

Folktale In Nigeria: The Moral Values In Guddiri Oral Literature

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Abstract: Every society has norms and values through which the younger generation acquires their socialization. These norms and values should be safeguarded or else the socialization process may be affected. The ways of safeguarding the tradition and culture differ from one society to another. However, due to the dynamism of life, values and norms change, our traditions are carelessly being changed: causing damage to the upbringing of children. Guddiri is one of such settlements faced with the similar challenge. The settlement has its headquarters at Azare, Bauchi state, one of the states seriously affected with the insurgency of Boko Haram. Folktale is therefore identified as one of the instruments used in safeguarding the integrity as well as discipline, morality through the oral tradition of the society in the past. Accordingly, this paper tries to explore some moral values harvested from the Guddiri Folktale. It also observed with dismay the way this valuable gem was being endangered and therefore resulted in present rampant indiscipline and immorality witnessed in our society among which is the monster of Boko Haram. Suggestions towards rehabilitating Folktale of Guddiri society were made.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Moral values are many and common to each and every society. Integrity is one of the commonly acceptable universal moral values. Green (1973) as cited by Ahmad (2006) defined integrity as "being transparent and trust worthy in words and deeds". It has to do with honesty, and self discipline in all spheres of life. Values associated with integrity include honesty trust, respect fairness, and responsibility. These items are non-cognitive and are sometimes described as Emotional intelligence since they refer to abilities. Competencies and skills which influence one's ability to success in coping with the environmental demands and pressures. The values have all potentials to enhance the outcome of citizenship of a person. Without stakeholders imbibing such values, chance of any potential product that would ameliorate the survival of a given society would be slim.

Guddiri Folktales are full of moral values such as integrity but regrettably, the performer and the audience lagged behind and rendering this literature genre to be extinct. Ironically, the neglect of this important aspect of literature is coming at the time many innocent people; including children, women and school-girls are brutally killed and some abducted in neighboring settlements of Guddiri: and partly in Guddiri area itself.

II. LITERATURE

Literature is a mirror of life. Literature is a veritable arm of culture which can function as a crucial frame of expression, explaining, explicating, and understanding of people within a given reference point of their social history. Literature attempts to depict man and his environment within a creative mode. Every race must have its own literature.

Guddiri literature could be perceived, as work produced for Guddiri audience by Guddirawa: the people of Guddiri and Guddiri languages such as Hausa, Kare-kare Leranci, or Fulfulde and either oral or written. It could also include literary works written by others in non-Guddiri languages like Arabic, English, French, or German. It may be said to encompass works written by others but with their backgrounds and contents in Guddiri.

III. ORAL TRADITION

Koko (2009) quoted Toms (1846) asserting that oral tradition forms an integral part of the culture of any group of people. There had never been a society that did not have a heritage. Even the recognized advanced countries have their oral traditions. The oral traditions of Guddiri are generally used to hand down from one generation to another, the basic elements of the people's culture.

These cultural elements are in form of Folklore which are passed through the words of mouth. It is therefore pertinent to discuss Guddiri Folktale because of its immense contributions to Guddiri people's life. Notably literacy in Arabic existed in Guddiri land before the arrival of the white man but the emergence of literacy in the Western form helped in documenting Guddiri Folklores. Consequence upon the existence of western education Guddiri oral literature was eventually boosted. This development was championed in Hausa by the works of Ibrahim Yaro Yahaya and revived by Bukar Usman. The oral tradition of Hausa/Guddiri was documented by these two outstanding figures. Weed for examples in possible. The stories handed down to us is known as Folktales of which Guddiri has a share.

IV. IMPORTANCE OF FOLKTALE

It should not be seen as an over emphasis to say that Folktale in Guddiri community is the mirror of the total life of people. A part from the entertainment we derive from Folktale, Guddiri people derive enlightenment on the way of living with one another in a cordial relationship. This entails educating the people how to live with their clansmen as well as how to go about with the alien people. It is the folktale that alerts the people on how to adjust with any condition the member finds himself. It teaches the Guddiri children discipline and good ethics that are recognized in the wider society.

