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UBUNTU ETHICAL VALUES AND AFRICA'S QUEST FOR A BETTER HOME

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ABSTRACT: There has been increasing cry over the years by the majority of Africans on the hard living conditions in Africa. Of late there has been an increasing exodus of many Africans from their different places to Western countries and other countries outside Africa in search of better life. Many African countries are increasingly losing their capacity to resolve problems of poverty, hunger, tribalism, terrorism and environmental degradation just to mention but a few. The community way of life that used to characterize Africans is no longer being experienced in many African communities today. This paper focuses on how in the pre-colonial period, Ubuntu way of life made Africa a better home for many Africans including the non-humans such as animals and vegetation. The argument of this paper therefore, is the revival of Ubuntu ethical values to spearhead global efforts in making Africa a better home for everyone.

Keywords: *Ubuntu Values, Colonialism, Globalization, Education, Leadership*

I. INTRODUCTION

In Africa and beyond, there have been on-going discussions on how to resolve the problems affecting many Africans today. Many Africans are badly affected by various problems such as hunger, poverty, deforestation, just to mention but a few. Researchers and leaders have tried to come up with answers to such problems. However, many of such researchers and leaders have ignored the loss of Ubuntu ethical values in resolving Africa's problems. This is evidence in the failure of efforts to resolve Africa's problems. This paper therefore, examines how, since time immemorial, Ubuntu has been very instrumental in resolving conflicts and problems affecting Africans. The paper discusses the concept of Ubuntu and how its value system was very instrumental in organizing the African communities thereby making Africa a better home for everyone. The paper therefore, argues for the re-appraisal of Ubuntu ethical values to champion the present efforts in resolving problems affecting Africans and make Africa a better home for everyone.

II. THE LOSS OF UBUNTU ETHICAL VALUES AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

There is a general feeling today that Africa has lost its long celebrated Ubuntu values which used to guide the daily lives of its people. The loss of Ubuntu values has left a moral vacuum. Van der Walt for example talks about Africa's moral vacuum whereby the elderly people lament daily over the escalating and shocking behaviors such as sexual immorality, dishonesty, corruption, crime, violence and many other things which hasten the old to their graves. The middle-aged people lament about children they fail to control. The youth complain of a lack of good example and guidance from the older members of society.[1]

Many African countries were colonized by foreign powers for some time till the middle of the 19th century. During the colonial era, many Africans went through troubled times to the extent that their ethical as well as social life was greatly disturbed. These Africans had hoped that the attainment of political independence from their colonial masters would restore their good life, whereby people would again live in harmony with each other and the natural environment. However, these expectations have not been realized. Instead there is the experience of lack of respect for each other especially the elderly, the loss of the spirit of compassion, solidarity and sharing, a growing hostility in a good number of communities in Africa which often has resulted into serious fighting or violence, and environmental degradation. These problems have disturbed the harmonious living among Africans today. The question is whether this situation can be reversed. In the pre-colonial days, Africa was a home for everyone due to the Ubuntu way of life. Therefore, this article proposes the re-appraisal of Ubuntu ethical values. If Africa has to become a better home again for everyone today, there is need for the re-appraisal of Ubuntu ethical values to facilitate the harmonious living among Africans and also with their environment.

III. UNDERSTANDING UBUNTU

Ubuntu concept has become well known worldwide as being typical African. Ubuntu is a Zulu word with parallels in many other African languages more especially in the Sub-Saharan Region which in English can be translated as ‘humanness’. The origins of Ubuntu concept can be traced to the Bantu peoples of Southern Africa though the philosophy is now shared across much of the African continent. Though the Ubuntu concept is found in many languages in the Sub-Saharan Africa, it is understood in the same way as a social philosophy which is based on the principles of care and community, harmony and hospitality, respect and responsiveness which expresses the fundamental interconnectedness of human existence.[2] This is well expressed by the Nguni expression, ‘*ubuntungamuntungabantu*’, which means, ‘*a person is a person through other people*’.[3] This means that the individual’s whole existence is relative to that of the group. It points to the human way of behavior towards other people. If one says that someone has Ubuntu, it means that the said individual has positive qualities of a human being. In other words, one is said to be human when he or she has Ubuntu. Likewise, it is equally true that one who lacks Ubuntu is not a human being. Hence, Ubuntu can be said to be the self-realization and manifestation of a human being. Augustine Shutte has described Ubuntu as an ethical concept which expresses what is valuable in life. He states that,

The concept of Ubuntu embodies an understanding of what is it to be human and what is necessary for human beings to grow and find fulfillment. It is an ethical concept and expresses a vision of what is valuable and worthwhile in life.[4]

