

Parental Responsibilities: A Transformational Tool for Leadership and Development

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Abstract: *The pride of a country rests on its capacity to constantly raise the standard of its citizens socially, economically, academically, technologically etcetera. This calls for good committed leaders who can spearhead growth and development of a nation. Nevertheless, this cannot be achieved without considering the value as well as the quality of the families where our people come from. This paper underlines the importance of parental leadership right from birth where we have the first school of orientation to the family preferably offered by parents and the surrounding community. The paper adapts the traditional concept of parenting where children right from birth were extolled as future parents and heads of the society, hence seen as the pride, the future, and the riches of the family and society at large. As a result, parents and the society shared their possessions with the young fairly and generously. In other words the community invested in the value and potential building of the younger generation as future responsible and reliable leaders. With the coming of Western civilization, parent-child socialization and consequently education was disrupted, creating a lacuna where care for the young was left unattended. Today, a lot is said about leadership and the future of our African countries and in particular Kenya, but the journey towards achieving this is least explored. Yet the quality of a pot, in this case our children depend on the materials used in its molding, care, attention and the final picture in the mind of the potter. The paper argues that to enjoy leadership and governance that would spearhead our country, we need our priorities right and in line with our expectations, goals, and objectives. The paper assumes that parents if well supported, empowered and equipped with knowledge and potential values would nurture children towards productive leadership and governance. The paper disapproves the concept that some people are born leaders. Instead what matters is the approach, care, attitude, time, resources and effort to produce potential leaders and goal achievers besides sustaining our goal oriented and hardworking leaders who remain mentors and instruments of admiration to our upcoming generations.*

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1. Introduction

Today, our country is faced with several challenges ranging from poverty, corruption, moral decay and other social problems. Tears of hopelessness keep flooding our nation north to south, east to west with almost no hope for a better tomorrow. Today's answer lies on Charles Darwin's "survival for the fittest" philosophy and if need be "everybody for himself and God for us all". For the keen listener along the streets, are the whispers of trails of death through carjacking, kidnapping, armed robbery, irresponsible driving, murder and violence on every corner of our country. Strikes and demonstrations appear the only audible language appealing to our leaders in this twenty first century. Today the doctors, tomorrow the nurses, the day after the teachers yet warned not to take too long, as the civil servants are on the way to demand for their rights and at the same time give way to the *matatu* (public transport in Kenya) cries who accuse the disciplined forces for hardening their yoke especially along the highways. The whole lifestyle seems a vicious cycle bearing neither a beginning nor an ending.

In the midst of all these, what is most shocking is that many people seem undisturbed with life appearing to move on as usual. They have gotten used to pain and struggle that what is happening has become part and parcel of their everyday life with almost no change to wait for. Yet all this rolls back to the country's leadership and governance. Even though everything appears to be in a helter skelter manner, what has a beginning always has an end. There is still light at the end of the tunnel. We all need a change of which we have to go back and begin the journey again by rediscovering the lost treasures, especially in the family / parental leadership values that carried our past miles away. Yes, *mototo wa*

nyoka ni nyoka (a snake bears a snake) but we can still tame it to become friendly to our environment. With proper leadership our country can still regain its sanity and pride regardless of how far away it has drifted.

Mtoto Umleavyo ndivyo akuavyo is a famous saying among our African people meaning that a child is the product of his or her upbringing and likewise a grown up person. The leadership we have today is a reflection of the products of our families. This saying has been used in and out of season, both by those who understand its meaning as well as those who think that they understand it as they hear others using it. In our discussion about revisiting parental responsibilities the saying summarizes all that is being discussed in this paper regarding the kind of leadership today and the impact it has on our National growth and development. In other words, it explains the state of leadership, the nature and the quality of people entrusted with change in our various institutions be it private or public, religious or secular, charitable or commercial.

The saying also echoes parenting as a role that has to be given utmost consideration unconditionally. Considering the various socio-cultural changes taking place in our society, something has to be done about parenting and child upbringing from all over our country if we have to achieve the best in present and future leadership. There is need for a united goal and purpose to salvage our country's leadership and regain our pride. Unfortunately no one will come from the outside except you who bear the titles of the father, mother, close family members, relatives, human charitable and non charitable organizations and institutions.