Folktales also points to the taboos of the community so that young people shun away from them. The tale informs the children how to be brave, self reliant, and threatens them from becoming arrogant or lazy. it also serves as a forum for the masses to lay their complaints against their tyrant leaders and admonish them on their tyrannical leadership. Even members of a family could use Folktales to caution one another on certain unruly and uncultured behavior that may emanate from a member of the family.

This is not withstanding, tradition and culture are preserved through the Folktales. This is manifested where an actor is praised when conforms to the accepted values of the society and the deviant being suffered and satire in the story. Folktales serves the purpose of keeping the performer and the audience away from boredom after the day's chores are completed (Koko: 2009).

From the Foregone we can deduce that the Guddiri oral literature performs the following:

1. Entertainment

Entertainment as buttressed by Mustapha (2012) is seen as the principal role of played by the Folktales. This is probably due to the fact that the narrative is performed during the night period. This agreed with the time when people retire from work and other day activities. You would see children laugh with tears over hearing certain folktale and it renders them forget the tedious work they attended to at the day time, so they go to bed as fresh energy comes back to their body. The role of Folktale is beyond entertainment.

2. Security

The old use the Folktale narratives to control the movement of their children and the children in turn feed secured when they are very close to their parents. The parents know the where about of their sons and daughters, since the narrative take place at the nearby old woman's apartment or the home of a neighboring bride.

3. Encourage Self Reliance

It enlighten the youth to be vibrant in their struggle to earn a living and people should not be passive. No matter how week is somebody, he should attempt doing things by himself. Gizo and Jummai of the Agadas prince are good demonstration.

4. Provision of Wisdom

Folktales teach us wisdom. People should not procrastinate in taking decision for fear that one can make a costly instate as it happened to the king lion who drowned himself in the well.

V. TIME AND PLACE OF PERFORMANCE

The Folktale in Guddiri is usually performed during the night time. Normally, it is given to the young children old women in a particular family or nearby house. In some instances, the narratives take place at the bride's house. It was even threatened that making the performance during the day time, renders the doer lost his way back home. The children do go to the place of performance almost after dinner. The time, they arrived, the adult men are out at the door house trying to re unite and enquire and recount their day's experiences and prepare for the next outing. The narratives ended around ten o'clock in the night where the children would asked to retire for sleeping until tomorrow.

Sometimes even brides lead the performance sometimes. When not comfortable would ask some aged children to make the narratives on her behalf. The listeners are girls and boys (without any bias) but the narrators are female. The children return home with memory of the teaching of the Folktale given and many a times this instill the moral lesson derived from the tale. So Folktale is the first educational institution attended

by the children of Guddiri and by implication every Hausa and Hausa related children attended the Folklore school before any form of educational institution; religious or western. They first acquire this form of education which prepare them for the traditional education, Qur'anic education, or western education. They learn ways and manners of interactions among themselves and interact with some other people outside their clan. They learn about cooperation, togetherness, tolerance and term work. Folktales prevent children from going far away, let alone putting themselves into risks.

VI. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Since this study is about Folklore, it is being guided by the Folkloric school of thought. The theory is relevant to this work because it enables the writers to document and study the verbal materials of Folklore tellers of Guddiri community of Hausa in relation to their being custodians of the societal norms and culture. The history, culture, tradition and beliefs of Guddiri people in general are studied through an examination of their Folklore and oral tradition.

VII. DATA PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION

Folk Tale I: Gizo and the Wild Animals

Gizo, after recovering from illness felt a craving for meat. He decided to pull a trick by distributing kolanuts to all the animals inviting them to a feast at his house. He promised each one of them not to invite their 'enemies'. On the day of the feast, the hen came first and was killed by the dog. The hyena killed the dog and soon after, the hyena was also killed by the leopard, which was in turn killed by the lion. In the end, the lion engaged in a fierce fighting with the elephant. Gizo at last put chilies powder in the eyes of the fighting animals and soon closed their eyes and he killed them with his sharp knife. He then asked his wife Koqi to collect the carcasses and grilled them for him.

