

HEALTHY FAMILY LIFE: A SINE QUA NON FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This study aims to raise awareness of the importance of enhancing family life and strengthening the family unit for the sustainable development of African society. When the family, the most significant social unit, is threatened, sustainable growth cannot be achieved. The central theme of this study is the importance of a healthy family life as a contributor to societal development. Parents in the society are now downplaying family values and ethics, which is considered as one of the main problems contributing to a number of troubles that are emerging in the society. This study demonstrates that poor parental involvement is one of the social elements that foster unhealthy family structures, which has serious negative effects on sustainable development. The paper x-rayed the passion that people now have for work in order to satisfy human wants and the neglects for home fronts thereby creating large gap in building virtues and moral life of their family members. In order to have a balanced and healthy society, that is free of stress, full of maximum productivity and conducive family living, it is crucial that work ethics and family life be given the desired attention in the society. This research demonstrates how important it is for parents to raise morally sound, well-educated children, which highlights the importance of striking a healthy balance between job and home life. The paper therefore conclude that every home should endeavour to uphold the sanctity of family life in order for the society to have sustainable development.

Key words: *Family-Life, sustainable Development, virtues, moral, society.*

Introduction

The quest for self-fulfilment, self-actualization and the desire to meet up with the current socio economic has become the cultural mainstream and challenge to the family life and values in the contemporary society. This has had deep impact on the quality of individual growth, family life as well as sustainable development. The family which is the micro unit of the society have

been affected significantly. This is evidence in the increase of divorce rates, worsening problems of juvenile delinquency, heartbreaking parent-child conflicts among many others. Some of these challenges relate to economic crises as well as natural and manmade disaster. These challenges apparently affect the well-being of the affected families and consequently affect the sustainable development of their respective societies all things being equal. Albeit, a healthy, intimate, harmonious, well balanced family life, raising well cultured and morally balanced children is a crucial factor for sustainable development of society. It is noted that healthy family life and environment can be the solution to the negative social outcomes as well as achievement of the sustainable development goal. Hence, this study qualitatively and descriptively examined healthy family life as a sine qua non for sustainable development of African society. The descriptive approach is used in this study as it helps adopt accurate facts on the current circumstances, dedicate important relations and interpret data. Daleen (1985) is of the opinion that descriptive approach is sometimes the only way to study social situations and aspects of the human behaviour. This approach suits the current study that seeks to describe the nature of healthy family life and describe how it can provide solid foundation for sustainable development in the society.

Statement of the problem

This study seeks to provide answer to the following questions:

1. What is the concept of healthy family life?
2. What is the concept of sustainable development?
3. What is the role of healthy family life in achieving sustainable development?

Objectives of the study

The study is an attempt to:

1. Explain the concept of healthy family life
2. Describe the concept of sustainable development
3. Discuss the role of healthy family life in achieving to sustainable development

Significance of the study

This study is significant because it provides the important roles of healthy family life in achieving sustainable development in the contemporary society. It reveals the crucial features of healthy family life and how they promote sustainable development from family level. More than one party can benefit from the study, including parents, educators, and family counsellors; researchers in the family, educational institutions, as well as trainers in family.

Conceptual Clarification

Terms such as healthy family life as well as sustainable development are conceptualized in this study for clarification and better understanding.

Healthy Family Life

First of all, a family is a nuclear or extended social group that God formed through blood, marriage, or adoption. It is a close-knit group of individuals connected by legal, sexual, or blood ties. It is the smallest social unit in the society yet the most important one. (Oko-jaja, 2020:361). Healthy family life refers to a happy, comfortable, intimate, harmonious, warm and well-balanced family life. “Healthy” in this context is not limited to the medical definition, it involved the harmonious relationships and successful functioning of the family towards meeting needs regardless of problems. Therefore, according to Lin and Chen (1987: 199), In order for a family to be considered healthy, it must be able to deal with stress, be able to function at its highest level, and be able to meet the demands of daily life while also developing a sense of positive family identity, satisfying and fulfilling interactions among family members, and the potential for family stability. A happy, loving, and cohesive home is one where the parents’ model good behaviour through open communication, effective dispute resolution, and defined roles. It is a family where each member is important, valued, respected, supported and esteemed regardless of their sex, dispositions, capabilities or weakness. It is worthy to note that healthy family is a concept that can be operationalized, observed, and measured and studied empirically. Meanwhile, this study focuses on the interaction between and among family members for sustainable development of the society.