As noted above, this is hoped to reduce leadership cases, complaints, criticisms, condemnations and moral

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accusations over leadership both in and out of office. While acknowledging that we have varieties of parenting methodologies such as authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and unattended, the paper turns around to adopt African Traditional child upbringing and parenting model so as to tap and inculcate the various values that could strengthen and enrich our today's parenting for responsible leadership. These values include solidarity, respect, communal parenting and ownership of children in addition to responsible individual growth and rise in individual maturity. Among our Africans these concepts saw children brought up as the pride, the future and the riches of the family and the society at large.

Finally, the paper highlights possible measures that could empower our parenting skills towards achieving transformational. These are likely to spearhead our country to great heights of admiration, appreciation and positive transformation in all sectors of our country's leadership and governance.

2. African Traditional Mind and Child Upbringing

Africans highly valued children and considered them a treasure bearing in mind that life of the past, present and the future pivoted around them. Too strong are the words of Mbiti in the following phrase that shows the heart of an African in regard to children.

Unhappy is the woman who fails to get children for , whatever other qualities she might possess, her failure to bear children is worse than genocide: she has become the dead end of human life, not only for the genealogical line but also for herself. When she dies, there will be nobody of her immediate blood to remember her, to keep her in the state of personal immortality: she will simply be forgotten (Mbiti, 1990, p.107).

In most cases prayers and sacrifices were offered to God in thanksgiving, for long life, human fertility and procreation. All this was done in a spirit of togetherness due to the high set of values established to ensure respect for one another, mutual help and working together (*harambee*). Majority of the Africans valued sharing their life with their families and the society in a spirit of self giving and total sacrifice. In most cases they considered each and every member of the society part and parcel of their achievements. Surprisingly, even the departed members of the family were never forgotten lest misfortunes strike the society. The unborn members equally formed the society and were passionately talked about. According to Mbiti,

The unborn members who are still in the loins of the living are the buds of hope and expectation hence each family made sure their existence was not extinguished. Hence the family provided for its continuation and the coming of the unborn (Mbiti, 1995, p.107).

There was nothing in the world that could have been more rewarding especially to the married than a child. The most beautiful names that a man and a woman could have were father and mother.

As seen above, parenthood marked the identity of an individual so highly that in almost equal terms as Mbiti's, among the Kikuyu community one without a child was considered a failure for children bring joy not only to their parents, but the entire clan (Kenyatta, 1974, p. 164). Besides, in the child, the parents see the fulfillment of their personhoods (Kithinji and Kithinji, 2005, p.83). Children were seen as the pride, the future and the riches of the family and the society. They were and still are the life insurance of their parents entrusted with caring for them in old age, propagate and give new family for progeny and continuation of the society. Among the Kamba community childless women went as far as marrying wives (*iweto*) to bear children for them (Arthur, 1998, p.83). As these children grew up everything was thus done to make sure they came out as responsible and reliable people in the community. On top of that, the extended family and the wider community provided the security and the support system necessary for parents to carry out their noble duty of bringing up the children.

Parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, community elders and counsel of men and women taught the young and the old techniques of human relations while preparing them to shoulder present and future responsibilities. Besides, these educators assisted the individuals to develop physically, psychologically, spiritually, intellectually, socially, economically and politically while ensuring that all their potentials were shared with the younger generation in a generous and well organized manner. The entire traditional community invested on the value, and potential building of the younger generation as future leaders. In many African homesteads, different family members had distinctive roles to play which both the family and the society had prepared them for. Among the kikuyu community, Kenyatta, 1974, (pp.102-114) explains that:

- a) The father for instance had the overall authority and discipline which he rigidly kept over the wife and the children. His presence was highly felt as he made major family decisions, gave orders and directives regarding both the family activities and relationships. He literally took care of the entire family members either directly or indirectly as a symbol of authority, unity, harmony and protection in the homestead.
- b) The mother was responsible for all family chores. She worked hard to ensure that all her family members were well fed. One of her greatest duties was to ensure that she controlled the children and taught them traditional values, respect for the family members, elders and society in general. She also ensured that these children related harmoniously with each other and with the other members of the society. Her work as an educator was evaluated by how well her children behaved towards others and in public places. Education of girls was entirely in her hands as the father took charge over the education of boys. She did all these things to ensure that children understood their place in the society and they acquired proper formation as this would amount to stability, respect and efficiency in future.
- c) Children had their duties and responsibilities as well. They were obliged to respect and obey their parents and elders. Girls had to assist their mothers with house duties

like preparing meals, drawing water, baby sitting and other house work. Boys looked after cattle, fed the animals, build houses and fences, dug and cultivated in the gardens and did most of the heavy duties as directed by their fathers. In the absence of the father, the older son took over the responsibilities of his father except for sexual roles and duties.

Unemployment and dependency over others, idleness, laziness and refusal to work were highly discouraged in every home. Every one worked hard to earn a living and for the welfare of the entire family and society. The African traditional society therefore, is known to have enjoyed peace, harmony and prosperity hence remained united under the umbrella of one family, one people, and one nation. Love for brotherhood ensured that there were limited cases of corruption and other anti-social behaviors. Unfortunately some trends in our country seem to be robbing us responsible leadership towards the promised land of peace, love and unity as a Kenyans.

3. Black Spots Against Leadership and Development

With the coming of western civilization, the above African traditional family setting, parent-child socialization and consequently education was disrupted. Mbiti supports this when he boldly states that:

The traditional foundations of African peoples have been shaken and everyone, whether in the village or in the slum, whether in politics of commerce, whether Christian or Muslim or follower of traditional religions has now been exposed to the demands of the new situation. He must find his identity and security in a forest of dilemmas (Mbiti, 1969, p.266)

This in a way created a lacuna where care, concern and formation for the young were left wanting in “the determined mind and hearts of mind your own business individuals”. With time what used to hold our African people together begun to loosen with the spirit of brotherhood dying each and every other day. Today a lot is being said about leadership and the future of our African countries and in particular Kenya but the journey towards change is taking a rather slow pace. Both old and young keep asking each other what is happening and as Mbiti above states, we are all in the process of trying to find our identity but unfortunately deep inside the forest of dilemmas. That calls for each individual to first establish which forest this is so as to identify what need to be done to liberate our country and our people. At this point the following factors are of great importance as far as today’s leadership and governance is concerned. They act as sky mark open indicators illustrating where we are as a nation and at times showing the direction we are headed for. Depending on the action we take, we can either salvage our country’s leadership or drown it deep as a glorious memory.

a) Change in Educational System

Before the coming of the Europeans we had the pre-colonial citizenship informal education that integrated history,

culture, values and beliefs of the family, neighborhood and community groups (Muyanda and Yiga, 1994, P.1). This kind of education took care of both the individual needs and the community needs. It was not just the parent’s but the entire community’s responsibility to form a well round person. Initiation into adult responsibility was also a communal achievement where the citizen’s goal was to fit and contribute to the needs of the traditional society. The entire lifestyle of an African took care of one’s life from birth to death. Unfortunately with the coming of the Europeans, there were colonization effects that demanded the education system in our country to cater for the needs of the colonizers (Kayongo D., 1991, pp.1-2).

During this colonial period, traditional citizenship education was replaced with formal education to cater for the new forms of government and economic systems. Although this had several advantages, it also had great disadvantages to our African people as it led to the loss of the traditional teachings of unity, harmony, family values and wisdom of the elders. As Africans became involved with the new type of education there was no more of the traditional cohesiveness, but a process of Africans is drifting away from each other. Today we still share in the bitter pill of the effects of colonial education such as:

i) Abandonment of Children to House-girls.

