

## Parenting in Ephesians 6:4: A Viable Option to Reducing Social Vices and Promoting Socio-Economic Development in the Niger Delta

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### **Abstract**

*The Niger Delta region is blessed with human and natural resources and serves as the abode of multinational oil companies. The presence of human and natural resources with multinational oil companies within the Niger Delta region ought to benefit the people and their land to a great extent through the provision of basic social amenities and infrastructural developments. However, the reverse is the case as the Niger Delta region suffers so much from environmental degradation and other debilitating challenges and these in turn have resonated increase in youth restiveness and other social vices such as illegal oil extraction also known as kpo fire, vandalism of oil pipe lines, sea pirates, cult clashes, kidnapping for ransom, armed robbery among others. In the face of these social vices many promising youths lose their lives, properties worth millions of dollars are destroyed and socio-economic activities and infrastructural development are stalled in the region. Who should be held responsible for the negative actions of some aggrieved youths in the area? The government, parents, youth or society? What proactive steps can be employed to reduce social vices in the Niger Delta region for socio-economic development of the area? It is against this backdrop that this paper examines parenting in Ephesians 6:4 as a viable option to reducing social vices and promoting socio-economic development in the Niger Delta. The paper employs the socio-historical and descriptive methods, and argues that upbringing of the children to forestall social vices lies solely on proper parenting as charged in Ephesians 6:4. The paper maintains that the upbringing of children to abate societal vices lies primarily on parents. The paper recommends that rather than abandoning the upbringing of children in the hands of house helps and other attendees, parents should properly train their children and also be good examples to them in all ramifications.*

**Keywords:** Ephesians 6:4, Niger Delta, Parenting, Social Vices, Socio-Economic.

### **1. Introduction**

Over the past decades the Niger Delta regions have been experiencing myriads of social vices. Dominant among the social vices is the upsurge in illegal oil extraction also known as

kpo fire, vandalism of oil pipe lines, sea pirates, cult clashes, kidnapping for ransom, armed robbery, lynching, murder, cult clashes, destruction of lives and properties by most youth within the locality among others. The upsurge in these social vices and insanity masterminded by most youth in the region have not only stalled the growth of the youth in all spheres of life; repelled most residents of the area from accessing their natal homes and other facilities inherent in their locality but have also impinged on the socio-economic and infrastructural development which the region would have benefitted as one of the host communities of multinational oil companies like Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited (SPDC), Elf, Mobil, Chevron, Agip among others. Similarly, rather than improved socio-economic and infrastructural development of the region, there is a crescendo in poverty, lack of fundamental social amenities, economic wastes, environmental degradation among others. Who is to be held accountable for these noxious attitudes of the youth which have in all ramifications defied the sanctity of human existence? While some school of thought attribute the rise in social vices among youth in the Niger Delta region to the failure of successive government in fulfilling their cardinal responsibility to its citizens by providing the basic amenities needed for human survival and provision of employment to the teeming youth population etc, others attribute the ascent in social vices as a result of the influx of technological advancement in the society and negative peer pressure. Contrary to these views, some schools of thought attribute the rise in social vices by the youth in the Niger Delta region to parental negligence or poor parental training.

Against this background, this paper examines parenting in Ephesians 6:4 as a viable option to reducing social vices and promoting socio-economic development in the Niger Delta. What is parenting and social vices? What are the causes and effects of social vices in the Niger Delta regions? Does Ephesians 6:4 which is part of the household tables or codes that give advice to the members of the household about proper behavior within the household have any implication to parenting? How can parenting as reflected in Ephesians 6:4 aid in reducing social vices and promoting socio-economic development in the Niger Delta? Moreover, what are the roles of parents towards the upbringing of their children to forestall social vices and promoting socio-economic development? These issues and more are the main thrust of this paper. The paper employs the socio-historical and descriptive methods and argues that proper parenting of children as exemplified in Ephesians 6:4 is a viable option to reducing social vices in the Niger Delta region for sustainable development. The paper maintains that the upbringing of children to abate societal vices and to achieve the United Nation sustainable development goals (SGDs) 2030 in the Niger Delta lies primarily on parents. Consequently, the paper recommends that rather than abandoning the upbringing of children in the hands of house helps and other attendees, parents should properly train their children and also be good stewards to them in all ramifications.

