

PHILOSOPHICAL ASSESMENT OF YOUTH MORAL QUALITY IN TANZANIA IN SIXTY YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE

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ABSTRACT : The question of youth moral quality in Tanzania since independence is the main question in this article. From literature reviewed and observation, it was found that, since independence youth moral quality has been declining exponentially. That is to say, youth of present modern society of Tanzania manifests a continuous moral decay compared to youth in traditional society before independence and colonialism. Several factors have been presented as roots for moral decadence among youth. These factors include poor parenting, poor example from elders, lack of systematic study of morality, improper use of social media and internet, superstitious beliefs and conflicting values of the past and present. The author of this article argues that, to improve moral quality among youth in Tanzania, philosophical study of morality should be introduced from primary school to tertiary level. This will help to form proper moral reasoning from childhood. In addition to that, elders and other guardians should change their attitude to become proper example to the youths. Superstitious beliefs should be abolished and good traditional values of Tanzania should be revived in society. The author thinks that, good moral quality can be achieved when government and citizens decide to cooperate in implementing the above suggested solutions. This work is divided in three parts, introduction, discussion and conclusion.

KEYWORDS: *Morality, Youth, Critical thinking, politics and Philosophy of Religion.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Living together in society, implies the element of purpose. Deriving from Aristotle's understanding of society, society is necessary due to the fact that, man is by nature a social animal. There is no way human being can live or exist without society. This can be demonstrated through daily experience in which humans are born, grow, live and die in society. From such observation it is concluded by Aristotle that, "he who is unable to live in a society or who has no need because he is sufficient for himself must be either a beast or a god" (Stumpf, 1966). However, Aristotle stress that, even though human beings are naturally destined to live in society, society is established with a target to some good. That is to say, there is a purpose in living together. This purpose as understood by Aristotle is to participate actively in making sure that society flourish, everyone live a happy life. In simple words, the purpose of living or being in society is happiness, happiness will be attained through ethical conducts that will bring good life to people living in a society. The same understanding is shared by prominent philosophers in medieval times, modern times and contemporary times. Schweitier argues that, "the prosperity of a society depends on the moral disposition of its members" (Anadi, 2008).

The above explanation on the interrelation of society and ethics suggests that, ethical life is essential for any society that need to be successful in terms of bringing good life, the life of happiness to its members. This fact is actively ignored in many contemporary societies. That is to say, members of many contemporary societies ignore morality or ethics while it is an essential driver towards development and happy life in Society. According to Joseph Ratzinger and Marcello Pera in their book entitled "without roots" argue that western countries have forgotten their roots. These roots are values, ethical principles that shaped western societies. These values and ethical principles being forgotten and intentionally ignored, have made western societies of contemporary time to exist without knowing that, they have no clear future. It is like a tree which looks attractive and healthy, without roots it will slowly decay. Figuratively, Ratzinger and Marcello asset that, European societies having lost their fundamental values (roots) are surviving without a clear future "The only thing worse than living without roots is struggling to get by without a future" (Ratzinger and Pera, 2006). In this book, author have shown that, western or European and American societies especially the youth and some other members of

society are morally corrupt to the extent if they are not ready to change their perception and live moral life they will slowly disappear. Just like a tree cut from its roots, it will corrupt and decay. According to Chima (2010) in Nigerian society there is moral bankrupt especially among youths. The issue of moral decadence in Nigerian society has become a very controversial issue. The reason behind is that, society seems to lack knowledge on the disparity between what is morally right or wrong (Njoku, 2016).

Furthermore, Idensi (2010) explains that decline of morality is reported in different societies and culture, industrialized world to non-industrialized world. Immoral behaviors such as rape, sexual abuse, drug abuse, school violence and killings have become common to many youths and children all over the world. In addition to that, Mugambi and Wasike (1999) argue that, today Africa is in a dilemma. In terms of every conduct for individual and communities, there is uncertainty, disillusionment and despair. Elder people lament that daily they are encountering behaviors that shock them. For example, sexual immorality, affectless relationships and skepticism about religious matters. That being said, elder people are suggesting that, contemporary societies in Africa should retrace steps to find out where we have missed the way in responsibilities to provide moral guidance especially in education.