With women education gaining root coupled with various economic constraints, women have no choice than leave some of their traditional roles such as parenting to house girls. These girls are responsible for looking after the very young as they do other house jobs. They are responsible for washing these children, clean their clothes, feed them, assist them with homework, socialize and teach them the language. Yet, as we know, the majority of these girls’ education has been between standard five and form four at most. This means that minus the parents such a child’s growth and development is fixated on the level of his / her best friend and companion who happens to be the house-girl. This is such a prime age of human development of the child to get indoctrinated with all sorts of teachings which later in years re-service to give his or her acquired identity.

ii) Emergence and Appreciation of Children Day-care Services

Due to the problem of getting house-girls, people have come up with homes and institutions which are ready to take between three months and three year old children as the mother / parent attend to work or school. In most cases, this service is offered by one or two people who take care of at least ten to thirty kids who are at the breastfeeding age. Just like in the case with the house-girls these are untrained and with minimal education. Due to the overwhelming number of kids, these child attendees at a time get worked up leading to abusing of the kids physically and emotionally. We thus have a situation where these children begin their world exposure with abuses, hate feelings, beatings and other emotional frustrations such as being kept soiled for long hours without being changed. Later in years, these children begin to lose interest in life leading to kind of

don't care attitude in life, yet we expect them to be tomorrow's leaders.

iii) Predetermined Career Guidance and Counseling in Schools

Our Kenyan education system has been advocating for science oriented subjects and courses to take care of the low innovation and invention gap as well as improving the country's technological know how. These subjects include mathematics, chemistry, physics, and biology or rather what street language refers to as "manpower courses" against the art related subjects such as religious education, ethics, history, social sciences, social studies, civics and geography. These Art-related subjects are also referred to as "women subjects" in street language.

Unfortunately, the so called art related subjects happens to be offering citizenship education and community values meant to shape a child. Once this is so we end up producing learned but not educated citizens who confirm the popular saying found in some street placards that "our scientific world has outrun our spiritual power, we have guided missiles and misguided men" This in other words displays a situation in which a child grows up in an environment where life is not only unfriendly and frustrating but also lonely most likely with no one to turn to and hence demanding protection and an answer. Out of the many frustrations and disappointments in life this person ends up in the wrong company where their reasoning triggers force and violence as a last result.

Due to such hopelessness in life we have some people who end up engaging in all sorts of behaviors and bad companies. To a certain extent the researcher is forced to relate this with the many tears in most parts of our country where the media in almost all the news portray people crying and mourning HIV Aids pandemic, sexually transmitted diseases, homosexuality, lesbianism, alcoholism, drug and chemical-abuse, car-jacking, kidnapping, terrorism, corruption and bribery, suicide and murder attempts, high school dropouts, pre-marital and extra-marital sex, early / child marriages and the list is endless.

Besides, where parents could have gathered around their children to identify, understand and mold them academically, history has it that these very parents trust that teachers are the best career advisors while on the other hand, teachers expect parents to intervene. In the end the child is left in the middle with no one to turn to something that might affect future leadership and governance.

b) Disintegration of The Extended Family System

Coupled with the change of the educational system is the gradual disintegration of the extended family, partly as a result of western civilization and partly out of other effects. Today, we are gradually moving from the supportive extended family system to the individualized nuclear family where individuals are left on their own to bring up their children in the way it fits best. Education for life is no longer

a universal value for either all fathers or all mothers as some of these never got a chance to receive it and know its value. They therefore are not aware of its values or contribution to the entire nation. These parents lack proper leadership characteristics and hence their children born and brought up under similar circumstances have no other person to take up from except what nature presents.

With time these children brought up with no leadership formation take up offices and carry the same deficiency in their respective offices. Consequently, those who visit these offices are heard complaining and criticizing the status of leadership in our country, accusing our leaders of being deprived of values, virtues, morals, ethos and hence loss of vision, direction and future. Yet our leaders are the products and the reflection of our society. With the disintegration of extended families, comes the death of communitarian life, hence giving birth to privatization and individualistic attitudes in life.

c) Privatization and Individualization Effects

This is a situation where individuals feel that they own themselves and all that they have is as a result of their personal efforts, determination, abilities, and struggles against communitarian achievements. They own their children and families as well. A kind of egoistic attitude to life emerges bearing deep cuts of selfishness, withdrawal habits and isolation from the majority, especially those labeled "lower class materials" or rather "the American proletariats". When there is such an attitude in a family environment, it becomes transmitted in the children from the parents. In the end a kind of personal blindness of society needs develop in such a way that if such people ends up holding offices it becomes difficult to serve or even understand and associate especially with the poor in the society. Many a times, leaders possessing such behaviors rarely understand it unless told by others. At times trying to correct these people would put one into problems due to a kind of "mind your own business" attitude entrenched in their lives.

