

WORK.

WORK IN AFRICAN TRADITIONAL(ATS) SOCIETY/CHARACTERISTICS.

In ATS, everybody was a worker, elders; children, men and women had to contribute to the development of a family through work. Idlers and loiterers had no place in ATS because it was only through work that people earned a living.

Work was aimed at provision of the basic needs of life like food, shelter etc. this made people to have a spirit of hard work but at the same time not be slaves of work.

Work was divided according to sex and ability of the people. Each person knew his or her role because they were clearly defined. Men were responsible for hunting, building etc while women were responsible for cooking food, home care etc. this limited the competition at work.

Work was taught gradually right from childhood. It was the duty of the parents to teach the young ones the value of work. Boys were taught by their fathers and uncles while girls were taught by their mothers and uncles.

Work was communally done and it was done for community development. Activities like harvesting, planting, cultivating, were communal and this promoted the spirit of togetherness. For example among the Bahima in western Uganda, cattle rearing was done as a group.

Work was done with religious significance. The gods were put into consideration while working i.e people prayed to the gods before working, during work and after work. For example among the Baganda, the hunters made sacrifices to their god called Ddungu with major organs of hunted animals and giving bones to dogs as a sign of appreciation.

There was personal/ individual supervision while working. There were no bosses at work which provided freedom and harmony at work. Everyone would decide when to start work, how to do it and when to stop.

Work was for free and where it was paid it was in form of food. The selling of work for salaries and wages was not part of the African Traditional society; this was because the society was not monetary based as paper money was not in use.

In ATS, work was manually done i.e. it was done with the use of hands unlike today where machines are used. This embraced everyone in different activities like farming, fishing etc.

Work was balanced with leisure. There was no specific time put aside for leisure, but alongside work people would carry out leisure for example fishermen would sing while fishing and this helped to make work enjoyable.

People in ATS, worked from their localities (home areas) and tribal communities. This helped them to develop their areas and eliminated cases of discrimination based on tribe. Cases of working overseas or far away from their home areas were limited.

The division of labour gave women several core works, that made them to have much more work and to work almost all the time, like gardening, looking after children, home care, and preparation of meals compared to men with almost one major work like hunting, fishing, home building...

Work in traditional Africa was done for the development of skills and talents, every work would be done by those with specific skills in it like black smiths, back cloth making, iron working or smelting and they were identified for that particular talents or skills.

MODERN ATTITUDE TOWARDS WORK (PATTERNS OF WORK TODAY).

Today young people look for white collar jobs such as accounting, teaching, nursing, etc basically to work in offices, so they despise manual work such as slashing, farming, etc because they think it is for the uneducated people.

Today work is paid for i.e. people receive salaries in return for labour or work done. It is hard to find people carrying out voluntary work because of the development of the monetary economy.

Work is geared towards the development of an individual and his immediate relatives rather than development of the community i.e. there is a lot of individualism in work today due to influence of urbanization, greed and selfishness.

There is a lot of laziness among the youth in society today. They have a negative attitude towards work, taking it to be a curse. This makes them dependants, loiterers, hence forcing them to engage in pick pocketing, sex abuse etc in order to survive.

People today work in order to get luxuries like expensive cars, posh houses, phones etc. This has made them slaves of work hence neglecting their families.

People today are employed under strict rules, supervisors or bosses and work is timetabled i.e. many people can't do work when they are not told. This reduces one's efficiency at work.

The competition for work is common and stiff. Men and women do the same jobs unlike African Traditional Society where men had their specific work and women also had their own types. This leads to hatred, envy etc as people are fighting for greater positions in society.

Work today is highly abused through practicing corruption, bribery, tribalism etc. Many people misuse their offices for selfish motives. This has seriously affected the religious aspect in work, working for general development etc.

In order for a person to get work in modern society, he/she needs to undergo formal training which takes long. Those without academic qualifications find it hard to get jobs.

There is use of advanced technology which has made work easier and more efficient hence high productivity since most of the work is done by machines like computers, tractors, phones etc.

Today people work far away from their home areas, they go overseas in Europe, Asia, America to get higher paying jobs which causes problems like risky jobs, home sickness, loneliness etc.

The religious aspect in work has been ignored in modern society. People concentrate so much on work and forget God i.e. they don't pray on Sunday, they don't give back to God after work like it was in ATS where people used to sacrifice to gods.