For the case of Tanzania there are many cases and instances which show the catastrophic decline of moral quality among youths. For example, it was reported by Nipashe newspaper in Dec.31, 2019 “mimba shuleni: Shinyanga yalia na wazazi wanaomaliza kimyakimya ” this means that, early pregnancies among students is entertained by parents who solve such problems in personal way without taking legal actions towards those who impregnated students. This is a sign of youth moral decay in Tanzanian society. In the dialogue presented by Star Tv television channel on the topic youth and morality in Tanzania (Startv, 2021) participants acknowledged and explained that, since independence, youth moral quality has been declining years after years. Currently, youth are not responsible citizens, their behavior and individual actions are not morally good, (Startv, 2021).

From above explanations, it is very clear that, there is youth moral decadence almost in every part of the world, Tanzania included. That being said, the purpose of this work is to critically assess fundamental reasons for youth moral decadence in Tanzania since independence to date and to suggest critical solutions for this growing problem. Methodology used in this work is critical Hermeneutic method. This method involve rational scrutiny and speculation about concerns projected beyond the existing order. By this method, the author is able to show how action can best understood as opposing performances driven by ideological moral views (Roberge, 2011). Furthermore, this method will help the author to give critical assessment on the youth moral quality.

II. The concept of morality

Most of the time humans have learned how to become sensitive to the physical environment. They know that, their life depends upon physical environment. In fact, humans have the power to ruin physical environment. They are also aware that, by ruining physical environment, the outcome of such action is to ruin their own lives. When it comes to morality perhaps, few of us are sensitive to what we might call the moral or ethical environment (Blackburn, 2001). From that point of view, insensitivity to moral or ethical environment can be a result of the lack of knowledge on what constitute morality or ethics.

Morality is concerned with climate of ideas about how to live. It determines what can be accepted or unacceptable, admirable or contemptible. It determine when things are going well and when they are going badly. It determines our conception of what is due to us and what is due from us, as we relate to others. It shapes our emotional responses, determine what is a cause of pride or shame, or anger or gratitude or what can be forgiven and what cannot. It gives us our standards of behavior (Blackburn, 2001, 1). According to Vandemiati (2004) ethics or morality is the science that indicates what man must do to be good, that is, worthy of his own humanity. Or, it can be understood as the science of what man should be. Moral life consist of realization of human being as a rational being (Vandemiati, 2004, 17).

Since morality is concerned with rules and norms to guide our conducts in life, then it follows that, human society devoid of morality is doomed to failure because people will not care or consider their conducts and it is human conduct that affects and shapes society. Absence of morality or presence of poor moral quality in society is an indicator of a society that is going to fail. As it was shown in the introduction, different scholars have shown that, in the sixty years of independence of Tanzania, youth moral quality is declining exponentially years after years since independence. The following part investigates factors for moral decadence among the youth in Tanzania since independence.

III. Factors for Poor Moral Quality among Youth in Tanzania.

3.1. Absence of moral authority among elders.

Elders in Tanzanian society have shown weakness in playing a role of being exemplary in morals. Some of the elders commit immoral acts like rapping, stealing, killing their wives\husbands, associating themselves in money laundering and drug selling. When youth see elders involved in such bad conducts they think that is how life should be. The result is, elders lose moral authority in transmitting moral value to youth and children (Star tv, 2021). In addition to that, parents (some of them) seem to be weak in teaching the young ones or their children to develop good behavior. They tend to be busy in their economic activities, looking to make more money or focus only on their jobs. By doing this, they forget that, it is their responsibility to make sure that their children are growing in a good moral order. Some of the children have been raised up by house girls or house boys. And in most cases, these house girls and house boys are not matured enough to play the role of a good parent or guardian. Eventually, they show and teach children bad behaviors. For example, when the parents are not around a house girl\houseboy will make calls to meet with her\his lover in the same house and the same room where the children are staying. After that, the house girl\houseboy will convince the children to be silent on what happened in the house. This is just one example, although there are a lot of cases like this that have happened, leading to poor moral formation in children. When children grow up, they become youths with poor moral characters. Therefore, elders have contributed to poor moral quality among youths in Tanzania. They have done this through a failure to be a good example or ignoring the task of raising their children in a good moral manner. Youth having no sense of good and bad, no respect to humanity, lazy and irresponsible, in one way or another, it is the fruits of the elders failure in transmitting moral values (Star TV, 2021).