This definition points to a very important aspect concerning Ubuntu that it is not just the manifestation of individual acts but also a way of life which seeks to realize itself. It is an inner state or disposition towards good which motivates an individual to feel and act in a humane way towards others. Historically, the Ubuntu way of life was very instrumental in maintaining social cohesion and protecting the environment in Africa’s pre-colonial days. It was very instrumental in making Africa a better home for all people including strangers. This paper proposes the re-appraisal and the re-use of Ubuntu ethical values in order to make contemporary Africa a better home for everyone. The following are some of the means through which Ubuntu ethical values can be re-appraised and reused:

IV. RE-LEARNING OF UBUNTU ETHICAL VALUES

One of the means of bringing back the African Ubuntu values is through the process of indigenous education through which Ubuntu ethical values can be re-learned. This can be done through informal education, formal education and living Ubuntu in daily life.

4.1 Informal Education

Informal education is a kind of socialization which takes place in family or community while dealing with everyday events. The events have no specialized character of their own because they are a product of the family or community and the emphasis is upon the learner who has a special relationship with the family or community. [5]Mosweunyane tells us that in the Africa’s pre-colonial era, there existed an informal education through which people were trained to meet the exigencies of the whole society. The education was aimed at helping the society members to play useful roles in society. [6]Most of this education was done in families. The young boys and girls of society were taught different skills as well as cultural values by their elders through demonstration. For example, on one hand, boys would imitate their fathers in their various activities such as building houses, farming, making mats or bamboo or reed containers, and chairs. The young girls on the other hand would learn the indigenous social values by imitating their various activities such as drawing water, preparing food, gathering firewood, washing clothes, cleaning plates and so on. Other forms of indigenous education were traditional games, traditional music and stories.

Furthermore, there existed also an advanced type of education. This is evidenced by the presence of different tools and skills among the Africans in the pre-colonial days and according to Mosweunyane, African societies must have become much complicated in the past million years due to the ever changing societal needs. The African society in response to such changing societal needs had to find ways of adaptation and hence, the learning of different skills. Through the interaction with their environment, the Africans learnt skills which they required for their survival.[7]So, for example, most Africans learnt how to make metallic tools and implements, produce textile, produce traditional medicine and also process foods. Such knowledge was highly scientific and was shared. Mosweunyane says that,

The knowledge and skills were shared with newly found members, such as those who were captured during battles or those who became members through birth and marriage. The learning about the environment also conveyed information about the measures that were employed by African societies in conservation of resources. For instance, in Southern Africa and other parts of the continent, taboos were used as a conservation strategy. For instance, an animal was not killed or eaten because it was respected as a totem. [8]

According to Sifuna, education is a process whereby one generation transmits its culture to the succeeding generation. Indeed, education has to do with the acquisition of knowledge which has been accumulated by society or culture over a long period of time.[9] Basically this knowledge is created as response to the physical, political, ecological and socio-cultural challenges. As it has been seen above, education among Africans in the pre-colonial days was oriented towards survival of the people and also towards the management of the environment. For this reason their informal education was very productive and very instrumental in orienting young people in placing themselves in the society through the playing of different roles and responsibilities. However, with the influence of colonialism and globalization such informal education among Africans has been suppressed so significantly.

Young people are exposed to television ads, foreign music which has flooded the global market and many other foreign pieces of information which have nothing to do with African culture. They have no time to learn these African productive skills and behavior which are very characteristic of Africans. Therefore, the bringing back of the African Ubuntu has to do with the re-introduction of informal indigenous education which is the school of the African Ubuntu values. It is not a question of total return to the good old days of traditional Africa, but a reclaim of African values which give Africans their identity and help them to improve their living conditions. So through Ubuntu informal education, the main principles of Africa's indigenous education system can be brought back.

4.2 Formal Education

Formal education is defined as an organized education model, structured and administered by laws and norms and involving an instructor, students and the institution.[10] This type of education existed in form of initiation rites or rites of passage. Initiation rites are sets of ceremonies or events which mark important stages in one's life. They are formal procedures of transition into a next stage of life. In the African conception of life, the various stages of human development are very important and therefore, they need to be celebrated.[11] They involve crossing from one stage of life to another and at this stage of life, people are remade into new human beings,

People are metaphysically and sociologically remade into new beings with new social roles.

