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The Ignorance and Apathy of Nigerians Today.

‘How is it my business?’, ‘It doesn’t concern me.’, ‘As long as it doesn’t affect me, it’s not my business.’

These are all phrases commonly heard by any Nigerian trying to bring up an intellectual argument about the problems in the country and in the world. Nigerians today believe that once something does not affect them directly then they shouldn’t get involved in it forgetting that, in a society, everyone is affected by a problem. As the saying goes, if one finger is soiled with oil then the remaining fingers will be soiled too.

Before going on, it is important to define the two key words. Ignorance, according to the Oxford Dictionary, is ‘a lack of knowledge or information.’ The Cambridge Dictionary defines it as the ‘lack of knowledge, understanding, or information about something.’ Apathy, on the other hand is the ‘lack of interest, enthusiasm, or concern,’ according to the Oxford Dictionary. Merriam-Webster defines the word as a ‘lack of feeling or emotion,’ and a ‘lack of interest or concern’.

From that, we can establish that ignorance is not having and not wanting to have information or knowledge and apathy is not caring or not being interested. A joke describes the

difference between ignorance and apathy as the distinction between the phrase ‘I don’t know’ and the phrase ‘I don’t care.’

In a continuously growing and changing world, it is important to remain informed and, in a society, participation is important. However, Nigerians tend to ignore the fact that the world is changing. They enjoy sticking to the old ways, to rules that simply just don't apply in this modern world. The basic principles of human rights, to Nigerians, don't apply to those with lifestyles that don't fit their definition of normal. Nigerians start by being ignorant about the entire situation, then shift giving nonsensical or condescending opinions about it when they are forced to acknowledge the situation before finally stopping at nonchalance and apathy.

For example, many Nigerians don't believe the Corona Virus Pandemic that has taken the lives of millions of people over the past few months. Yes, the infected people's cases may be little in this country compared to others but it still exists. Frontline workers have taken to the internet to complain on how they are being called liars although they have infected patients to look after, NCDC call operators have shared stories about being cursed at over the phone because they are apparently working together with the government to keep people from making a living. The fear of death has made some Nigerians take the quarantine and lockdown seriously but on the occasion that one has to leave their house, they will notice that people are still going about like nothing is happening. And, when asked why they are not at home, the typical Nigerian will answer in broken English ‘what African man doesn’t know will not kill him.’

Another example can be cited in the issue of rape in Nigeria. Many people don’t care who gets sexually assaulted or raped if it’s not someone close to them, forgetting that when one is silent in a case of oppression they have taken the side of the oppressor. The ignorance and

apathy of Nigerians in this case and other cases of injustice has appropriated rape culture amongst other vices.

What are the repercussions of ignorance and apathy on the society? Firstly, it increases the time it will take to get welcomed change. The strength of a nation is in the unity of its people and this unity and cooperation is hindered when Nigerians remain ignorant and then, apathetic to situations that affect them indirectly.

Also, it appropriates the discrimination of other human beings, encourages abuse and leaves societal vices to reign as such things can not be changed without everyone in the community actively fighting against it.

Moreover, ignorance and apathy brings about corrupt government as those liable to vote will not exercise that right, therefore leaving room for corrupt government officials to remain in power.

To solve the problem of ignorance and apathy in Nigerians is both a general and individual effort. Institutions, NGOs and the government can start up reform programs to educate the people on the importance of being well reformed and proactive.

Another way we can take care of this cankerworm is by informing our friends, helping them stay informed and encouraging them to be proactive in situations that demand it. Minding ones business can only go so far, if it affects the society, it is everyone's business.

All in all , individuals are implored to self evaluate and ascertain their contribution to the root of the problem. If yes, then they should resolve to become the change they need for themselves and for the society at large.

Ignorance and Apathy are cankerworms Nigerians suffer from, by coming to the realization that our dysfunctional society cannot become anything but, without the willing re-evaluation and change of our own dysfunctional patterns, we can hopefully solve our problems and become a better nation gradually.