



What Have We Done Wrong? The Cry of Today's Youth for Attention

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Opinion

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Abstract

Every society expects good behaviour from its citizenry. Society applauds behaviour which conforms to set norms and customs. Deviant behaviour is frowned upon and sometimes punished. The motive behind this is for people to live peacefully in all societies so that they can fully realize their human potentials.

In this sense, agents of socialization and formation are expected to help new members of society to take up the values of such societies. Families, schools, training institutions, churches, mosques etc. have greater roles to play in this regard. They play this role of socialization generation after generation. Failure to play this role as expected leads to a generation of miscreants and deviants.

Youth of today are the most criticized of all times. Most of these criticisms are about their general approach to life. These condemnations are slapped on their faces by the most powerful in the society -the elderly, parents, teachers, religious leaders etc. They are condemned as immoral, disrespectful, incorrigible, drug peddlers and addicts, alcoholics, rude and unruly, undisciplined, criminals and all the negative adjectives one can think of. Society judges these young ones without giving a moment's thought to the source of these negative tags. Were those we blame, shame and tag with all negativities born with such negativities? Are young people of today just a bunch of negative traits? What accounts for the negativities we see in them? This article explores especially the role of the home and parents in the plight of the youth.

The Context

Let us try to contextualize the situation, looking at the environment in which these young ones are verbally and emotionally bastardized by the very people who are supposed to help them grow into responsible adults of our various societies. The context is the 21st Century which has seen lots of technological advancement. The 21st Century is the Information Age in which information travels at lightning speed. We are in an era where no one can hide information from these young ones as it used to be in our times. The Internet has made information available to all who desire to know. It is the age in which the whole world can be

imprisoned on a screen. We are talking about a situation where whatever happens in the remotest part of the world is no more hidden from the eagle eye of the youngest of this generation. It is the age of globalization. Worse of all, it the age that has witnessed the greatest societal neglect of young people, shrieking their responsibilities.

We are also looking at a context in which top executives loot public coffers, leaving society in shambles. We are living in an era where the truth is exchanged for falsehood and falsehood is crowned as truth, an era where falsehood reigns. Worse of all, we are in an era where so-called agents of socialization freely do the very wrong things they speak

against in the presence of those they are to socialize, exposing young people to all forms of abuse, violence and crime. The list of immoral and evil deeds by the elderly in the society is endless yet young ones are condemned to hell every day. Is it because they are the most vulnerable in society? Perhaps that may be the answer.

The Family and the Home

The family and the home are the first agents of socialization. Each one of us is ideally born into a family that provides us home, a welcoming environment in which we live and grow into fully mature and responsible adults. Parents provide love and support to new members of the family and welcome them with care, making their stay on this earth enjoyable. Other family members help parents in this project. Psychologists posit that we are not purely products of nature but of nurture also. This means that the environment in which we live and grow contributes significantly to what we become in the near or distant future.

Parents have greater roles to play in what children become. It is pitiable when parents now turn to blame others for the misfortune of their children which results from their own failure to provide the right environment for their children to grow into responsible adults. Childbearing and parenting are not just biological functions every male or female should fulfill. They carry greater responsibilities towards the perpetuation of society. It is about time people understand that the future and wellbeing of society undeniably lies in the hands of parents and families. Every responsible adult comes from a particular home or family. The opposite is true.

When one examines critically Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, it is obvious that parents have loads of work to do. The first four needs-physiological needs, safety needs, love and belongingness needs and self-esteem needs-are key to character formation and socialization. They are the engines that propel young people to success in society. Young people form characters in the context in which they live. When the home environment is not conducive enough to support the life society expects from these young ones, do we turn around and demonize these young ones?.

Let's all examine the hundreds of problems associated with parenting in this modern world. Parents would sincerely acknowledge the fact that most of them have failed

their children in terms of upbringing. This failure may be conscious or unconscious and is mostly due to the shift in the global economic situation. Work dynamics have changed and most working parents have shifted their parental roles to either house-maids, grannies, teachers or some others. We must remember that no other person can train or form your child more than you would have wished to do. Some parents leave home very early for work and come home very late when their children are already asleep. It is thus possible that some parents have no interaction with their children for some days within the week all in the name of work and the quest for money and other material benefits. Children as young as three (3) months are not getting the needed love and attention from their own parents. This situation is pitiable and a big blow to parenting in the modern world.

Most parents have become tyrants who will not give a little space for their children to interact with them. Some children fear their parents. I can't simply fathom this! If children are not able to open up and discuss issues freely with their parents, who should they discuss their upbringing challenges and difficulties with? Any available person who will be ready enough to open up and listen to their concerns and challenges. A rough survey among senior high school students indicate that more than 95% of students cannot openly discuss their sexuality with their parents or their guardians. How do these young ones seek answers to the tens of questions that confront them about their sexuality? It's not only about their sexuality but other mind-boggling problems that confront adolescents.

With this situation, do we have the moral right to condemn these young ones to hell? We have woefully failed in our duties as parents and should seek to make amendments by showing more love and care to these young ones instead of demonizing them and condemning them to hell.

Conclusion

From the above, it does not take much analysis for one to see how society and parents and guardians have failed the youth and at the same time turned to blame and condemn them to oblivion. We must accept our failure and mop up strategies to help our younger generation grow into responsible adults. We as adults need to live responsible lives and help our youth do same. We all have roles to play in this.

