

RE-ORIENTATION OF VALUE SYSTEM IN NIGERIA: A CRITIC

Dr. Donatus I. Njoku (Rev.)

Department of Philosophy and Religion, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities,
Ebonyi State University, P.M.B 053, Abakaliki, Ebonyi State, Nigeria.

ABSTRACT: *The re-orientation of value system in our society is a search for national culture that would reshape national character and image. The study revealed that when national life is taken over by social sins, the citizens pursue wealth without knowledge, without character, pleasure without conscience, commerce without morality, worship without sacrifice, science without humanity and politics without principles. The study adopted historical research method. The research provided that re-orientation of value system would promote national image, respect for human life and corporate values. The youth would imbibe the culture of hard work and productivity, wealth creation, employment generation, entrepreneurship, intangible wealth and competition. The writer is optimistic that educated and uniformed youths would gain better understanding of the subject matter while leadership, education, religion and home remain the fulcrum of value re-orientation for now and the future.*

KEYWORDS: Re-orientation, Value System, Society, National Culture, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Human society exists for individual and group life. Societal rules are made by people and the same rules guide the behavior of citizens. Situations in the society warrant members to value things as good or bad. Man's efforts in any given situation are geared towards survival. Human struggles for survival are informed by drives of hunger, sex, aggression and loyalty to tribe or group (Keith, 1976). Sexual reproduction is a positive duty in the propagation of one's own kind. Aggression is an inborn instinct in humans. Aggressiveness is a strong drive in man necessary for his survival for which society provides acceptable ways of doing things so that others may not be destroyed. Social relationships are closely associated with people of the same culture and language as the bedrock of group solidarity and survival. Loyalty is a strong element in human nature but tribal loyalty is limited and a source of major obstacle to corporate and freely pursued purposes of a world-wide community.

The problem is the maintenance of ones own culture and development of wider society where conflict would be resolved by mutual acceptance. Culture as man's creation is a way of life that consists of social and civilized virtues and ideals that transform the interpretation of the biological and psychological subtraction upon which man is formed. Therefore hunger, sex, and aggression become objects of cultural pursuit incorporated in institutions, conventions, marriages as well as hierarchical structures of economic and political power. In other words, basic human needs must be met and the tribe must be defended against its enemies.

The Government has positive roles of promoting conditions that would guarantee corporative fulfillment of the pursuit of knowledge, variety of choices, training in skills and abilities as well as cultural opportunities. In just society one does one's duty and receives corresponding benefits and all constraints are balanced with equal rewards to the individuals. Indeed, the

principle of justice is the principle of balance of constraints with corresponding benefits (Njoku, 2008).

The crisis of value system in Nigeria suggests that the growth and progress of the society is being retarded in many aspects through outburst of materialistic tendencies of our youth. It is beyond doubt that materialism has taken over government, political institutions, invaded traditional and cultural institutions, while the church seems to be more materialistic than the secular society. The malady of value crisis has predicated Nigeria as open society in which anything goes. In Nigeria we seem to be grabbing the worst and getting very little of the best from the rest of the world. This paper on re-orientation of value system is focused on redeeming Nigerian youths currently faced with crushing identity crisis, resulting, from misplacement of value that led to misunderstanding of the purpose of human life. It presupposes that the purpose of your life must be far greater than yourself and each individual must therefore have a sense of community. The work stressed that Nigeria has national culture that established her before materialistic invasion, the home remains the primary base for value formation and re-orientation along with value oriented education and as religious process of redeeming the image of our national life in the future.

Positive and Negative Value System in our Society

The core of every human culture or ethos of any culture is a mark of its fundamental values. The satisfaction of some desires and interests inform the values we placed on things or experiences that arise from them. The objectivity of value is a personal judgment with pronounced emotional tone (Titus, 1957 & Njoku, 2006). Certain values have been fundamental in all human societies across civilization, the base of instituting value seems to be the family while collective values of society makeup the societal value systems.