(adopted from Ahmad)

Gizo was a typical illustration of the Guddiri common man. The name given to the spider in a trickster tales. The spider is always depicted as weak and lazy, but wise and cunning related to the noble and strong animals like lions and elephants. In the first tale, Gizo honoured the animals, praised them and lured them to death while he survived. For instance he lied the animals for festivities whereby he promised them heavy feast. He tricked them and got the meat that would help him early regain his strength. The stronger animals killed and ate the smaller ones while the bigger one fought eyes closed and Gizo took that advantage and slaughtered them and got more than enough meat for him.

The story tried to show us how the less privilege survive among the nobility class. It is also manifested in the tale how many people become opportunists. One could be a good critique of the leadership of the society but if chanced to rule, will be worse than the former. They loot the public treasury beyond anticipatory demands. On the other side, the ruling class appear to be fools and unwise to think beyond the contextual situation. This is why the bigger animals were seduced to death as the prey of the spider.

The tale here encouraged Guddiri people to send their children to Qur'an school but with precautions. The story told us that since time immemorial, some rapacious and greedy Ulama involved in child-labour and human trafficking activities to the extent of annihilating them. It is now the dubious act we witness in our children who were sent to Almajiri schools where they are being labored unnecessarily and end up in death or becoming vagabonds instead of obtaining the Islamic education which is the target of the parents.

Folktale 2: The Prince of Agadas

"Agadas prince met a young peasant girl coming home from fire wood. He was impressed by her manners and decided to marry her. Unfortunately during their courtship period he became ill. The illness was due to juju made by her step mother. Because of love and promise keeping, the young woman went in quest for cure of the sickness. She was told to get the tail of an ogre who was a dangerous and deadly monster. However, the girl risked herself for the survival of her boy friend. After a long suffering she was able to obtain the medicine and succeeded in curing the prince where he vomited ninety nine Juju needles. The palace wanted to reward the poor – Almajiri – Doctor by giving him (because they think her as male) the half of the continent but refused to take anything. All what she demanded were the ring of the prince and a promise to honour the Almajiri who cured him. The prince complied. After some days, the prince recovered and set to go and kill Jummai his girl friend. Unknown to him she was the one who cured him. When he brought the sword to kill her, she showed him the ring and asked him to withdraw his intention in respect of the Almajiri. He enquired of how she came about the two elements; ring and the statement. She recounted to him the episode, and he took her to his father the king and introduced her. They were married and a great feast was held. They lived a happy and prosperous living."

(Yahaya 5:1 – 25)

In the second tale, we have seen how a low profile girl was raised to the status of a princess. The integrity she showed admired by the prince and resort to marry her. On the other part, here humbleness makes

he to sacrifice her life in search for his cure. We could see that promise keeping saved the girl from the sword of prince who intended to kill her because he was thinking that juju was done by her intentionally. But when she mentioned the doctor – almajiri is name to him he succumb and calm down, by asking her how she came to know about the almajiri-doctor.

Folktale 3: Water of Cure

There was an orphan girl whose mother was dead. Her step mother maltreated her. The step mother was having a daughter. The daughter waqs notorious. However, all misconduct by the daughter was being lodged upon the orphan girl. In one of the occasions the notorious girl urinated on a hides skin. But the orphan girl was asked to take the hides to the river water of cure and wash it.

The orphan girl set for the mission. She crossed seven rivers before she found the water of cure. She would ask the other rivers whether a particular river is the water of cure. The river would answer her it was not the river but the other was ahead. She was near the river and there came the rainstorm. Fortunately for her she raw a hut. She entered the hut and she met a talking leg on the chair and a dog by its side. The girl Salamed them and she was welcomed. She was given a due hospitality.