### **The Niger Delta at a Glance**

The Niger Delta region comprises of people from Rivers, Bayelsa, Akwa Ibom, Cross river, and Delta states. The region is blessed with abundance of crude oil deposit, good land, climate and is the abode of International Oil Companies (IOCs) like Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited (SPDC), Chevron, Elf, Agip, Total, Mobil among others. These multinational oil merchants are domiciled in the Niger Delta region mainly as a result of the discovery of huge oil deposit discovered first in Oloibiri, a town in the Niger Delta region (precisely Yenagoa Bayelsa state) and subsequently in Afam (in River's state) and other areas of the region. The discovery of the enormous oil deposit in the Niger Delta region has facilitated the exploration of oil and gas in the region for over five decades thus advancing the financial and economic status of the Nigerian nation but to the neglect of the

goose that lays the golden egg. Ideally, the presence of the rich natural resources and other multinational oil companies in the Niger Delta region ought to benefit the people and their land to a great extent through the provision of basic social amenities such as good road network, portable drinking water, electricity, educational facilities, internet, health care services, creation of employment opportunities and other infrastructural developments. However, the reverse is the case as the Niger Delta region suffers so much from high rate of poverty, underdevelopment, infrastructural decay, poor social amenities, environmental pollution such as oil spillage, black soot, water and air contamination due largely to harmful substances emitted by numerous industrial companies in the region into the ecosystem (Amadi-Nche, and Wobodo, 2023).

Nkwocha and Ginikanwa (2020) buttressing the point above assert that the unearthing of oil in Olobiri in 1956 which changed the economy of the Nigerian nation for good has contributed less to the socio-economic development of the Niger Delta region. They aver that the economic and social historians are in conformity that the Niger Delta declaration rights and other policy reports made by the Niger Delta indigenous people suggests that the enormous income made as a result of oil exploration has not benefitted the Niger Delta people and their land rather the resources, incomes and profits are mostly used to develop other geo-political zones and regions while the Niger Delta region that contributes to the wealth of the Nigerian nation is highly neglected. They infer that although the federal government of Nigeria had constituted commissions and ministries such as the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), and Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs (MNDA) to collaborate with the multinational oil companies in the region to see to massive development of the area in the provision of social amenities, creation of job opportunities and other infrastructural developments. However, the level of deterioration, poverty, and infrastructural neglect is alarming. Consequent upon the neglect by multinational oil companies and the federal government of Nigeria through her commissions and ministries to improve upon the lives of the people in the Niger Delta region and their land, there is an upsurge in conflict, myriads of social vices by youth in the areas such as sea piracy, militancy, kidnapping/hostage taking (of expatriate, students, lecturers etc), armed robbery, drug abuse, illegal oil refining among others which have not in any way aided socio-economic and national development. Conversely, granted that the federal government of Nigeria and the multinational oil companies in the Niger Delta region has failed in the provision of the basic amenities for the teeming population in the Niger Delta region through creation of job, improved schemes and other viable socio-economic and infrastructural development, should youth in the Niger Delta region stoop so low to engage themselves in unwholesome activities just to make a living? Where is the place of parenting for self-reliance, civility and moral inculcation? The next section will provide insight to these posers.

### **Conceptualising Parenting and Social Vices**

Oso (2020) remarks that parenting which comes from the word parent from the Latin root word *paren* or *pareo* does not only mean to give birth but involves providing not only for the child's physical wellbeing, but also providing warmth and security to ensure good psychological adjustment, discipline for moral development, and stimulation for intellectual growth. She notes that not every woman who is delivered of a baby or every man who fathers a child is qualified to be called a parent. This is because parenting has been described as the most perplexing and multifaceted of all the tasks of adulthood. She further submits that there are three basic responsibilities of parents towards their children namely: academic, moral and spiritual development. Besides, she avers that the precise duty of the father is to provide the physical needs as well as the spiritual and moral needs of the family; protect and guard the

family by ensuring that the family is safe and secured and have enabling environment that will promote proper growth of the children and to aid in procreation. This implies that the father serves as a role model, an embodiment of discipline and generational continuity. On the other hand, the mother serves as the first educator of the child and care giver to every member of the home, ensuring that the right virtues are instilled on the children from infancy to adulthood. Parenting means training the young child on the right morals for self-reliance. It also means giving care, support rearing children by the parents from infancy to adulthood. One of the definitions of parenting is that it is the process of promoting and supporting the physical, emotional, social, and intellectual development of a child from infancy to adulthood.