Consequently, value implies acceptable standards, idea way of doing things and living virtuous life in society. Value cannot function in socio-cultural vacuum since there is need for it to serve societal purposes. The positive or dominant values that serve different societies along with Nigeria include respect and honour accorded to parents, elders, men and women of honour. Love and protection of the family and family name has been the practice in traditional and contemporary society of Nigeria. Nigerians have belief central in their life in God, Allah and Supreme Being.

The ability to feed oneself and one's family instituted respect for hard work and productivity that has served different societies. Truthfulness, honesty and friendliness are renewable virtues that increase as they are used and add flavor to life. There is nothing as precious human life on earth and society has accorded overwhelming respect for sanctity of life (Titus, 1957). Hospitality has been part of societal life in Nigeria, even during inter ethnic wars in the past and the civil war; we were generous to one another although, they have declined in our present circumstance. Nigerians have strong respect for authority and leadership. Our society was founded on people's lives of chastity, temperance, peace, justice and courage which have given way to negative values in contemporary Nigerian society. The negative values have poised our society with pecuniary motives that structured the society to be concerned with individual needs rather than public good and purposes. The order in our society is lack of respect for parents, elders, men and women, there is inordinate pursuit of material acquisition and the worship of money. Ebo said

For a materialist, life is a game, 'haa-haa-wuu', and a gamble, scratch my back and I scratch your. Life is give and take. Life is getting anything you want through any means, fair of foul. Life is 'fastnesses. Life, in sum, is '419' of various dimensions and magnitude (Ebo 1994:17).

The society is characterized by high level of distrust. Suspicion and everybody has become a suspect of misplaced value. Immorality and lack of sanctity of life have increased as murder and kidnapping have become daily occurrence that pervaded the society with infanticide, fratricide, Patricide, matricide and suicide in pursuit of materialism. The malady of corruption has polluted the character and personality of every Nigerian doubt why' seemingly responsible Nigerians within the corridor of powers gather around themselves sycophants and praise singers. It is worrisome, in that those who dare to criticize the ugly trends are faced with open harassment or veiled security. It is regrettable that vices have taken the place of virtue and merit is scarified. These and other similar negative values have taken the place of dominant or positive values needed for development of our society. The factors that enhanced the emergence of negative values in Nigeria need to be properly explained to the youths as basis of negativity in value system in Nigeria.

Education that is seen as life long formal and informal processes of equipping individuals to be aware of their environment and to exploit, manage and dominate same for their benefits and of the society at large has also negative influence. The assertion is a critic of Fafunwa's definition of education that eludes development of "the abilities, attitudes and other forms of behavior which are of positive value to the society" (Fafunwa, 1974: 26). However, it cannot be over-emphasized that through formal education, all forms of misdemeanor are learnt. Education breeds even negative knowledge to the disadvantage of the society. In this way, education has both influenced and affected the dominant value system in Nigeria.

When Government took over schools from their private owners' vices took the place of civilized virtues. Moral education was abandoned in schools (Ikpe, 2002). Products of education negated right moral conducts as they were not taught as such education produced society on fire. Indeed when the issue of Nigeria educational system is mentioned, the first set of thoughts that come to mind are decline in standards, deterioration of facilities, examination malpractices, mass promotion syndrome before any other thing else. Others include government insensitivity to education needs, shortage of manpower, lack of the spirit of hard-work among growing number of students as well, poor preparation of students and their lack of self confidence (Igboke, 2001) In this way, education has both influenced and affected the dominant value system in Nigeria as certificates or degrees are awarded to those found worthy in learning without worthy character.