Most people have become work oriented to the extent that they have neglected their families. They work from morning to evening and ignore their children and partners at home causing family instabilities.

There is a lot of unemployment today because people are job seekers rather than job creators due to lack of creativity and innovativeness. The education system is so theoretical and this makes people fail to start their own jobs.

CHANGING PATTERNS OF WORK. (Differences between ATS and present situation understanding of work.)

In ATS everyone was a worker either in the family or in the community therefore work was compulsory while in the modern society work is optional (people are free to work or not). That is why there are many wrong doers due to idleness.

In ATS work was free of charge while today work is paid for i.e. workers are paid salaries or wages for work depending on their activities to ensure their survival.

In ATS work was communally done while today it is individually done. Africans participated in activities like harvesting, cultivation, as a community; in the present society, such activities are done individually to fulfill individual needs.

In ATS, work was divided according to sex, age, and ability while today both men and women are competing for the same work based on their qualifications i.e. both men and women can be ministers, teachers, nurses etc.

In ATS work was manually done i.e. done with hands while today's work is done using machines like tractors, computers etc. due to modern technology.

In ATS, children had to take careers of their parents while today's children take on work of their own choice depending on their professional qualifications.

In ATS, work was balanced with leisure while today people work and neglect leisure to catch up with the increasing costs of living as well as the demands of their work and responsibility like the security personnel who has to keep guard almost 24 hours.

In ATS, work was taught right from childhood while today people are taught their careers during school and influenced by individual interest which may be biased.

In ATS, there was religious significance in work where people consulted gods while working where as today religion is completely separated from work which leads to lack of God's blessings hence failure.

In ATS people worked to get basic needs of life while today people work to get basic needs and luxuries as well, to improve on their standards of living.

The fruits of work were shared by the members of the society in ATS while today the fruits of work are enjoyed individually and immediate family members which breed selfishness in society.

There was limited supervision at work in ATS since it was enjoyable while today, there is a lot of supervision due to negative attitude towards work.

Traditionally people worked in their localities which promoted communal wellbeing while today people move away from their homes in search of better paying jobs so as to improve on their standards of living.

REASONS FOR THE CHANGING PATTERNS OF WORK.

(Account for the changing patterns of work in society today.)

Decline in African culture makes women to work in offices to contribute to their family welfare instead of staying at home to look after their husbands and children as culture dictated.

Too much greed for wealth makes people to neglect their families in favour of work. Some people work from morning to evening because they want to accumulate wealth to outcompete others in business.

The technological advancement leads to introduction of machines which make work easier. People no longer use hands to do work because of the existence of machines though this leads to unemployment since a few people are required for a particular piece of work.

Unexemplary leaders who abuse work through corruption and accumulate wealth make the young people to emulate them and ignore work well knowing that that they can get wealth in other ways like stealing, bribery etc.

Influence of money economy where everything is paid for makes people to charge money for their services. Failure to charge money will make them fail to survive in the society and ceases to be a service.

Influence of urbanisation can make people care more about their families instead of caring for the society as a whole. The cost of living in towns is high and so people cannot care about others in the community.

Influence of women emancipation where women compete for the same opportunities as men. For example they compete for the same political posts.

Influence of formal education which emphasizes teaching men and women in preparation for the job market. It is no longer necessary for parents to teach their children the careers because they are trained from school.

Western influence makes work to be timetabled and supervised centrally to the traditional African ways of working in relation to society needs. This undermines the concept of work as a service in society.

The education system, which trains students theoretically instead of practical skills, forces graduates to compete for the few white collar jobs, hence leaving the majority unemployed.

Parental career guidance drives children to value white collar jobs like accounting, teaching, instead of manual work like farming hence promoting unemployment.

Poor government service delivery pushes some people to run away from villages to work in towns as they access better social services.

IMPORTANCE OF WORK IN ATS.(VALUE OF WORK).

Work promoted togetherness and unity because it was done communally. Many activities were done collectively and it showed cooperation among the people. For example cultivation, harvesting, were done as a community and that promoted togetherness and at the same time made work easy.

Work promoted development of skills and talents. Through work, people perfected their skills and were able to serve their communities with the specialized skills they acquired. For example the blacksmiths were able to serve the community with iron materials like hoes, knives etc.

Work promoted development of the community through physical work. This is because community needs were more important than individual needs, clearing of wells, cleaning of the communities was done communally in the event known as “bulungi bwansi” among the Baganda.