Newborn infants are made into human persons, children are made into adults, men and women are made into husbands and wives, deceased people are made into ancestors, princes are made into kings and so on.[12]

So initiation rites are very important among Africans because they signify a new creation of a people. The former self and status are destroyed and a new self and status is created. This is always accompanied by new roles and expectations and also moral discipline and moral obligation. [13] According to John Mbiti, those individuals who undergo initiation rites acquire knowledge which is not accessible to those who are not initiated.[14]

Just as the rest of Africa, the initiation rites among the Bantu have been a very effective way of teaching Ubuntu values to the young people. These initiation rites for both boys and girls were aimed at helping them to attain maturity and acquire responsibility for their own families, communities and their nation.[15] As such initiation rites were providing basic informal education about African human values. During the initiation, the elderly women of the community taught the girls about the roles of women in the families and communities. They were advised to be loyal and be committed to their country. The girls were trained in leadership skills, self-respect and self-discipline.[16] In Malawi for example, girls were taught to avoid sexual intercourse with men before marriage because they could get pregnant or die as a result of maternal complications. They were also taught how to carry out household chores such as cooking, washing, gardening, fetching firewood. Above all they were taught etiquette and good behavior towards their husbands once they get married, and also to dress properly by wearing clothes which cover their bodies properly.[17]

The boys were also given some formal training through initiation rites. During such moments, they were taught not to have sex before marriage, or have sex with a lady when she is menstruating or has just given birth. They were taught how to respect parents and elderly members of their communities, take care of the sick and the aged. Furthermore, the boys were also taught some skills such as building a house, making hoes for farming and weaving mats and others.[18] In both cases of the female as well as male initiation rites, the young people were also offered education in sexuality to prepare them for married life while they reach the age.[19] Such formal education was very instrumental towards helping the young Africans to embrace the African Ubuntu values.

However, in Africa's contemporary period, such initiation rites have been compromised and in some cultures eradicated completely due to the influence of globalization through which foreign norms, values and practices are being considered as a yard stick for all cultural practices. Globalization has compromised man's knowledge of himself and the place where he belongs. This is very true of the African Ubuntu values. With the influence of colonialism and globalization, such initiation rites have been deemed as useless, primitive and against human rights and therefore, discouraged or put to death. This is where things have gone wrong. The

values mark the identity of every society. Therefore, putting to death this formal education means also putting to death the African Ubuntu values. The elders or mentors used to pass on to their young ones the values which are very characteristic of Africans. This even included the aesthetic, spiritual, symbolic and other social values.

4.2.1 Rethinking of Curricula

As a way of bringing back the African Ubuntu values, the formal education needs to be re-introduced in the African community schools. This has to be done because every culture is identified by its ideas, beliefs, values and practices which are passed on from elders to young members of society or from one generation to another. This paper therefore, proposes that the initiation rites as a form of Africa's indigenous education be re-introduced so as to bring back the African Ubuntu values. Of course not everything of the initiation rites is good. There are some elements which cannot be embraced today. However, the initiation rites can be assessed and the negative elements can be left out while the positive elements as mentioned above can be retained.

There is the danger of understanding the African formal education as just a simplistic process of socialization whereby the young people are integrated into society. This kind of understanding has resulted into a feeling that African formal education is inferior to the Western formal education. This is a misconception of African formal education. While the initiation rites are appreciated because of their positive impact on Africans, especially in instilling in them the African values, they do not exhaust the whole sphere of Africa's formal education. In other words, Africa's formal education cannot be explained by initiation rites alone. The initiation rites are just part of the rich reservoir of Africa's indigenous knowledge. There is credible evidence about the existence of elaborate formal education in Africa in the pre-colonial era.

According to Itibari Zuluth the transmission of values and the state of knowing in Africa through formal education began about 3000 B.C. in Ancient Egypt. In Ancient Egypt, education was predominantly handled by priests and the intellectual elite within the Ancient Egyptian theocracy. Besides Ancient Egypt, an African process of education was transmitted and accumulated throughout the African continent before colonialism. Places such as Ancient Nubia, the Great Zimbabwe and the University of Sankore were places of higher formal education before Africa colonial invasion.[20] This means that Africa is not a stepchild of Western education. It has an elaborate and well established system of education worthy to be proud of.

