Education Limited.
- Gruenberge, S.M. (1956). *The encyclopedia of childcare and guidance* (np): Doubleday and company, Inc. (p.115).
- Isòlá, Akinwumi. (2009). "Yorùbá Culture In Education". In Ògúndèjì, A and Àkàngbè, A. (ed). *Omo lúàbí: Its Concept and Education in Yorùbá Land*. Ibadàn: Ibadàn Cultural Studies Group. (pp.89-112).
- Lijadu, Moses. (1974). *Àwọn Àròfò Orin Sòbò Aróbiòdu*. Lagos: Macmillan Nigeria Publishers Limited.
- Olupona and Falola (eds). (1970). *Religion and society in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Spectrum.
- MacIntyre, Alasdair (1999). *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues*. Chicago: Open Court.
- Ode tokun, Ademola (2010). "The Yorùbá Child and His Language Education" Paper delivered at the 1st Distinguished Lecture of the Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin. 23rd March, 2010. Ilorin: Tajudeen Printing Press.

- Ogunloṣṣa, Oṣṣoṣṣo (2004). "The belief in the existence of evil forces: Witchcraft and Sorcery as focus" In *MULTJER*. No 1, Vol. 1 (pp. 119-125).
- Sowande, F. and Ajanaku, F. (1969). *Orúko Ṃmútò runwá*. Ibadan: Oxford University Press.
- Taiwo, Caleb (1968). "Yoruba mathematics", Unpublished M.sc dissertation, Institute of education. London University: London. (pp. 8-10).
- Yóloye (2009). The Philosophy of Nigerian Education System and relevance to the Concept of Yorúbá *Omólúàbí*". In *Oṣṣoṣṣo: Its Concept and Education in Yorúbá Land*. Ibadán: Ibadán Cultural Studies Group. (p.29-55).
- The Holy Bible. The Holy Quran.