The Cambridge English dictionary defines parenting as the raising of children and all the responsibilities and activities that are involved. Britannica dictionary sees parenting as the process of raising children and providing them with protection and care in order to ensure their healthy development into adulthood while Collins dictionary defines parenting as the raising of children and all the responsibilities and activities that are involved in it. In the views of American Psychological Association, parenting practices around the world share three major goals namely: ensuring children's health and safety; preparing children for life as productive adults; and transmitting cultural values. Parenting plays an important role in rearing children and building character and imbibes values in the children during the process of rearing. Some of the important roles parenting plays are to build character of the child: It is said that the parents are the first teacher of a child while the school teachers came later. It is the parents who build the character of a child and impart values to the child. The child is considered as someone whom the parents can shape the way they would like. Other importance of parenting is to build a good society: A good society can be built with the help of responsible children and youth. A disciplined and well-organized society can be built with the parents who groom their children properly and who subsequently help build a good society.

Parenting is important to make children future responsible citizens. Parents are not only to build character but also teach manners, ethics and other values which are critical to responsible citizenry. Good parenting is essential for reduction of crime and antisocial activity in the society. Parents are instrumental in promoting education among the children which later on help them to get a job in either the government or private sector. This reduces crime in the society. Inculcate good manners: Good parenting inculcates good manners among children. It is said that the parents are the first teachers of a child. Therefore, parenting is very much essential for building character and inculcating good manners among children. One of the main objectives of parenting in the current globalized era is to produce obedient students. Their role is to behave responsibly in the classroom and respect teachers and carry along with other peers. Good parenting can be helpful to produce responsible youths who can play an effective role in nation building.

Conversely, social vices refer to conducts or actions that are considered ethically wrong, damaging or unacceptable by society. Social vices are practices, behaviours or habits generally considered corrupt, sinful, rude, taboo, criminal or degrading in the society. The word 'social' is derived from an English word which means 'relating to the society' and 'vice' is derived from a Latin word which translates 'defect or failing'. Thus, Social vices are extremely bad immoral behaviours that constitute a nuisance to the society (Ariyo, 2017).

Jointner (2016) adds that social vices are forms of immoral, criminal, and terrific behaviours in the people. He notes that they are social glitches and have been thought of as social

establishments that a large number of viewers feel are unsuitable and need treating. Islam, Abubakar and Bello (2023) on their part notes that social vices are those actions that disturb societal rules and values. Social vices are also defined as a negative behaviour that is in contradiction to societal norms. It is very uncommon to find an institution annulled of social vices. This reveals that social vices are rampant in educational institutions as well as other social centres. Social vices are very common predominantly among young people even though adult males and females do engage in it too. In the Niger Delta region as in other clime of the world, social vices such as kidnapping for ransom, rape, cultism, drug abuse, political thuggery, pipe line vandalism, robbery, sea pirate among others persist. Most of these social vices plague the society and assuage socio-economic and infrastructural development. They also oftentimes have negative impacts on individuals, families, communities and posterity. What are the causes and effects of social vices in the Niger Delta region?

### **Causes and Effects of Social Vices in the Niger Delta**

There are lots of causes of social vices in the Niger Delta region which has impacted negatively on the Niger Delta people and their land. While some of the causes are linked to poor leadership ability of government and insensitivity of multinational oil companies in the Niger Delta region, others are associated with parental negligence; negative peer influence, poverty, lack of employment and modernity. These causes of social vices in the Niger Delta area and their effects on the people and their land are discussed below.