After the rain, she was directed on how to go to river of cure. She successfully washed the hides and returned home with two eggs given to her by talking leg. After cracking the eggs at near home she obtained boxes of gold and the other horses and servants to carry her belongings. Upon seeing the orphan girl with a lot of booty, the step mother asked her daughter to go for the river of cure to washed a hides skin too. The girl went, but the misbehaved on her way and refuse to respect the talking leg and the dog. At last she was escorted to her home town by lepers and this and the people of the town deserted her. The mother died of hypertension due to agony.

The third tale shows how child maltreatment by some step mothers was common among Guddiri community. However, the sufferd child usually excelled and become famours as it happened to this orphan; while a repercussion of the child abuse is shown on the people who maltreated the child. The repercussion is usually befall the children of the tyrants or the cruel people themselves. Many a times, the maltreated child when grown up became the mentor and helper of the step mother and her children.

In this tale the girl child suffered, but became rich at last. This was due to her respect for others which is one of the moral values that Guddiri society admire. Although the talking leg could not communicate directly to her, the interpretation by the dog which is also a disrespected animal in the society, the girl accepted and obey. Her obedience fetch a great wealth which the has no comparison in her community.

VIII. MORAL VALUES DERIVED

Koko (2009) claimed that politics could be realized from the Hausa tales. In a similar occasion, the Guddiri Folktale would yield politics in them. For instance, the promise made by Gizo that he would make a big feast to the animals, replicate the kind of promise our politicians do us. During the campaign, they promise us heaven but after the election we would not know their whereabouts. In the animal world of Guddir folktales, the lion is considered as the king of animals who always appear to be a tyrant leader. The king and his countiers are very few, but strong animals over powering the smaller ones. Like our politicians, they always serve their own egocentric interest not the interest of the masses. The powerful leader exhibits power often by coercive means. They were the minority but govern the majority, the *talakawa*.

Sometimes, the majority become fed-up with the way they are being ruled and retaliate against the ruling class until they died and the masses jubilate as it happened to the old lion, king who was promised one of the lesser animals for his everyday feeds. It was the canny have who planned and executed the death of the tyrant lion. On hearing the news, the rest jubilate around the ditch – well which the lion jumped down and never be up. In the same vain, many of the ruling class fail to identify the blunders they commit in their administration until they were overthrown by their situational intricacies. There would be a day or time when the downtrodden would gang up and retaliate against any leader or politician who refuses to bring home their dividend of democracy.

From the narratives we can see that a lot of moral lessons are manifested. The Guddiri narratives have very rich culture which are not only educative or entertaining but also train the young ones to be wise and courageous through oral narrations that involve powerful animals. The culture and the tradition of the people of Guddiri are worth learning.

- In the fist tale we were told how everybody should try to be a productive citizen in the society. The peasants should struggle to earn means of living. They should not be docile and dormant.
- Gizo tale also enlightens us on the question for knowledge. Parents should train their children at the tender age. The training should be at one's hometown not send to almajiri. Going to almajiri schools leads to child abuse.
- The second tale encapsulates moral lesson like promise keeping and modesty and courage from the girl friend of the prince of Agadas.

- Respect for the views of other people. The king listened to almajiri doctor even though the doctor was not in any royal or bojour regalia and that led to the cure of his only son.
- The last but not the least taught us the moral lesson on child upbringing. One should be kind to a child no matter what the relationship. This is because one does not know whether the child would become rich as it happened to the orphan girl.
- We also witness in the last tale that respect for others is a key to success. The girl-orphan could not have succeeded in finding the rive of cure and the fortunes the brought home.

IX. CONCLUSION

From the analysis of the narratives above we can see that Guddiri folktales in Hausa inculcate discipline, honesty, truthfulness good character, and moral upbringing, consciousness of safety, and obedience to societal norms and values. Unfortunately this valuable gem of literature seems to be neglected by the greater number of the community members. This is because some feel that it is a drawback to sit down the children and tell them these kinds of tales due to its origin from the local people. Our so called western educated women reject the genre and consider the performer as illiterate and a low profile human being. Some hide under the auspices of the religion and called the genre lies which is prohibited by the religion. This is not the kind of lie prohibited by religion, after all three forms of lies are recommended by the religion.

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