Another way of bringing back the African Ubuntu is by re-introducing the Ubuntu indigenous knowledge in the present African schools curricula. This does not mean that Western education is all bad. According to Busiathe Western education has made some positive contribution towards the life of some Africans,

It introduced new ways of earning a living, and new skills and professions; work in the mine, the commercial city or harbor or the factory offers new opportunities; men have formed new associations to pursue new interests; the bicycle, the car, the train and the airplane have accelerated mobility; the school, the radio, the press and television have widened men's horizons. Possibilities not previously conceived have been revealed: that more babies can survive; and men and women's expectation of life can be extended beyond middle age; the earth can be made to yield more food for all to enjoy; more durable and comfortable houses can be built; water can be brought to the farm and distant home; men and women can be more mobile...[21]

Its contributions are important for African cultural exposure and sustenance of the lives of many Africans. However, the problem lies in the Colonial master's wish to replace the African's indigenous system of education. During the colonial period, the African indigenous system of education was replaced by the colonial education. According to Jayson McGarvey, colonial education was meant to destroy the African culture and communities. In his article, *Conquest of the Mind*, McGarvey recounts the real experience of a Tanzanian man by the name Semali who after undergoing Western education found out he was so alienated from his own people and felt enslaved by Western education. He states that,

Education is slavery of the mind...While I was growing up in what was then called Tanganyika, we had already been under colonization for nearly a century – first by the Germans, and then the British after the First World War. The colonial school I attended did not teach me to be a member of Chagga society. Although I had certain knowledge system as a member of the village, I read, wrote, and spoke things at school that did not fit into village life. I always wore two different hats. I developed this double-consciousness so well that I did not realize it. In order for the colonizers to exploit the Chagga for labor they first needed to establish themselves as the authority. Since authority traditionally rested in the hands of the Chagga elders, the colonizers needed to begin dismantling Chagga cultural traditions. The main tool for doing this was the colonial school. The colonial school was set up to instill the values and practices of the colonizers on the indigenous people so that the indigenous people would open up their land and their minds to market economies. In order to establish control over these economies, the colonizers had to first establish control over the socialization of the people. As a result, the colonial

schools began socializing the children in ways that conflicted with their traditions. The children began to lose faith and respect for the elders as authority figures, and began to see the colonizers as the authority...[22]

The Colonizers had a deliberate strategy of introducing the colonial system of education among Africans which would eventually suppress the Africa's indigenous system of education. Eventually, the strategy of the colonialists worked out as planned and this was evidenced in many Africans being controlled by the colonialists in their thinking and action. Toyin Falola observed that

...the Negro's mind has been brought under the control of his oppressor. The problem of holding the Negro down, therefore, is easily solved. When you control a man's thinking, you do not have to worry about his actions. You do not have to tell him not to stand here or go yonder. He will find his 'proper place' and will stay in it. You do not need to send him to the back door. He will go without being told. In fact, if there is no back door, he will cut one for his special benefit. His education makes it necessary...[23]

So, colonial education curriculum was deliberately aimed at controlling knowledge production in African cultures. Therefore, bringing back the African Ubuntu among Africans requires a system of education which has African indigenous knowledge in it. In other words, there must be new curricula in African schools which include the African indigenous knowledge which must be aimed at promoting African values among Africans.

The cultural values create cultural identity and a sense of belonging. Having a sense of belonging is very instrumental in development in the sense that people who feel to have a common base can easily decide to do something for the good and development of their culture or surrounding communities. In fact traditional education was aimed at training people to acquire African values. It was aimed at producing men and women who had always the good of other people at heart.[24] They always sought knowledge and advancement in different skills so as to serve their brothers and sisters much better. Furthermore, African traditional knowledge was acquired for particular needs of the society.[25] It was not knowledge for its own sake but rather purposeful knowledge. Therefore, inclusion of African indigenous knowledge in African school curricula will give chance to young Africans to understand their culture and values. Such knowledge will eventually help them to understand their personal experiences and also their environment which may eventually motivate them to invent new skills to use for resolving the problems in their various communities.

Furthermore, African curricula must aim at promoting African languages. African languages are one of the big cultural elements which Africans have lost, so that even today Africa is still defining itself in terms of Anglophone, Francophone, and Lusophone linguistic zones.[26] Local languages are very instrumental in preserving, transmitting and applying traditional knowledge and therefore, the loss of local languages would be tantamount to the loss of traditional knowledge. Real literacy can only be taught in an African language and this can also facilitate the spreading of knowledge to the entire population of a particular culture.[27] It is very important for Africans to acquire knowledge of African languages because it helps them to build self-esteem, to preserve their culture and also advance the literary output and identity of African peoples.[28]

Language is a very significant component of culture because it is through language that cultural values are passed on. In many colonized African countries, the language of the colonizers became an official language of the people. Furthermore, intelligence and higher levels of education were measured by language proficiency. Those Africans who knew very well the language of the colonizers were considered to be highly educated as well as intelligent. This is a false belief. The level of education and intelligence cannot be measured by language proficiency. Unfortunately, this belief is still there today among many Africans. The indigenous languages are still considered second class and in fact many indigenous languages have been suffocated and hence, the loss of the African Ubuntu. Therefore, for the revival of African cultures and Ubuntu in particular, African educational system must be cultural based and must be aimed at retaining Africa's cultural values and languages.