3.2. Social media and improper use of internet

Social media like Facebook, Instagram, snapchat, telegram and WhatsApp have positively contributed a lot in social, political and economic development. However, they have negatively, contributed in being the root of poor moral quality among the youth. It is fact that, most youth involve themselves in such kind of social media, where they are able to interact with their friends through chatting and voice calls as well as video calls. Furthermore, they are able to view video clips and send\receive video clips as well as voice note. Sometimes, they do good things through such access, but, there is a time when they learn bad things. For example, youth form groups in WhatsApp, telegram and Facebook. Some of these groups are there to share contacts of prostitutes, pornography videos and contacts of buying or selling stolen things. This is just one example, a lot of bad actions are organized through these social media. And unfortunately, distance is no longer a problem due to simplicity brought by social media. Through social media, youth are able to get contacts of drug sellers, they are able to plan everything from scratch on how to transfer drugs from one place to another. They are able to get contacts to go abroad and become prostitutes in other countries. All these are simply done through social media, because in it, communication is unlimited (Startv, 2021).

Rosemary Richard and John Gibson, conducted a research concerning the behavior of youth in Universities when accessing internet materials. Their main questions were, when students in universities view internet materials are they learning values and ideologies that advance them along the path to full human maturity? Are they wasting time? Are they engaged in behavior that would make them feel shame if their grandmother or grandfather, mother or father, sister or brother, wife or husband, pastor or priest, imam or teacher were to learn about the websites and the networks that they visit? Would they feel shame about their browsing habits? Would their elders ordinarily watch what their students watch when they surf the web? (Richard and Gibson, 2017, 37). In their findings, they realized that, students in universities are busy surfing in their browser to the extent they waste precious time. They view pornography material and other immoral contents. In relation to that, Richard and Gibson (2017) exposed a new term called “phubbing” by this term, it means youth are busy interacting with their phones and other devices while ignoring other nearby person. That is to say, they focus on their phones rather than a nearby individual who deserve attention as a person, from their observation and findings, it can easily be seen how social media and improper use of internet lead to bad habits. The habit of watching or viewing porn, lead to psychological and moral disorder. As a result of such actions, youth moral quality declines exponentially.

As argued in the beginning, it is not that everything that comes from social media is bad. A lot of benefits arise from social media. For example, according to Makau and Tassielli in their book “about children and the media” argue that, the media can teach beautiful and positive things to the young mind such as; vocabulary, mathematical puzzles for thinking skills, virtues such as fortitude and obedience, and general knowledge to mention the few. However, young and adults exposed to media can be effected with obesity, impairment of neurological development, increase in aggression, desensitization to violence, male, female stereotyping, and distortion of the sense of reality. Susceptibility to commercialism and materialism. These happens all from a few hours a day of watching (Makau and Tassielli, 2007, 9).

3.3 Superstitious Beliefs

On 19th January 2022, it was reported by clouds Tv that, a youth with an age of 16 years old was arrested in Songwe Region of Tanzania charged of killing his pregnant wife. Ward counselor of that area explained that, the husband killed his wife because she did not accept to go to the witch doctor for medical treatment (clouds TV, 2022). Out of this report it can be seen how superstitious beliefs among youth is one of the factor for poor moral quality in youth of Tanzania. Really, it is a very serious factor in bringing poor moral quality. When youth believe in witchcraft and other superstitions beliefs, they tend to be uncritical when approaching different matters. Any challenge in life they associate with superstitions. In a given example, that youth planned to take his pregnant wife to a witchdoctor rather than to hospital where professional doctors with scientific instruments are found. Simply because he believes in superstition. This is just one report, there are so many others in Tanzania, like people being told that, there is magic power to anything they want. Some seek superstitious power as a way to bring respect and obedience to their wives or husbands. In fact, all these actions are morally bad. Youth of Tanzania, many of them are drown in such beliefs to the extent they are no longer interested in studying or working. With superstitious beliefs youth moral quality declines day after day (Startv, 2021).