In some homes this kind of behavior is evidenced in *mbwa kali* (dangerous dogs) notices on their gates. Unfortunately this does not only affect leadership in offices, but goes further to affect child upbringing where parents in this category lay standards to their children which even they never achieved as expressed in the following:

Many parents have great dreams for their children. They want their children to be what they failed to be themselves. They want the children to fulfill their long time desire, and in their anxiety to achieve this, they want to model their children to a vessel of their dream. (Ciriaka and Thomas Kithinji, 2005, p.116)

The above example gives an indication that some of the problems we have in leadership in our African countries are to be traced back from the time of colonization and may not just be solved by the present day parents alone. These parents need everyone's support as they borrow from our African Traditional cultures on parenting if today's parenting is anything to go by. This is because society is not static but changing. With time, even our remaining

traditional values are likely to become glorious memories, giving way to certain traits that could affect our present and future generation of leaders even more.

d) Uncontrolled Media Effect on Children

Due to the many schedules involving parents in their day to day activities, parents as already expressed above, have been left with little or no time for their children. As a result, children are abandoned to the culture of watching different television networks, listening to different radio channels and reading all sorts of literature materials, newspapers, and magazines regardless of the content in it. At other times, they are all over in the internet, Facebook, tutor, whatsapp, fiber, linked, ovi messenger, Skype, email, instant messenger etcetera.

In the above sites not everything is palatable to healthy and responsible leadership let alone parenting. Yet even the smallest kids are left to grow, develop and assimilate materials provided, even when there is a warning that “internet could endanger your child, Allowing your daughters access to social sites like Facebook could expose her to sex pests”(Saturday Nation, 20th January, 2010). This is very unfortunate bearing in mind that according to Piaget’s stages of intellectual development, where differences in intelligence are as a result of both heredity and environments, from birth to 12 years a child undergoes the age of indoctrination and anything seen and learned is rarely forgotten (Uba,1989, P.36-39). Yet this is the age at which we expose our children to very nasty mass media as well as pornographic materials and still expect them to be morally upright bringing about healthy and responsible leadership and governance.

e) Increased Cases of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse

Traditionally beer was actually perceived as a symbol of blessing, sharing and thanksgiving and therefore restricted to certain categories of people far from the young children and youth. There were no concepts such as bars and house drinking springs as much of it was taken ceremoniously during family functions and gatherings and only at given time of the day or evenings. Irresponsible drinking and drunkenness was discouraged by the society hence punishable. Today, beer drinking has been commercialized and its rules relaxed making it available to anyone who can afford to either buy or access to it anywhere. We have a good number of our working class youth who end up becoming addicts after constantly carrying it secretly in their offices and places of work having borrowed these habits from their parents.

These parents are known to either send their children to buy beer for them while others store it in their houses regardless of the danger it poses to the young. Harold Ayodo laments that “Alcohol drowns developments at Nairobi West” showing how alcohol and drug abuse has been destroying prospective future leaders while at the same time pulling down several developmental projects (The standard Newspaper, 11th Feb. 2010). Such effects are likewise the same with all sorts of drug abuse, especially bhang and mandrax which are very common among the youth in our country.

f) High Level of Corruption and Tribalism in Our Employment Industry

For quite some time, the issue of corruption, negative ethnicity and tribalism has been the talk of many especially in our government institutions and offices. To either get employed or go through in some negotiations some people insist that one has either to be a *kamwene* (kikuyu word for owned by) or be able to give *kitu kidogo* (something small). What some people refer to as TKK meaning *Toa Kitu Kidogo* or is it *kitu kikubwa* (something big)? It is not a wonder to visit some public institutions and find out that three quarters of the personnel are either members of the same family or same village. These people are there, not because they are the most qualified, but because they could be having a relationship with one or more of the most senior person(s) who happen to be influential and well known to each one of them individually. Unfortunately, such issues are never spoken too loudly due to the fear of the outcome from those associated with them.