4.3 Living Ubuntu Ethical Values

One of the elements which can assist to bring back Ubuntu to the indigenous Africans is the marketing of Ubuntu. Normally selling and buying of commodities is done at a market place. People bring the things for sale to the market place and expose them to the prospective buyers. They try to improve the quality of their commodities so as to be attractive to the buyers. So in the same way, marketing Ubuntu means putting Ubuntu values in the open so that people have experience of them and eventually begin to embrace them. Marketing Ubuntu means putting Ubuntu into practice or living Ubuntu ethical values. It means embracing the values of Ubuntu in everyday life. The marketing of Ubuntu can be done in political, religious, economic, and community spheres.

4.3.1 Ubuntu Politics

There is huge concern among many Africans on the worsening political governance in many African countries. It has been observed that the African post-colonial era is experiencing escalating cases of corruption, poor budgetary practices and implementation, civil wars and abject poverty. The worsening political governance

in Africa is due to bad leadership. Most of the African leaders are selfish in the sense that they are concerned only with their own well-being and not of the well-being of the people that they govern.[29] African politics is politics of the belly. Most political leaders who are commissioned to serve the people are not committed to their work but instead they abuse power and enrich themselves. For example, power in most African countries is largely concentrated in the hands of the executive. It means that the president controls all the ministries and departments of the state. There is no power sharing. The problem with this kind of leadership is that the president becomes so powerful to the extent that he or she can make decisions as an individual for the whole country without involving other stake holders. In other words, the executive arm of the government dominates in decision making leaving the other arms of the government, the legislature and the judiciary, inactive and useless. Such behavior has resulted in leaders making themselves life presidents in their various countries. They make themselves god father or founding fathers. This is an abuse of power and contradicts Ubuntu style of leadership.

Furthermore, in most African countries, various political and economic favors are given to few individuals so as to entice them or bribe them to maintain them in leadership. Such favors can range from influential political positions to monetary favors. This is a very bad behavior because normally, the resources which are used to bribe such people are for the state. So instead of channeling the state resources towards the good of every citizen and the development of the state as a whole, they channel them to few individuals who become richer and richer every day at the expense of the rest of the citizens. Such behavior has resulted in the widening gap between the rich and the poor. Such leadership contradicts the Ubuntu style of leadership which is inclusive and also aiming at the good of every member of the community or society and not the selected few.

Again, most African leaders control the use of state resources for their own benefit. State owned resources such as minerals, oils, bodies of water and others are meant to be used for building fundamental facilities and systems needed for the operation of the state. Public facilities such as roads, hospitals, stadiums, power supplies etcetera, are at the disposal of every citizen of the state for him or her to use. Therefore, state owned resources are meant for every citizen of a country. However, the situation is different in most African countries. Most leaders in Africa either use the resources in a selfish way to legitimize their positions of leadership or just to accumulate riches for themselves.[30] This behavior has resulted into corrupt practices, poverty and serious conflicts.

This negative behavior among African leaders is a sign of the loss of the African Ubuntu ethical values. In most African countries, the political leaders are not guided by Ubuntu ethical values. They are guided by foreign ideologies which have plunged so many African communities into chaos. Therefore, to retain political stability in many African countries facing instability and confusion due to political leadership, there is need for the leaders to incorporate Ubuntu ethical values in their style of leadership. This paper proposes Ubuntu politics as one of the effective ways of bringing Ubuntu into the Africans communities. Ubuntu politics means to embrace the values of Ubuntu in political leadership and this can improve the style of leadership which eventually will improve living conditions of the people and also the relationships.

Ubuntu is the capacity in African culture to express compassion, reciprocity, dignity, harmony and humanity in the interests of building and maintaining community.[31] In essence, Ubuntu is the philosophy of interconnectedness. It means that people share common humanity, and this entails responsibility towards each other. Ubuntu emphasizes on the human aspect and teaches that the value, dignity, safety, welfare, health, beauty, love and development of the human being are considered first before all other considerations.[32] Ubuntu leadership is based on such values. The African leaders need to change their individualistic style of leadership and embrace the Ubuntu style of leadership which is about sharing opportunities, responsibilities and challenges. They need to open up for wider participation of citizens in decision making and leadership. It would be profitable to put in place deliberate strategies for the people to participate in the running of the government. To be a leader in the African context does not mean that one is wiser and more intelligent than the rest of the citizens. It is just a representation. Therefore, African leaders should legitimize their leadership through the inclusion of other citizens in decision making and also through commitment to the African Ubuntu values such as compassion, honesty, sincerity, truthfulness and respect and dignity. It is only through embracing Ubuntu ethical values that Africa can become a better home for its citizens. A country or community whose style of leadership is based on Ubuntu values will certainly be a better home for everyone. Therefore, Africa needs Ubuntu politics.