Sustainable Development

According to the concept of sustainable development, human societies must be able to meet their needs without jeopardising the ability of future generations to do the same. The welfare of family members is taken into account. A brighter and more sustainable future for all is envisioned in this blueprint. In order for society to continue to exist over the long term, it must be organised in a sustainable manner. In this paper, the idea of sustainable development is viewed as enhancing lifestyle and well-being while protecting natural resources and the environment for both the current and future generations. It is becoming clear that any society's future depends on its people's capacity to reach their full potential and have the chance to lead fulfilling, productive family lives. The family is crucial to the health and happiness of society and its citizens. (Cortese2003:22). How can we meet today’s needs without comprising the

ability of future generations to meet their own? The sustainable development answer that question.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), often known as the Global Goals, are a set of 17 interconnected global objectives created to serve as a blueprint for a better, more sustainable future for all. The UN General Assembly created the SDGS in 2015 for everyone. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development envisions a society where everyone is treated with dignity and respect for their rights, as well as shared economic success based on equality, non-discrimination, and the rule of law (Gulay and Ahmet, 2012;114). Sustainable Development is a way of organizing society so that it can exist in the long term. With this explanation, sustainable development is taking into consideration of both the imperatives present and those of the future, such as the prevention of the environment and natural resources or social and economic equity. The problems the world faces today are so great that no one country, person, or organisation can tackle them on their own. As a result, the entire human race must work together to find solutions. The goal of sustainable development is to ensure that many people work together to address the world's challenges. (<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment.org>. Retrieved on November 27, 2021).

Features of Healthy Family Life

Every healthy family has similar features that effectively bind and integrate the family and promote development in the society. These features according to Phylis (1994:9) include: Appreciation and affection, good communication, Commitment and support, Trust and sense of spiritual well-being, quality and enjoyable time together, and ability to manage stress and crisis effectively.

Appreciation and Affection: Being admired by others and receiving affection are fundamental human needs. Mutual affection and respect are highly prevalent in healthy families.

Good communication: Effective communication fosters a sense of community, lessens frustration, and strengthens marital ties. One crucial self-discipline in communication is to focus on listening to the other person with respect and attention. When a family enjoy humour together, it shows how well-connected they are to one another and fosters a feeling of belonging.

Commitment and support: Family is like an entity consisting of numerous interconnected organs; it has life and vitality. These interdependent organs, which represent the various responsibilities in the family, must function, coordinate, and support one another for a family

to be deemed healthy. In order to maintain family wellbeing, family members' mutual support, collaboration, and obligations must come before everything else, including hobbies and job hours. A strong foundation can be created when family members pledge to support and be there for one another by investing their time, effort, and compassion into the family. Family objectives could be stated in a flexible manner that allows for change. Healthy families also provide its members with emotional support as well as a sense of security through emotional attachment, identity, and feelings of worth and self-worth.

Trust and sense of spiritual well-being: Family members share a common value orientation as well as similar life meaning, missions, and goals when there is trust and spiritual well-being. It encourages family members to be more understanding, and accepting of one another. Experience has shown that when family members engage in shared interests and values, it strengthens their emotional closeness, cohesion, and support for one another. Spiritual wellbeing and trust in a shared purpose and set of values are important components of healthy families. Such families are interested in the wellbeing of society as well as the welfare of their own family.

Quality and enjoyable time together: Family members can communicate their values, thoughts, wants, and appreciation through spending quality time together. A happy family learns to manage their time so that time does not control them. It takes planning to ensure that you have a good time; it does not happen by accident. Healthy families frequently partake in common activities including going to church, taking vacations as a family, playing games, and shopping. The explanation is that happy families understand the importance of spending fun, high-quality time together.

Ability to manage stress and crisis effectively: Every family experience problem, according to a well-known proverb. No exception applies to the healthy families. Families in good health confront a variety of challenges, but they are able to face reality and work through stress and crises in a calm and reasonable manner.

Family and Work-Life Balance

According to Prasad, the idea of work-life balance originally appeared in the UK in the 1970s (Prasal 2012, p. 104). The idea did not gain widespread acceptance in the United States of America until 1986, when work-life balance regulations started to emerge, in part as a result of an increase in workers neglecting their families in order to achieve organisational goals (Lockwood 2003, p. 6). The emphasis on work-life balance extends beyond helping family

members to encompass other facets of human existence, such as keeping track of employees' trips, academic pursuits, extracurricular activities, volunteer work, leisure time, and personal growth. To replace work-family balance with work-life balance is based on this idea (McDonald and Bradley, 2005, p. 110).