3.4. Lack of Systematic Moral Study in Education System

In the education system from primary to universities, there is no systematic study of morality. Students who form a large part of youth have no clear comprehension of morality. Beginning from primary school and secondary school, there is no subject that only deals with forming moral reasoning. Students only learn subjects that will help them to acquire scientific skills and social skills like mathematics, biology, physics, and civics to mention the few. When it comes to tertiary level some colleges and universities have introduced courses like fundamental ethics, social ethics and critical thinking. These courses or subjects help students to form moral reasoning in their thinking process. However, most of government colleges and universities have not introduced such subjects. For this reason, most youth grows up to the level of graduates with no or very poor moral reasoning (Startv, 2021).

As a result, most youth finds no difficulties in committing immoral actions. As a matter of facts, they enjoy doing it thinking that is a smart way of doing things. In Swahili languages there is a word known as “ujanja” which means cleverness. Thus, most youth when they have successfully committed an immoral act like cheating in a relationship, stealing or lying to someone, they call themselves “wajanja” to imply that, they are very clever, they know very important tricks of life. Many youth have such mentality. This mentality is entertained by poor or no moral reasoning in someone’s mind. Such explanation does not imply people with good moral reasoning do not or have never lied or committed immoral acts. It means that, someone with good moral reasoning is able to think critically and realize that he or she has done something bad and should be very careful in the future not to repeat the same thing. Someone with good moral reasoning implanted through subjects which develop moral reasoning will not be happy calling himself or herself “mjanja” by committing immoral act. Instead he or she will feel blameworthy and regret about the act, planning and seeking advice from others on how best to avoid such occurred immoral act in the future conducts. Therefore, lack of systematic study on morality, is among the factors for exponential poor moral quality among youth in Tanzania 60 years of independence (Startv, 2021).

3.5 Conflicting Values of the Past and Present

It is the nature of societies to change as time goes, past societies are not like present modern societies. Society of Tanzania is among other societies transformed from traditional societies to complex modern societies. Such transformation involves people, value, activities and trends. For example, traditional African societies were relatively simple with no literary heritage (Ime and Unwanaobong 2014). Transmission of knowledge based on oral tradition as opposed to modern African societies which have been greatly influenced by the western world and is more advanced with a lot of literary collections on an array of subjects. As noted in the beginning, when society change, values also change (Ime and Unwanaobong 2014). These changes have affected values to the extent there is an increased wave of moral decadence and moral laxity in present day societies.

Values used to be appreciated in the past are like truthfulness, respect, tolerance and cooperation, hard work and functionalism, respect for human life and dignity of a person. In the present modern society like Tanzania these values are no longer seriously pursued. Moral decadence has resulted in indiscipline at all levels in the society. Effects of moral decadence is manifested in people’s readiness to cheat and embezzle, lack of dignity and respect for human life and the monster of corruption. Values that are predominantly held and pursued today include dishonesty, disrespect, intolerance and lack of cooperation, profit oriented relationships, profane of life and abuse of human dignity, loss of pride in hard working, an increased interest in pursuit of injustice and other crimes all in a bid to acquire wealth (Ime and Unwanaobong 2014). The motto of “get rich quick” makes people to commit themselves in corruption. From such divergence in values of the past and present, youth of present

modern societies including Tanzania find themselves pursuing more bad values of modern societies (Ime and Unwanaobong 2014)

IV. Solutions

4.1. Moral Philosophy should be taught from Primary school to Tertiary level

The main concern is to improve moral quality among youth. It is better to begin with mental formation of children. I recommend that children as they begin learning, morality should be part of their studies. I do not mean a mere lesson of morality by telling children what to do and what not to do, I mean a philosophical study that will form moral reasoning of what should be done and what should be avoided. Through this philosophical training, children are taught how to think morally. Teaching a person how to think systematically to make proper decision on good and bad actions, is different from just telling someone that stealing, cheating and sexual immorality are bad conducts. The former is comprehensive enough to generate a character in a person while the later only makes a person to be aware without comprehension. Thus, here the motto is “teach children how to think rather than teaching them what to do”. With this philosophical training on moral reasoning from childhood, it is possible to improve moral quality of youth in Tanzanian society. Therefore, philosophical study of good and bad should be a compulsory subject for all students in Tanzania.