People worked for prestige and fame, since the hardworking people respected, loved and recognized in the society because the society looked out for to people with specific skills like the the prominent farmers, black smiths etc.

Work helped people to fit in society since it was a must for everyone to work. Laziness was highly condemned and punished therefore people worked in order to contribute to society development and also to be like others.

Work helped to promote peace in the society since right from childhood boys were taught to provide security starting from the family level up to the community level. For example among the karimojong children were taught right from childhood to use bow and arrows in order to provide security at home.

Work helped to solve the problem of theft in communities since each person was expected to carry out any activity to help him or her to survive. At the same time work ensured strangers were catered for by giving them food for survival.

Through work people got basic needs of life like food, shelter etc. It was through work like farming, fishing that people got food to eat, houses for shelter etc.

Through work, charity was carried out, the elderly, lame who could not work because of the different reasons were helped out by the younger generation.

Work helped people to carry out religious responsibilities like sacrifices. People worked hard to get food and animals to sacrifice to the gods to thank them for their providence and at the same time ask for blessings.

Work helped people to accumulate wealth like pastoral communities had large herds of cattle for milk, meat and hides which even encourage exchange with cultivating communities which would earn people wealth.

REASONS WHY WORK IS MEANINGLESS TODAY.

WHY PEOPLE DON'T ENJOY WORK TODAY

PROBLEMS PEOPLE FACE WHILE WORKING.

Work makes people reserve little time for leisure. People work from morning to evening without resting. This leaves them with no time to enjoy the money they toil for.

Work which lacks job security is meaningless because people work while fearing to lose their jobs anytime. It makes people unhappy and have a negative attitude towards work.

Work separates employees from their families. I.e. they work far from away from home and spend weeks, months and years without coming back home hence causing poor upbringing of children, indiscipline and related family instabilities.

Sexual harassment at work places makes people to lose the love they have for their work. This mostly affects women who are forced to give into the sexual desires of their bosses in order to get a promotion, salary increment or even maintaining their jobs etc.

Some work is tedious and risky making people to fear for their lives and thus not enjoy it at all. It makes people to sweat and fear that it can cause damage to their body parts. For example people who work in gold mines etc. fear that they can be covered by the soil and die at anytime.

There is tribalism today which makes employers favour their tribe mates at the cost of other workers who may have better qualifications and skills and this makes the unfavored lose interest in the job.

Work is poorly paid and this makes employees to fail to buy the basic necessities of life. If one works and cannot use the money he earns to satisfy his needs, he will find work meaningless.

Political instabilities/wars make people displaced and some become refugees. In camps people don't work well and even those who work live in fear because of lack of concentration.

Lack of enough market for the products and more especially perishable goods like cabbages causes unhappiness at work places when they get spoilt which leads to losses.

Lack of fringe benefits at work makes people unhappy at work places because they spend their salaries on activities which could be covered by extra benefits at work. If rent, transport cost isn't covered by the job, the employee will spend almost all his salary on these costs and thus will find work meaningless.

Long distant work in most cases people find it difficult to work in far distant areas from their homes and families. Some places are hard to reach like working in islands; it makes them tired, lonely and bored hence making work meaningless.

Abrupt transfers of workers especially the public workers to less important departments makes them hate work because they don't see more benefits in the new places.

Stiff competition characterised by death, witchcraft, human sacrifice, has made people to hate work of the fear of dangers associated with work hence making work meaningless.

BIBLICAL TEACHING ABOUT WORK(WORK AS A BLESSING).

God himself is a perfect worker who worked by creating the universe and in 6 days everything was done in an orderly and perfect way and he appreciated his work.

God rested after creating the universe in Genesis 1 and 2. Every after a creation session, God would rest and resume work the following day. This means that work should be balanced with leisure. (Genesis 1:-1-23)

Man was ordered by God to co-create with him, by controlling the universe and making it better and he could only do this through work. (Gen. 1:28)

Through work, God given talents are developed, Jesus calls upon people to exploit their talents fully, in the parable of talents where the 2 servants who used their talents well were praised (Mat. 25:14-30)

God offers special skills of craftsmanship to the people he has chosen. This is seen when he gave power and skill to the tribe of Judah to plan and make artistic work. (Exod.35:30-33)

Good work is praised by God because it brings glory to God therefore people should work hard in order to receive praises from God. For example King Solomon was praised for building the temple of Jerusalem.