#### **Poor Leadership**

Poor leadership by successive government (military/democratic) in the Niger Delta region and the insensitivity of multinational oil companies to the plights of the Niger Delta people and their land in providing basic social amenities and infrastructural development of the area is a major cause of social vices in the Niger Delta region. The act of poor leadership by successive government in the region which is characterised by denying the Niger Delta people the privileges of benefiting from the resources endowed in their land and the insensitivity of multinational oil companies to the plights of the people in the provision of basic social amenities, infrastructural and human capital development has led to the rise of militancy and other agitators in the Niger Delta region. Even though the Niger Delta region harbours oil wealth and other natural resources, the area lacks basic social amenities such as good roads, portable water, schools, hospitals, electricity, internet facility among others. Unfortunately, rather than perceived basic amenities and infrastructural developments of the area, the Niger Delta region is frequently engrossed with oil spillage and other environmental hazards which adversely affects the people, aquatic habitat and the ecosystem. Consequently, the nodding attention of successive government and multinational oil companies in the region in the provision of basic amenities and infrastructural development of the area have enabled the abduction of several expatriate and other oil workers in the region necessitating the payment of huge sum of money for their freedom from captivity. Besides, as a result of poor leadership and insensitivity of multinational oil companies to the provision of basic amenities for the people and their land, most youth in the area resort to become thugs and societal nuisances which constitute a major setback to the development of the nation (Amadi-Nche, 2020).

#### **Lack of Employment**

Dishion et al (2002) remarks that lack of employment is a situation whereby a person of workable age, willing and able to do work is unable to secure a paid employment. Lack of employment for the teeming population of youth in the Niger Delta region despite being

academically and physically fit and hailing from a region that harbour multinational oil companies constitute another cause of social vices in the area. As is always said in the popular adage “An idle mind is the devil’s workshop”, If youths who could have been fully employed and busy contributing to the development of the Niger Delta in particular and the Nigerian nation at large, find themselves being idle, they cannot but start to think of any means of survival even if it means resorting to crime. Apart from resorting to crime, they look at themselves as second class citizens who are unable to contribute to the growth of the Nigerian society. The lack of unemployment of youth in the region has led some to now engage in crimes such as armed robbery, banditry, kidnapping, militancy, sea pirate, vandalism of oil pipe line, fraud, violent associations and demonstrations for monetary gains from corrupt politicians who engage them to do dirty jobs. It is important to state that lack of employment can cause depression, aggression and can lead youths into drug abuse, disruption of serene environment and other forms of social vices (Islam, et al 2023).

### **Parental Negligence**

Another cause of social vices in the Niger Delta region is parental negligence. Most parents these days are too busy to give attention and discipline where necessary to their children. Many parents are most times not available for their children. While they pay teachers, nannies and house helps to play their parental responsibilities, they spend long hours out of the home in the name of making ends meet for the family. Consequently, parenting which involves not only giving birth but also giving warmth and security to insure sound psychological adjustment, discipline for moral development, and stimulation for intellectual growth, is not achieved. On the other hand, inactive participation of most parents in the day to day affairs of their children’s upbringing such as talking to them on delicate issues, supplying answers to their questions, going on site-seeing with them, telling them stories with moral instructions and giving them a sense of security and confidence contributes to moral depravity in this age of technological evolution.

Deji (2020) remarks that the most trying periods of a child’s life is the adolescent period, which is the time between childhood and adulthood. This period is characterized with growth and manifestation of some maturity traits in the physical and mental formation of the child. At this stage, the youth feels that they know all, can do all and should be left to make decision for themselves, thus, lack of attention and lack of adequate discipline by the parents at this stage could lead to waywardness. Admittedly, Oso (2020) opines that intentional single parenting must be discouraged at all cost. This is because there is a limit to which a single parent can satisfactorily care for a child. Many single parents are often stressed up and battling with their own psychological problems which weakens them from giving attention to their offspring’s needs. The joint effort of the father, mother, extended family, school and the larger society is essential to make the formation of the youth reasonable. When parents pay less attention to the training and proper upbringing of their children; are unable to provide the basic needs of their children such as clothing, food, housing, education among other, the child/children are prone to social vices such as prostitution, stealing and other social vices in order to survive. Similarly, parental permissiveness (allowing children to go wherever they wish to go, even club night, party of all kinds), and being absent from home or harsh parental attitude towards the children can make them become violent and prone to vices.