4.3.2 Ubuntu Religion

Another way of bringing back Ubuntu among Africans is by embracing Ubuntu Religion. Ubuntu Religion means living religious values in daily life. The word religion here can be confusing as to what kind of religion is being referred to since there are so many religions in the world. Indeed there are so many religions in the world such as Hinduism, Christianity, Islam and others. However, what is being referred to here by religion is the belief in the supernatural realm or supernatural power.

In the African worldview, the universe is both physical and metaphysical. The physical realm comprises of human beings and the natural environment where as the metaphysical realm comprises of the ancestors, the spirits and God the creator. These realms are so connected. There is interconnectedness among God the creator, the spirits, the ancestors, human beings, biological beings and non-biological beings such as minerals. [33]

The belief in the Supernatural realm is very instrumental in bringing back Ubuntu among Africans. According to John Mbiti, God is the source of the African Ubuntu moral order. The purpose of God in giving this moral order to the people is to help them live happily and in harmony. [34]Wiredu concurs with Mbiti on this point as he says that in traditional Africa, what is morally good is what is decent for man, or that which brings dignity, respect, contentment, prosperity and joy to man and his community.[35]Mbiti continues to think that morality should therefore, be considered as an authoritative code of conduct directly sanctioned by God. This means that any breach of this moral code is a direct offence against God.[36]Therefore, Ubuntu ethical system is based on religious beliefs. These beliefs, more especially the belief in the Supernatural Being become a yardstick of all human behavior or the standard measure or guiding principle of behavior and actions.

In the pre-colonial days, the African traditional moral code was well safeguarded by the ancestors. These ancestors were perceived as moral agents in their immediate families which they had left behind. They were still considered part of the family to the extent that they could oversee the family's ethical behavior. In some African communities the ancestors are believed to have had the role of punishing those community members who violated the laws and customs of the community. [37]So due to fear of the punishments from the ancestors but also for the sake of keeping good relationship with the ancestors, people used to respect the moral order and live the Ubuntu ethical values.

Besides the ancestors, the Ubuntu moral code in pre-colonial days was also safeguarded and strengthened by taboos. These taboos were very instrumental in helping people to embrace those behaviors which were permitted and also avoid certain behaviors which were not permitted among the people. In other words the taboos helped people to choose the right actions and avoid the wrong actions and therefore, helped to maintain peace and order in communities.

So, in the pre-colonial days, the African moral code given by the creator God was so safeguarded by the ancestors and by the taboos. On one hand, this morality helped in promoting life, peaceful coexistence or harmonious living and also the spirit of care and love. On the other hand, this morality helped in minimizing the level of crime among the people but also careless destruction of other beings in the web of life keeping in mind that all beings have God as their common source, and therefore, doing harm to one being is doing harm to yourself as Nussbaumsays:

Ubuntu calls on us to believe and feel that:

- *Your pain in my pain,*
- *My wealth is your wealth,*
- *Your salvation is my salvation.*[38]

In Africa's post-colonial era, the religious belief in the Supernatural Being as the source of morality and values has disappeared in a significant way leading to the loss of Ubuntu. Therefore, embracing Ubuntu Religion is very instrumental in the process of bringing back Ubuntu. The point here is not to bring back the belief in the ancestors or re-learn the taboos and put them into practice. This may not work due to cultural advancement and also availability of knowledge on the same. However, what this paper stresses is the belief in the Supreme Being as the creator of all that is. It makes sense to have a Supreme Being because otherwise human beings cannot explain themselves and all that is. Such a belief in a Supernatural Being will eventually order the behavior of human beings for they will know that certain actions are not permitted and therefore, must be avoided. The problem today seems to be that there is no Supreme Being and therefore, morality is based on the individual who is free to do what he or she wants. Such individualistic morality has seriously compromised the lives of other beings in the web of life. This can be evidenced in the destruction of the natural environment in Africa by some human beings who believe they can abuse it in the way that pleases them.