Through work, man serves and contributes towards the kingdom of God. This can be done by writing Christian literature, establishing churches. For example St. Paul worked as a tent maker and used the money he got to establish churches among the gentiles.

There should be a spirit of brotherhood between the employers and the employees. The employers should pay the employees in time because the employees count on that money. (Deut 24:14)

Through work charitable work is carried out. i.e. man serves others by meeting their needs in order to give them joy. For example Jesus worked in order to serve the needy people like the 5000 hungry men that were fed with fish and bread.

Through work man sustains himself so that he does not become a burden to others. For example St. Paul made tents to sustain himself instead of being a parasite to the people of Corinth.

Laziness is condemned in the Bible, Christians should be better than the ants which work in the summer by collecting food in preparation for the winter. (Prov 6:6)

Honesty at work should be exercised to ensure harmony at work (Math 21:28), Jesus gave the example of the two sons who were disobedient.

Work helps to get basic needs of life and to earn an honest living since St. Paul in Ephesians 4:28 calls upon believers who used not to work to start working using their own hands.

Sample questions

Using the Bible, show how an employee can enjoy his work

- What Christian advice can you give someone frustrated with their work?
- As a Christian what advice can you give to the youth who do not want to work?
- Examine the Biblical teaching about the value of work
- As a Christian, how can you solve the problem of unemployment?

THEORIES OF WORK.

There are two theories of work

- 1). Marxism
- 2). Capitalism

MARXISM.

This theory/ideology was developed by Karl Marx, a German philosopher and a socialist. It is also called socialism/communism.

The theory tries to interpret the life of society in economic terms by upholding the following ideas;

Work is a must to everyone. Anyone who doesn't work must not eat. The yields of work must be put in the hands of the state which will take close supervision over people's contribution i.e. the state gives you your share depending on your contribution.

The interests of the state are more important than the interests of individuals. Marx suggests that the state should be in charge of all activities, making decisions on what people should have, what they should not, what to do and how to do it.

Marxism suggests that there must be a classless society with all people equal in aspects of life. According to Karl Marx, this will guard against exploiting of the poor by the rich.

Whoever enjoys the produce of the country must work and contribute to the country's development. If one cannot contribute, he has to forego the country's benefits. For example if one refuses to contribute to the clearing of the public well, then he should be stopped from fetching water from it.

Man is better off with economic needs, all other factors held constant. As long as man can be economically stable, he can be in position to fulfill all other needs of life i.e. man needs money to survive, with it he can get shelter, food, medical care etc.

Marxism believes that man suffers because of wrong planning and unfair sharing of the national cake. He says that national resources should be equally distributed. This can work well where every production unit and resources are owned by the state.

Marxism believes that production is effective when production units and agents like capital, labour etc are communally managed by the state. He says that individuals tend to be ineffective and less hard working due to natural laziness.

Marxism suggests that there should be a law of working morality to develop a sense of social togetherness to work because some people deliberately ignore work. There must be a law forcing people to contribute to national development than individual development.

Marxism does not allow any social variables like religion, culture, politics to interfere with work. According to Karl Marx, spending time on Sabbath, Christmas, independence will divert people from work.

According to Karl Marx, everything must belong to the state including the children people produce. They must take orders from the state before thinking of orders from their parents because the interests of the state are more important.

WHY CHRISTIANITY IS AGAINST MARXISM.

Marxism is against God because he believes that man can only live by economic needs only. He ignores prayers, days of worship as unnecessary, yet it is God who created the universe and everything in it. Gen1 & 2.

Marxism denies people a chance to own property by suggesting that all production units and agents must be in the hands of the state yet God blessed man with wealth and riches, Gen 1:28, Job 42:12ff.

Marxism denies man personal freedom in work when he holds that there should be a law of working morality forcing people to work. This deprives people a chance to work on their own pace yet the will, skills, and ability to do work are God given. (Exodus 31:1-11).

Marxism believes that children belong to the state but not their parents; they are expected to work for the state regardless of the wishes of their parents. This promotes disobedience, rebellion of children towards their parents e.g. according to Exodus, God commanded children to respect their parents and honour them in order to live long.(Exodus20:12).

Marxism wants all the people to be equal, strong, and the weak, the talented and untalented, the leaders and their subjects, God created people with different abilities so kings can't be equal to their subjects.