### **Poverty**

Poverty is also a reason for prevailing social vices affecting the Niger Delta, Nigerians and many other countries. Poverty refers to a state of complete lack of minimal income of livelihood. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) recently released the 2019 Poverty report

of Nigeria which highlights that 40 percent of the total population, or nearly 83 million persons, live below the country's poverty line of 137,430 naira yearly. This gives birth to occurrence of high participation of its people in illegal actions such as corruption, political thuggery, kidnapping, robbery, and all types of social vices. Poverty as an idea may not be new in the world's history book but the consciousness of it, is relatively new as a result of the economic breakdown, civil conflict, ethnic catastrophe (Ibia, 1999).

### **Modernity**

Information and communication technology devices, such as the internet, cell phones, computer, hardware, software among others when used wrongly by the youth is another causative factor leading to social vices. Through constant and unregulated viewing, these devices have the capacity to expose and corrupt the indiscreet minds. Young people could be encouraged to imitate crimes, wrong dressing and behaviour seen on the screen. Therefore, the continuous exposure and access of youth to pornographic internet and social media sites with their peers help to increase the rate of crime as well as moral depravity amongst them. This is adduced because some of the sites accessed in the internet have moral devaluating inclinations. Information and communication technology devices, applications and services while on one hand seem to bring people together, on the other hand create social isolation. Thus, social isolation could lead to a host of sensitive, mental and physical problems which include anxiety, depression, somatic complaints among many others.

### **Negative Peer Influence**

Peer group has been identified as a very effective medium of education among youth in the sense that youth seems to trust and confide in their peers more than any other person including their parents. Grenz (1967) avers that the peer group serves as a first learning group after the family. He explains that the children relate with people of their age easily, that is why they are easily lured into several depravities by their peers. Youth learn a lot of things among their peers particularly things they do not have access to in their family. Peer group gives them the chance to become independent and it also offers free interaction in which at times they code words and use argot which are mostly understood by the young people alone. Peer group plays a prominent and influential role in the moral education of its peer. It regulates the behaviour of each member and makes them amendable to the opinion of the group. However, when the group ideology and disposition is evil, the youth or child becomes corrupt leading to societal nuisance and contributing to social vices.

### **Historical Milieu of Ephesians**

The letter to the ephesians is unique in its presentation, composition, style and language. Ephesus was a proud coastal city which boasted of its status as the first and greatest metropolis of Asia on numerous inscriptions. Because of its strategic location both on land and by sea, the city became a major centre of international trade and communication, with sea traffic from the Aegean in the west, the Bosphorus and Dardanelles in the north, Palestine in the East, and Egypt in the south. When the Epistle to the Ephesians was written, Ephesus had been under Roman influence and control of Roman leadership. Under Roman administration, the city greatly flourished and prospered and, along with having a harbour on all major sea routes in the eastern Mediterranean, was placed at the head of the Roman roads into the interior, facilitating communication and commerce with the new cities founded there. Besides being the seat of Roman provincial government, Ephesus also served as an intellectual and economic capital and was a major religious centre as well, being home to the Temple of Artemis, or Artemision, a site of international pilgrimage considered one of the seven wonders of the ancient world (Belz, 2019). While some biblical writers uphold that Apostle

Paul authored the epistle others sustain that it was composed by a follower of Paul. According to Best (1988), if the letter was written by Paul then it was written while he was in Roman prison. Carson and Moo (2005) remark that if it was not written by Paul, it must belong to the immediate post-apostolic period, but there are no criteria for locating it with precision. Irrespective of the indispensable debate about the authorship of Ephesians, most biblical scholars hold beyond reasonable doubt that Apostle Paul is the writer of the epistle to the Ephesians and that the epistle was composed between 60-90 AD possibly earlier or subsequent to the collapse of the Jerusalem temple. The location and time of composition is contentious by biblical writers due to the dispute of composition of the epistle.