Furthermore, looking at how life is today, one gets a feeling that there are no prohibitions in the African society. Everything is permitted. This is not true and it has led to the loss of Ubuntu whereby many communities as well as many lives have been destroyed. There is need to live Religious values of Ubuntu and it is possible. For example, people should be able to come together to pray over issues affecting people in society such as good rainfall, good harvest harmony etcetera. At the basis of such prayers is the belief in God that human beings as well as the natural environment find their source in God and therefore, if there are any problems among them, it is only God who can resolve them and bring harmony. If the African continent embrace the style of life based on Ubuntu Religion, it will certainly be a better home for everyone.

4.3.3 Ubuntu Economy

One area which has lost Ubuntu ethical values in its operation in most African countries is the area of economics. The loss of Ubuntu values in economics is evidenced by the many cases involving corruption

whereby power and state economy entrusted to certain individuals of prominent status in society are misused for private gains. Corruption is a dominant factor which has hampered development in most African countries. It is sickening and has made so many innocent Africans to suffer. Despite the many efforts that have been made, there seem to be little progress in most countries. Sometimes there have been situations whereby donations in form of material things or money are given to uplift the lives of poor people but in most corrupt countries, such donations end up in the hands of few corrupt leaders. This is a clear sign that the problem does not lie in the scarcity of material things or finances but rather the way of life. This paper therefore, proposes Ubuntu economy as one way of resolving the problem of economic imbalance in most African countries.

Ubuntu economy means living Ubuntu ethical values in economics. Ubuntu is a metaphor which describes the group significance of group solidarity on survival issues amongst African communities that are subjected to poverty as a result of deprivation, and which are effected through brotherly group care as opposed to individual self-reliance. The Ubuntu values promote communalism and interdependence, and hence the Ubuntu aphorism '*I am because you are and you are because I am*'. Communalism therefore, is a value according to which the interests of the group come first. The interests of the individual are subordinate to those of a group.[39]

This is where Ubuntu ethical values can resolve the problem of economic imbalance in most African countries if they are well embraced. For this to materialize there is need for a change of heart and life-style from one that is characterized by greed and individualism to one that is characterized by communalism and sharing. One important characteristic of community life is sharing. It is sharing of experiences, material things and life in general. If African leaders were led by this value of Ubuntu, we would not be talking of corruption because they would realize that what the state has is for everybody and not the leader alone.

So, living Ubuntu values to stabilize economy in Africa demands that African leaders adhere to Ubuntu life which requires them to become stewards of state property and not owners. State property belongs to the people and no leader has the right to abuse it. This is community life and it used to sustain the African community in the pre-colonial days.

In the African society, community life has three main aspects. The first aspect of community life is hard work. Work is very important for the production of wealth or property of any state. Any development and organization of state depends on work and production. Work and production are very important characteristics of Ubuntu. Since a person is a person because of the community, the community has the responsibility of providing the needs of the individuals but at the same time, the individual has also to provide for the needs of the community. This is what African community life means.

Ubuntu initiates in people the sense of responsibility for the community and the need for oneness to work and achieve a common goal. This is an Ubuntu ethical value which Africans need to embrace so as to live Ubuntu in economics. Most people who are involved in corrupt cases are those who do not want to work but at the same time they want wealth and property. Since they are lazy, they begin to interfere with the wealth of the state which is meant for everyone. So to bring back Ubuntu ethical values, Africans need to regain their consciousness on the importance of work and begin to do it because true economic and social development goes hand in hand with productive and distributive processes. Ubuntu's idea of work forbids all kinds of exploitation of fellow human beings. All must work for the common good.

The second implication of community life is sharing. It means that people must share what they have produced. Sharing is a very important value of Ubuntu ethics. In Ubuntu, no body owns things for themselves only. Ubuntu community life demands that people be concerned with the needs of other people and be able to assist. So to bring back Ubuntu in economics, Africans must re-learn the spirit of sharing with those people in need. This will promote societal solidarity. Sharing is a quality which considers human life to be prior to wealth. If the Ubuntu ethical value of sharing is embraced among Africans, there will be no issues of corruption.

The third aspect of community life is accountability and transparency. In the perspective of Ubuntu ethics, leaders of communities or societies are representatives of the people and the stewards of the wealth which the community or society has. For this reason they are supposed to be transparent and also accountable. Transparency and accountability means that Ubuntu activities and wealth be exposed so that all the members of the community know what is happening with their wealth and how it is being used. This is a community spirit and very characteristic of Ubuntu. Accountability and transparency yield trust, credibility and honesty. African leaders need to be transparent and be accountable for the wealth of the state which fellow Africans entrust to them. This is Ubuntu Economics. If African communities embraced Ubuntu economy, there would be harmony, solidarity, peace and unity among the people. The gap between the rich and the poor would have reduced so significantly. So there is need to embrace Ubuntu Economy so that Africa can regain its Ubuntu life-style.