In order to prevent role pressure from the work and family spheres, the idea of family and work life balance was developed (Carnicer, Sánchez, Pérez, & Vela 2002, p. 175). The demand for balance results from the tension between the family and work realms, which leads to the formation of roles that may be incompatible and challenging to balance. This results in a person's having low levels of both work and personal satisfaction, as well as stress that lowers quality of life. (Adams King, King, & King, 1996, p. 411). Hence, in general, work-life balance refers to the lack of conflict between the work and personal spheres. (Grzywacz, and D.S. Carlson 2007, p. 455).

The achievement of personal and professional objectives depends heavily on striking the right balance between work and family life. (2012) Prerna, p. 136. Maintaining a healthy and balanced life is crucial since work-life conflict can lead to issues in the family such as a lack of commitment, dissatisfaction, and ineffective stress management (Veiga, 2010, p.10) It is clear that achieving work-life balance requires effectively managing and balancing demands arising from familiar and productive areas, avoiding the degradation of job quality, and assisting in raising personal life satisfaction. It may be challenging for people to maintain a good family life if they are enmeshed in complicated and rigid work schedules and structures that prohibit them from concentrating on their family's requirements. In this instance, it should be underlined that policies promoting work-life balance cannot be successful unless they complement a corporate culture that places a strong emphasis on work, family, and personal values, together with managerial support. (Carnicer, Luis, Sánchez, Pérez, & Jiménez, 2002, p. 28).

The Role of Healthy Family life in achieving Sustainable Development

The concept of sustainable development refers to a holistic development that focuses on progress in economic, socio-cultural, as well as environmental fronts. It is frequently said that “the family is the driving force behind social progress and development”. Because a strong family is the foundation of a morally upright and socially cohesive society, the importance of healthy family life in attaining sustainable development cannot be understated. It is more likely

that children nurtured in a secure environment by godly parents would develop into godly, morally upright individuals who will uphold strong family values and support the social and economic progress of their neighbourhood. Sustainable development is thus typically defined as the process of enhancing a society's quality of life over two periods of time. The family, the smallest unit of society, must learn how to use all of its resources while protecting those of future generations in order to increase its wealth and quality of life in the modern environment brought about by the constantly changing social, cultural, and economic conditions. With such constantly changing living conditions, maintaining a decent level of living and removing barriers to family wealth are essential for a healthy, ideal, and ideal family life and for raising children. As a result, a sustainable development would maintain the vibrancy and quality of family life as well as the workforce's physical and mental health as well as the social and structural fabric of society. The family acts as a vehicle for passing down to future generations the moral principles, tenacity, and traditions necessary for upright citizens and the progressive communities that support civilizations. According to Kofi Annan, who contributed to the aforementioned statement, "the very achievement of development goals rests on how well families are empowered to contribute to the fulfilment of those goals." Hence, measures emphasising family welfare will undoubtedly be beneficial for development. As shown by the six sustainable development goals, which include reducing violence, ending poverty, and promoting gender equality, health, and education. All of these issues may be positively addressed by well-crafted family-focused policies. To put it another way, it is essential to invest in and safeguard the family institution by developing and putting into practise pertinent policies that support them as a fundamental element that play a significant part in attaining sustainable development. Healthy families aid in eradicating poverty, advancing gender equality, good health care, and ending violence in society. Undoubtedly, other factors—such as a change in perspective, the growth of moral character, and a change in way of life—are associated to the evolution of a nation. spreading awareness of these values through an example lifestyle that would ultimately result in a godly nation. (Oladapo, 2018, 56).

Cultural Development Role

A significant and basic ethical and human cohesion factor is embraced by the cultural idea of sustainable development. As it relates to how people perceive and value natural resources as

well as one another, culture is a crucial component of sustainable development. The primary driver of social, economic, and cultural development is the family.