Ephesians chapter 5:22-6:9 falls within the biblical text often referred to as the *Haustafeln* or household code. *Haustafeln* is a German word for household tables or codes that give advice to the members of the household about proper behavior within the household. Kenner (2014) writes that ancients used such codes to express what their culture regarded as virtuous relations within the family. In Paul's day, many Romans were bothered by the spread of religions from the East-for instance Judaism, and Christianity, which they thought could undermine the long-established Roman family values. Members of these minority religions repeatedly tried to show their support for those values by using household codes, a standard form of exhortations developed by philosophers like Aristotle. These exhortations about how the head of a household should deal with members of his family often break down into discussions of husband-wife, father-child and master-slave relationships. Paul borrowed this form of discussion from standard Greco-Roman moral writing. Towner (1993) remarks that the household codes' aim was to encourage a mode of social conduct that was highly regarded in the eyes of those outside the church. Thus, Ephesians chapter 5:22-6:9 is divided into three parts, the first part of the text addresses the duties of wives and husbands (Eph. 5:22-33) while the second part deals with issues about how parents are to relate with their children (Eph. 6:4) and the third section states the duties of slaves and masters (Eph. 6:5-9). In all this divisions, the thrust of this paper is on the second section of the *Haustafeln* which centres on how parents should deal with their children or the relationship between parents and their children (Eph. 6:4).

#### **Analysis of Ephesians 6:4**

Ephesians chapter 6:4 remarks "and you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord" (NRSV).

Matthew (1960) remarks that Ephesians 6:4 reveals the duty of parents towards their children. He avers that children are part of their parents, and so ought to be governed with great care and love. He states that when it comes to caution, counsel and reproves of children, parents must do such in a manner as not to provoke their children to wrath, endeavouring to convince their judgments and to work upon their reason. He further remarks that it is the responsibility of parents to be careful in the education of their children. Education of children as remarked by Matthew must be for physical, emotional and spiritual stability. Martin (1979) notes that Ephesians 6:4 displays a fathers duty towards his children in the negative and positive sense. He remarks that parents are warned against irritating their children by nagging which may lead to their exasperation. He reveals that parents are called to desist from irrational behaviours towards their children; rather than nagging their children, parents are enjoined to train them by disciplining them where necessary.

Turaki (2006) in analyzing Ephesians 6:4 avers that while children are charged to be obedient to their parents by honouring and respecting them (Eph. 6:1), parents however are commanded not to make irrational demands of their children; hence they are commanded not

to infuriate them. It is adduced that children who are exasperated by such irrational demands may be rebels, and rebellion leads to godlessness and any child who has experienced this kind of unreasonable attitude from parents may be difficult to win back to the Lord. Thus, fathers (which are a representative of parents in general) are to be kind hearted and understanding in relating with their children. She maintains that the fundamental task of parents is to train their children in righteousness and exercise appropriate discipline where necessary in order to forestall moral decadence. She further allude that parents must be interested in the physical, psychological, emotional as well as the spiritual wellbeing of their children for them to be better representatives in the home, church and larger society.

Alamu (2019) on his part notes that Apostle Paul exhortation in Ephesians chapter 6 begins in an unusual manner in that he first instruct the children to obey their parents (6:1-3) before giving instructions to parents on what is expected of them towards their children (6:4). He further remarks that while the first part of Ephesians 6:4a “and you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath”, states what parents should not do, the second part “but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4b) reveals what parents should do. He remarks that Apostle Paul in Ephesians 6:4 admonishes parents not to be harsh on their children in other not to provoke them to anger. He infers that parent must avoid attitudes, words, and actions which would drive their children to wrath, exasperation, or bitterness and thus rules out unreasonably harsh discipline, demands, abuse of power, nagging, criticism, brutal treatment of children and all forms of gross insensitivity to a child’s needs and sensibilities but they are to bring their children up in the fear of the Lord and also provide for all their needs. This includes their physical, mental, moral and spiritual needs until the child/children reach the age of maturity or independence.