4.3.4 Ubuntu Recreational Activities

One of the factors which can help to revive Ubuntu life is Ubuntu recreational activities. Ubuntu is understood as a social philosophy which is based on principles of care and community, hospitality, respect and dignity, harmony and solidarity which express the fundamental interconnectedness of human existence.[40] In

the pre-colonial days, Ubuntu was well manifested in recreational activities such as dances, singing and social evening gatherings. These activities were meant for recreation and above all for communicating and passing on Ubuntu ethical values. An example could be that of Agikuyu music in Kenya which was very instrumental in helping people to live Ubuntu values. Most traditional songs and dances propagated values that respected humanity and human dignity, respect for legitimate and humane authority, sense of community, mutual aid, collective responsibility, and respect for authentic and traditional religious values.[41] So among the Gikuyu people of Kenya it was expected that people join and participate in these songs and dances because they propagated harmonious and ethical living among the people.

Music and dance were common activities in many African communities and they were meant for recreation but also to propagate African human values which would eventually bring about good life among the people. However, such musical activities were suppressed and suffocated by the colonial masters. In our modern times, global recreational activities have negatively impacted on these traditional recreational activities. Many Africans especially the youth are so glued to television and computer games. The unfortunate thing is that most of these modern recreational activities are very individualistic and therefore, no interaction with others. The suppression of the traditional recreational activities is tantamount to the suppression of Ubuntu itself. It is therefore, important to re-value these traditional recreational activities so as to bring back Ubuntu.

In an effort to revive Ubuntu ethical values through Ubuntu recreational activities, the traditional recreational activities such as traditional dances, songs, and plays could be introduced to the young people in schools and also encourage them to practice them in their homes or communities. Besides these activities, sporting activities could also be encouraged among the youth so that they have time to interact and share and practice Ubuntu ethical values. It is good to note that most of the sporting activities now are done for financial gains. In other words, most sporting activities are not done for recreation's sake but rather for financial gains. This has negative consequences in the sense that the Ubuntu ethical values are not embraced during such activities.

In Ubuntu worldview, services cannot be offered for money. So such sporting activities which are done for the sake of money attached to it are not practical for the revival of Ubuntu. What is needed is to sensitize the youth to frequently engage themselves in sporting activities such as football, basketball, volleyball and others which are aimed at recreation while at the same time serve as the opportunities for knowing each other and building up relationships. When these young people come to know each other and establish relationships amongst themselves, they will develop a spirit of care so much so that they will not aim at injuring each other deliberately during games. They will develop the spirit of solidarity. They will come to understand each other and accept each other as they are. They will develop the spirit of togetherness or team spirit in fighting for success. In other words, they will begin to live Ubuntu ethical values through their various recreational activities.

Besides the players gaining Ubuntu ethical values, recreational activities can help to market Ubuntu values worldwide. This is so because the sporting activities such as football, basketball, volleyball, netball and others may happen among players of nearby communities but also players from communities which are far away from each other. In both cases Ubuntu ethical values can be spread near and far if they are put into practice during such recreational activities. Therefore, Ubuntu recreational activities can be a powerful and effective means of reviving Ubuntu ethical living among Africans more especially the youth.

V. CONCLUSION

This paper has brought forward the suggestions which can help in retaining the African Ubuntu values which can facilitate the healing from the problems Africans are facing. The two main suggestions of education and living Ubuntu values are very important for this process of healing. However, there is need for African experts in education and culture to commit themselves to initiate and advance this project. They need to come up with educational programs which favor the African people and which can help them to develop without sacrificing their values.

Furthermore, the professionals on African culture must embark on meaningful research on African culture aiming at bringing out those African cultural practices and values which have been suppressed by colonialism and globalization. The aim here is not to bring Africa back to its traditional past, but rather to retain its identity and make Africa a better place to live for everyone. Therefore, for the success of this project, there are some foreign values which can be incorporated because they help Africans to develop. Likewise, there are also other indigenous values which can be dropped because they do not help Africans to develop. Hence, philosophy as a rational enterprise is of great help here. It can assist in examining all the aspects of culture to see whether they are still of any significance to the people in these modern times.

Finally, the project of reviving Ubuntu ethical values must be a shared responsibility. The leaders must sensitize their people to reclaim their African identity by embracing the African Ubuntu values. The people also must work hand in hand with their leaders and experts in the practices of Ubuntu values. It is through the re-

learning and living Ubuntu ethical values that Africa can once again retain its identity and also become a better home for everyone.

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