What this means is that, we are seated on a time bomb where some people continue rewarding such degrading behavior, pass it to their children and society and thus initiate others into it. It also means that several good leadership traits are blocked and locked out hence, never exploited. Besides, this has killed the good spirit of Kenyan brotherhood and buried it too deep that some communities have ended up developing hatred for their Kenyan colleagues just because they belong to a particular tribe or locality of which unfortunately, tribe is a matter of historical accident.

4. Revisiting Parental Responsibility

Having travelled the long journey on the black sports in our leadership and development, it is now clear that some very urgent measurers need to be taken if we have to continue enjoying the treasures of our country in peace.

The quality of a pot, in this case our children, depend on the materials used in its molding, the kind of care and attention given and the future picture in the mind of a potter. It is only when we understand not just what leadership mean to us as a nation, but why we need that leadership and for who, that we are able to invest in the quality of what is already a priority in our lives- children as our only hope for change. As already noted in the beginning of this paper, our society vis a vis our country is faced with several challenges of which our children are at the receiving end. Yes, we too are facing difficulties in life, but what is most distressing is the kind life our children are likely to encounter if the situation today is not arrested.

A quick survey among all the different tribes of our country indicates that leadership scuffles are already raising an alarm. Whereas we in leadership are responsible for the chaos involved, we need to go back to the roots and try to establish a generation that appreciates each other as far as leadership and development is concerned. We need a generation that reasons beyond tribal, ethnic and material boundaries. One where interactions and socialization are based on love and togetherness as expressed by our

National Anthem which requests that we dwell in unity, peace and liberty for all to prosper.

This we begin by asking ourselves the following questions:

- a) Are we really sincere when we say that we love and value our children?
- b) What do we want for these children as they grow up?
- c) Kenya being my treasured home, am I proud of the way it is today?
- d) What kind of Kenya would I want for my children?
- e) How do I rate the kind of leadership and inter-tribal, inter-class socialization?
- f) Which areas do I feel we need to change as leaders?
- g) Is what we are doing as leaders sustainable?
- h) Given an opportunity today what would I do different from what I see our leaders doing?

These and many other questions need to be answered individually if responsible leadership is anything to go by. To achieve any growth and development in our country, we need to consider the quality of each and every individual within the country as well as the families where these individuals come from. Among the Kikuyu community, there is a proverb that says *wega umaga na mucii* meaning that prosperity is founded in one's home (Barra, G., 1998, p.121). We therefore cannot address any issues on leadership without touching on the contents in our homes and families. This is the kitchen where all leadership is baked and served, especially by the parents if not by the mother who happens to be the main instrument for change in her home and society at large. The proverb *karega nyina gaihonaga* (the baby that refuses the mother's milk never survives) is very significant showing how important a mother who in this case represents parents is in life.

It is therefore very sad when we look backwards and notice how disintegration of extended family has led to detachment of the parents from their children. It is even more disheartening when we realize how little we are doing to pick up our broken pieces and rebuild our country once again. Whereas this is the reality today we need not to keep on lamenting the lost glorious moments when our people were guided by moral and ethical values in their leadership and development. Instead, we have to rise above such issues and see how best we could revive parental leadership in our families. First and foremost, we have to accept that we have drifted from our national values and then begin raising awareness in all fields stressing on the power and value of responsible leadership from the point of view of a parent. In this case a parent should not just be the biological father or mother, but anyone older or in a position of leadership.

This may not be very easy especially in the urban areas where individualization has grounded itself and parental responsibilities appear to be fading away, or taken a different perspective all together and in some cases long forgotten. All the same, it is possible to re-capture it through the following:

- a) Formation of good leaders has to start in our homes where the children we are bringing up have to be introduced to simple duties and responsibilities right inside the house. All the work should not be left to the

house-girls. These children should help with cleaning and wiping services or even assisting their fellow siblings where needed. They should always be made to recognize and respect both their elders and those who are their juniors in all matters. Where they have members of other tribes living around them, they should be made to address and refer to them as Kenyans and not with the tribal affiliations. It is therefore the responsibility of the parents to ensure that our children are well disciplined, advised and encouraged to grow up with love and respect to all in the society.