In preparation for this, government should consider to motivate people who study philosophy in order to increase specialist who will assist in such philosophical training. It can be done by giving loans to students who are not able to pay for their philosophical studies in universities and colleges. This will help to produce more teachers of moral philosophy to achieve the target of teaching morality from primary schools to colleges and universities.

4.2. Parents and Other Elders Should Play Their Role

As it was shown that, elders and parents in the society have contributed to poor moral quality among youth in Tanzania. I hereby recommend that, parents in their families should be very careful to make sure that, children are taught good manners and rebuked when they misbehave. There is a Swahili saying “mtotoumleavyondivyo akuavyo.” This means that the way you raise him/her in bad manners he/she will grow a bad person, the opposite is true. This will help at least to reduce bad tendencies of children and shape in them good behavior. In traditional African societies, this was the main focus of every parent and every elder. Children used to be corrected by any elder when they misbehave and parents were supporting such correction. In present modern society experience shows that, parents do not allow other elders to correct their children, they are busy with business, enjoyments and other economic and political activities. I think, it is a time to wake up from this, elders and parents should cooperate and become a good example of good behavior to children, children should learn something good from parents and other elders.

4.3 Restrictions should be introduced on Social Media and Use of Internet.

The use of social media and internet has been identified as among the driving force to poor moral quality among youth in Tanzania. Therefore, there is a need to introduce strict restrictions on improper use of social media and internet. For example, this can be done by blocking websites which involve pornography and other immoral activities. Some will argue that, this is an intervention to individual freedom. In my opinion, common good should be remembered as an important thing for any society. Thus, if youth of our societies are future generation and we are not careful enough to facilitate their future, then their freedom is doomed to failure. Because such irresponsible concept of freedom which vividly manifest deterioration of moral quality, if it is entertained, future generation of Tanzanian society will suffer the consequences. Therefore, it is the role of government and every Tanzanian to make sure that, improper use of social media and internet is prohibited and restricted.

4.4. Superstitions Beliefs Should be Avoided

Even though Tanzania is a country where people are free to belong in any religious belief, it should be emphasized that, superstitious beliefs are not accepted. Because these beliefs have proved to be among the source of moral decadence in youth of Tanzania. Youth are killing their parents, wives and husband, children and others for the sake of implementing requirements from witchdoctors to become rich. This is not something to be entertained, government should find a way to stop those witchdoctors and other religious people who preach on superstitious ways of becoming rich. Because when people believe on superstitious ways of becoming rich, they eventually lose focus on working hard. In addition to that, parents and other guardians should avoid telling children superstitious stories. Because such stories form deep beliefs in superstitions, leading to growing desires and fear among youth. Instead of telling superstitious stories to children, it is far better to tell children stories of science and technology. This will sharpen their mind into scientific way of thinking.

4.5. The Concept of Brotherhood and Familyhood Should be Reemphasized in Tanzania

Julius Kambalage Nyerere, the first president of Tanzania reintroduced the value of brotherhood as a way of living together, cooperating and helping each other as one family. He argued that, brotherhood and Familyhood

are necessary practice for social and political development not only for Tanzania, but for the whole world. This value was common in traditional African societies, therefore, he expected Tanzanians to find no difficulty in living together as one family. However, experience of current Tanzanian society does not manifest this value. But I think that, if children and youth learn to live the concept of familyhood and brotherhood, their moral quality will improve and social, political and economic development will advance.

V. Conclusion

Moral quality among youth has been demonstrated to be poor almost in all parts of the world including Tanzania. The author of this work explained how poor moral quality among youth can lead to failure in the society that may last up to the future generation. Several factors for moral decadence among youth have been explained which includes poor parenting, poor example from elders, lack of systematic study of morality, improper use of social media and internet, superstitious beliefs and conflicting values of the past and present. The author of this article argues that, to improve moral quality among youth in Tanzania, philosophical study of morality should be introduced from primary school to tertiary level. This will help to form proper moral reasoning from childhood. In addition to that, elders and other guardians should change their attitude to become a proper example to the youths. Superstitious beliefs should be abolished and good traditional values of Tanzania should be revived in society.

Further studies can be done to investigate whether other philosophical subjects apart from moral philosophy can contribute to improve youth moral quality in Tanzania.

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