Marxism doesn't know that the state is for men when he suggests that individual interests must be ignored in favour of the interests of the state. It is selfish for the state to oppress its citizens because the state is for man and should consider the interests of man.

SITUATION WHERE CHRISTIANITY AND MARXISM AGREE.

The church and Marxism call upon people to work hard as it is emphasized in the scriptures. For example, St. Paul encouraged Christians to work hard using their own hands to get what to eat.

Marxism and Christianity encourage development of man and his society, promoting welfare of everyone, and promoting development of talents.

The church preaches that all the people are equal before God whether rich or poor and Marxism is looking forward to general equality for all people, leaders and their subjects.

Both Marxism and Christianity aim at providing food and other material needs like shelter, medical care to the society through work.

Marxism and church equally condemn exploitation of workers because Marxism looks at the rich as oppressors of the poor, he agrees with prophet Amos who condemns the rich for oppressing the poor.

Sharing the fruits of work is encouraged by God, Marx and the church. Marxism believes the resources should be equally shared/owned by everyone.

Both are against dependence i.e. everyone must contribute to the resources of the community in order to benefit from the community. In 2 Thessalonians, Paul says that whoever doesn't work should not even eat.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS.

1a). Examine the socialists view about work.(Marxist view about work)

b). Why do Christians object to Marxism?

2a). Discuss Karl Marx's teaching about work.

b). To what extent do Christians agree with Marxism?

CAPITALIST VIEW ABOUT WORK.(CAPITALISM)

Capitalism is an economic situation where the resources or wealth are owned privately. It is an ideology of individual ownership of property and all agents of production like land, capital etc. in other words, it is survival for the fittest because everyone works hard to ensure that he survives.

To a large extent, Christianity supports capitalism because of its advantages which include;

It encourages hard work since one has to ensure that he earns a living in order to acquire personal belonging. Failure to work will make one starve or depend on others for survival.

It raises the standards of living because people work and earn income to meet some of their demands like building nice houses, buying cars, etc.

It promotes development of talents and skills where people work to their best abilities because all the benefits of their work will belong to them.

It provides employment opportunities to the public through investments set up by those with capital through industrialization, self employment, where people get income and profits.

It provides the community with quality goods and services. This is because of the competition that exists with other capitalists and if one doesn't work hard to improve on the quality of his products, he loses his customers to the one with good products. For example, telecommunication services give their customers fast internet, good network, etc.

It is a source of revenue to the government since it taxes individual capitalists and money is used for the development of the country.

It brings about general rise in income, in that after investing the capital and one is able to get profits, he/she can raise the general income that he/she has and is able to enjoy life.

Decision making is very easy and prompt since the business owner can implement any programme as soon as it is perceived without having several debates.

Some capitalists use some of their wealth to support the poor by paying school fees, providing shelter and medical care which helps to improve their standards of living.

It creates social freedom since people invest freely in areas like leisure, transport and other businesses like supermarkets.

DISADVANTAGES OF CAPITALISM.

It condones exploitation of the employees with the aim of minimising costs; they make the employees to over work and pay them little money which can't help them to buy the basic needs of life.

Capitalism promotes unhealthy competition which results in to a lot of social problems like murder corruption, witchcraft etc which leads to disharmony in the society.

There is income inequality under capitalism because those who already have continue to get more, while those who have little continue being poor because of unequal abilities, resources, money etc.

It may make one forget God because of engaging in ungodly activities like witchcraft, evasion of taxes, exploitation of workers, etc and this affects the relationship one has with God.

Capitalism is very inefficient in providing public services like health services, roads, schools, etc due to the fact that such services don't present immediate profits which are the major aim of capitalists; this affects the wellbeing of people in the society.

Harmful and substandard products are brought on the market due to the profit motive which leads to loss of lives due to consumption of harmful products e.g. some people make harmful Vaseline which affects the skins of many women.

It leads to monopoly where a few people carry out selfish economic activities and block others from entering into those economic activities. This spirit of selfishness keeps majority backward and poor.

The use of machines like computers, tractors leave many people unemployed/jobless due to the profit drive which has no regard for other people's feelings.

It promotes individualism in society where each person thinks about himself without caring about others yet we were all created as one family to live in peace and harmony.

Capitalists work hard to accumulate profits and they forget their families which lead to family instabilities which can in the long run cause divorce.