- b) As we try to place parents where they belong, we need to have at the back of our minds that today's children are the parents of tomorrow. As mentioned above, we should not forget to empower and enrich them. As a child grows up, it is very important to instill strong parental values right from childhood through educational seminars and workshops. These should reflect and dwell on good parenting and the place of a parent in the life of a child right from the lower primary to the highest institutions of learning. This will help children in such homes to internalize the good roles of parenting in such a way that by the time they grow up, they will already have learned to appreciate parenting with all its challenges. They will already be grounded and convinced how important it is to be a participant in the life of your children.
- c) For those entrusted with school curriculum, we need to evaluate our studies and see where we can re-introduce subjects that re-awaken us to the authority and the role of parents especially in our society. At this level, it is important to revisit some of the abandoned subjects such social ethics and religious education where moral values and citizenship education was encouraged. We need to integrate them, among other subjects in our school syllabuses for the formation of good leadership.
- d) All our teachers at different levels of education also have a responsibility to sensitize the entire society as they socialize with them in various forums. Parental responsibility and values attached should be given priority among other issues, especially during school parent and committee meetings. When possible, our teachers should also lobby the government to give considerable thought, especially over parents when posting them to work far and wide and hence avoid frequent transfers that destabilize parenting.
- e) We also need to encourage our media at all levels to come up with programs where enlightened parents can address the general public or come in as role models on good parenting. These programs should be used to promote and portray good parenthood for transformational leadership and development. As supported by traditional parenting in our African traditional communities any true transformation has to involve the parents and the family / society at large. As a child grows up, the first educators are the mother and father who lay the foundational stones in life. These are the ones who know their children well enough and therefore need to be encouraged to take their parental responsibilities with commitment and devotion. Parental involvement while bringing up children needs good support for all people of good will.

f) Finally, we still have to insist on self awareness where parents themselves are not just involved but are convinced on how important they are to their children and to the society in general. This has to be a communal responsibility portraying parenting as a national goal and objective and thus, according it highest priority among all citizens. No doubt, our people are dying for lack of knowledge. If parents were supported, empowered and equipped with the knowledge and potential values of what our children need and then placed under favorable conditions, they would to a great extent be ready to nurture our children to our nation's satisfactory level of productive leadership and governance.

Experience has shown that children learn a lot from their parents as they grow up. The famous twentieth century slogan and theory holding that a section of our people were born leaders actually holds no water. All what we need is the care, attitude, time, resources and effort in forming our children as potential leaders and goal achievers through focused and good parenting. To keep the fire burning, we also need to sustain our diligent goal oriented and hardworking leaders so as to remain mentors and instruments of admiration to our young upcoming generations.

5. Conclusion

In every sector of the human life responsible leadership is very important. Without it, the world would be turned upside down with all the treasures in any given country reduced to past tense. It takes bad leadership for a country's forty years of investment to be reduced to ashes. Even the simplest things in life need good leadership. Today, a lot is said about leadership and the future of our African countries and in particular Kenya, but the journey towards achieving this as already established, is less explored. Many people would wish to have a change, but few consider the change as beginning with themselves especially as parents.

This paper has explored how parents should play a mighty role in changing our leadership by forming good leaders right from our homes. Borrowing from our African traditional cultures, it credited responsible parenting for good leadership while highlighting what is referred to as black spots and which have affected the parental role in leadership especially in our country Kenya. The writer was able to look at changes in the education system; disintegration of extended families, privatization and individualization effects, uncontrolled media effects, alcoholism and drug abuse, corruption and tribalism effects. Whereas this is a reality in our country today, much is highlighted especially on the ways in which we could counteract these effects and still be able to come up with responsible leadership where parents remain the tool for change. Thanks to the many parents who sacrifice day and night to accompany their children in life as this is one great step towards responsible leadership and development in our country. And to us all, my invitation that each one of us set time beyond our busy schedules for our children and families. We are both the change and tools of change urgently needed by our countries wherever we are. And to

the working mothers, kindly face the challenge of parenting head on.

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