Contextualize reading of Ephesians 6:4 for socio-economic development of the Niger Delta  
As previously stated, the Niger Delta region is blessed with abundance of crude oil deposit, good land, climate and is the abode of multinational Oil Companies. However, over the past decades the region has been experiencing varieties of social vices championed by some youth within the region which have impinged on the socio-economic and infrastructural development of the region. Consequent upon these prevailing vices, this section seeks to contextualize Ephesians 6:4 for socio-economic development of the Niger Delta region. Therefore, the paper submits that for a sane and harmonious Niger Delta society that is free from all forms of social vices and for socio-economic development of the Niger Delta region, the place of proper training and teaching of the children on the do’s and don’ts of the society must not be down played or taken with levity. Parents within the Niger Delta environment and the larger society must ensure the proper upbringing of their children, discipline them where necessary and be consciously committed to such discipline to ensure that the children represent the family well in the society. On the other hand, the children must be willing to accept such instructions and discipline from their parents for their own personal growth and for a better Niger Delta society and Nigeria at large. Relatedly, parents must be ready to provide for their children the basic necessities of life such as clothing, accommodation, feeding, education among others. Parents must refrain from excessive procreation but plan to give birth to only numbers of children they can provide for and take full responsibility for the numbers of children birthed. Parents must not be absent from home always but be present at homes always to give instructions, guidance, direction, support, protection, security among others for daily sustenance.

Apart from training through moral instruction for uprightness which is inevitable for societal sanity parents must ensure that their children are exposed to skills acquisition, entrepreneurial

and vocational studies such as tent making, baking, painting, sculpture, drawing, photography, fashion designing among others in order to be self-supportive and self-reliant for socio-economic development of the Niger Delta region. Besides, parents are to refrain from wrongful and abusive use of words which could trigger their children into negative acts and actions. Alamu (2019) collaborating this view submits that parents must avoid attitudes, words, and actions which would drive their children to rage, exasperation or resentment and thus rules out unreasonably severe discipline, arbitrarily harsh demands, abuse of authority, arbitrariness, unfairness, continuous nagging and condemnation, subjecting a child to embarrassment, and all forms of uncivilized insensitivity to a child's needs and feelings. Moreover, for a Niger Delta region that is devoid of social vices parents must be role model to their children by instilling in them moral virtues such as love, honesty, respect for constituted authority, hard work, faithfulness, loyalty, patience among others. This is to forestall increase in social vices for socio-economic development of the Niger Delta region. In other words, parents must practice what they teach their children and not "do what is say not what I do". It is instructive to note that parents who defraud their employers, misappropriate funds and manipulate figures at home or in the public services in order to beat taxes are teaching the young ones the wrong precedence and must desist from such.

Alamu (2019) remarks that good parenting is a major yardstick for the reduction of crime and promotion of socio-economic development in the Niger Delta area. He notes that most children raised on the principle of Godly parenting are not associated with crimes, domestic violence, addiction and others vices but are linked to a healthy, stable family life, strong marriages and societally accepted conduct. Thus, while making frantic effort to instil discipline on the children, negating harsh and provocative attitudes, parents must ensure that they live together to raise their children with the fear of God, avoid the risk of single parenting with its negative effects or abandoning of the child for upbringing by care givers/nannies. This is because most children rose by single parent; care giver or nannies often get involved into social vices.

## **2. Conclusion**

This paper examined parenting in Ephesians 6:4 as a viable option to reducing social vices and promoting socio-economic development in the Niger Delta region. Having examined the Niger Delta at a glance, the paper emphasized the causes and effects of social vices in the Niger Delta region and ways to mitigate such vices in the area. Primarily, the paper submits that to forestall the prevailing cases of social vices in the Niger Delta region, parents has a lot of work to do in terms of training and parenting. The paper maintains that the upbringing of children to forestall social vices lies solely on proper parenting as charged in Ephesians 6:4. Thus, the paper calls on parents in the Niger Delta region that rather than abandoning the upbringing of children in the hands of house helps and other attendees, they should properly train their children, provide the basic necessities of life for them and also be good examples to them always in all spheres.

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