Educational Development Role

The process of learning and teaching is called education. Which is a lifetime process that includes formal and informal teaching and learning. Family has significant direct and indirect contributions to making sustainable development a reality. While children reside at home, family participation in education is most noticeable. The ability of a child to function well in school will be significantly impacted by the family's capacity to offer a safe and nurturing environment that meets the child's physical and psychological requirements. As significant as social and cultural resources are, a parent's education, dedication, and time spent on their child's informal and formal education can also have a big impact on the child's education. Education is a lifelong process that focuses on knowledge acquisition in order to increase life chances and gain access to information in areas like health, food, and nutrition as well as productivity. The family is at the centre of this educational process, which aims to achieve sustainable development. Many studies have shown a connection between family, social, and economic resources, as well as children's academic success. The family is primarily responsible for the upbringing, education, and socialisation of children as well as for teaching civic virtues and a sense of social responsibility. Families care for and support their members both materially and emotionally. Leading happy, prosperous lives is more likely for children who are raised in healthy households. In order for families to play their part in sustainable development, assistance is required.

Emotional and Personality Development Role

The family is essential to a child's emotional development since it is an important part of human growth. All facets of identity and personality development are included in emotional development. The family's environmental and genetic effects have a significant impact on a person's personality and sense of self. The influence of the family on a child's personality development also extends to the growth of emotional and behavioural self-control. The degree of parental response and participation in the child's life has an impact on the child's capacity to regulate emotions and emotional reactions.

Spiritual Nurturing Role

A key parental responsibility in the home is the spiritual growth and change of the family. Ayinde contends in his argument that parents should use every opportunity to introduce their

children to Christ instead of being stiff, formal, and religious while imparting their beliefs to them (Ayinde, 2014, p. 48). Every parent should make it a priority to raise their children in the fear of the Lord through effective spiritual upbringing and nurturing, according to Ayandokun, who contends that the responsibility of teaching children to appreciate life and God must not be abandoned because doing so eventually results in godliness and the fear of God (Ayandokun 2012, p. 319).

Social Development Role

Societies are where people live. As a result, individuals must grow physically, cognitively, and socially in order to adapt to social circumstances and settings. Family life lays the groundwork for societal development. It starts in childhood and continues all throughout adulthood. The connections and social behaviour that a youngster exhibits with his or her parents at home directly predict the relationships and social behaviour that child will exhibit as an adult. Several facets of a child's social development will be influenced by the relationship between parents and their offspring. Young children will often look to their parents as a sort of social referencing when they are unsure of how to react to confusing situations. By emulating their parents' actions, the children will learn how to behave appropriately in social situations.

Moral Development Role

Moral development is the process through which children pick up values that help them judge certain behaviours as right and others as wrong and guide their own behaviour according to these values. It also entails developing pro-social behaviours, or means of acting in a compassionate, cooperative, helpful, rescuing, consoling, and giving manner towards others. Moral formation occurs as a result of parental impact on a family's children (Nnubia N.P., 5). By modelling for and instructing their children in moral behaviour, parents foster moral development and a high degree of moral reasoning in the family. Families can provide an example for their children by acting with honesty, diligence, courage, forgiveness, thankfulness, tolerance, integrity, love, and respect, among other virtues. It is essential for parents to instil these principles in their children at home in order to help them grow up ethically and socially. According to Akande, parents have a duty to instil good religious and moral values in their children's minds during their formative years (2015, p. 250). Undoubtedly, other factors—such as a change in perspective, the growth of moral character, and a change in way of life—are associated to the evolution of a nation. By modelling these values, one can influence their family and community, which will lead to a godly nation in the end. Parents

should do everything possible to ensure that they live right before their children, settle difference in a way that will not affect the future of the children and all the wards in their care (Oladapo, 2018, 56).

Conclusion & Recommendation

This paper has examined the importance of healthy family life in achieving sustainable development. Every family therefore should as a matter of utmost importance consider the need for upholding family values, maintain work-life balance and thereby ensuring the development of the society. Therefore, the study recommends that parents, religious institutions, government and every stakeholder in the society should give proper attention to the family institution. Policies and programs that aim at strengthening the family, directly contribute to the sustainable development of corresponding societies should be implement.

The government can end poverty, the most difficult obstacle to achieving sustainable development, human dignity, and societal cohesion, by providing grants and microcredits to families to enable them to start income-generating projects as well as by developing and implementing a balance between work obligations and the family requirements for achieving family connection and cohesion. Furthermore, healthy families are necessary for the creation, nurturing, and growth of well-rounded, morally upright, and socially robust individuals through good upbringing, which is a prerequisite for sustainable development. As such, there is a need for government to ensure full and effective implantation of policies that are healthy family oriented.

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