The influence of Religion on the value system in our society cannot be doubted. Missionaries were rated as guardians of African youths and as source of change agent of several typologies in our society (Uka, 1989 & Agha, 1999). The various religious systems in our society structure the world-view of their adherents through numerous exaltations, Religious teachings, sanctions and admonitions are guides to people's moral conducts. However, over secularization of religion has led to secular atheism (the worship of materialism) which has influenced the morality of religious personnel with consequential degrading of the value system in our society. Nigeria religious scene is beset with daunting doctrinal differences that resulted to further splits, division, pomposity and pride. Many religious officials through their 'misunderstanding of their respective dogma indulge in debauchery, sexuality with member spouse, incest, unchastely and polygamy as well, serial marriage. The problem of Christianity

is the survival of heterosexual marriages with the challenge of homosexual marriages being legalized by some Christian denomination in the world, it is then beyond doubt that value system in Nigeria is trampled under foot by some religious persons.

Corruption has been a challenge to leadership in Nigeria. Failed moral training of children gave birth to corruption in our society (Darting and Steinberg, 1993). The high level of corruption compelled past leaders of our country to wage war against it. Buhari administration instituted War against Indiscipline (WAI) while Obasanjo set up Economic and Finance Crime Commission (EFCC) just to mention but a few. These attempts were geared to shun corruption and indiscipline in Nigeria but indeed corruption has not been eradicated. The problem stems from leadership to the led. When leaders are corrupt, the people cannot help but follow the same bane in the name of survival thereby ignoring desirable and accepted standards of society. Achebe (1983) concluded that the trouble with Nigeria is failed leadership.

Economic conditions in Nigeria have created moral vacuum in the live of parents and youths that cannot meet up with their financial obligations. Harsh economic situations have encouraged cheating, stealing, briber and corruption that ravage the society. Even mothers now spend lesser time in taking care of their children as they have to materially sustain their families. The economic crunch has greatly devalued Nigerian value system.

The impacts of foreign ideas and technological influences have made Nigeria an open society. The unrestricted and unrestrained entry of foreign films, phonographic publications, satellite broadcasts, videos and similar products of modem teleology have great impact that affected value system in Nigeria. As Nigerians acquire those gadgets, their use are hardly regulated or controlled hence children watch films meant for adults as such end up with warped values. These and other corresponding factors have encouraged the emergence of negative values in our society. Hardily can it be underlined that Re-orientation of value system is relevant to Nigerian society.

Reorientation of Value System in Nigeria

We have discovered how we began our national life and know where we are now and that reorientation is the re-positioning of Nigerians where we ought to be in the future. The reorientation of value system is conscious development of human resources through ideological appeals, planning, training, productivity and efficiency in achievements through corporate culture. A national corporation culture influences employers and employees actions towards consumers, competitors, suppliers, and one another.

Arnold (1999) quoted Penney, Rene and Steiner as those that valued reorientation in their system. Penney advocated for fairness in dealing with stress that returned merchandise should not be queried while suppliers were aware that Penney would not haggle over terms. Employees were comfortable in their jobs, lay off policy was avoided and easier jobs located for those that could not handle complex area which is the need of Nigeria society today. Rene incessantly emphasized cost reduction and productivity improvement and his company doubled its productivity in seven years. Steiner reflected on his sense of obligation to his company, the mores, habits and ways of doing things of his company as an institution and the lives of those involved in his business were major determinants of choice of strategy.

The Indian society shares the similitude of Nigeria nation in multi- religious and cultural diversities but India has undertaken to overhaul her value system (Maheshwari, 2009). The

re-orientation on materialistic needs and never-ending lust to earn more and more by putting in less and less effort can be exchanged for value based life through inculcation of an attitude that earning money is for living a respectable life and for helping others who are disadvantaged. The re-orientation of values has been structured under parenting (family unit), education and government. Others include religion, economy and mass media.

Parenting

The family unit is the primary focus of value re-orientation informed by parental roles, goals, values and manners that influence the children moral and of social behavior that influence the children (Bull. 1980). They should teach and train their children, adequately monitor their children, guide their behavioural patterns at home and adopt gradual and systematic process to sensitize their children's initiatives as well as develop in them self control in the absence of external authority. They should apply mild physical punishment, mild withdrawal of love, emotional appeals or threat of disapproval to develop in their children self imposed discipline and obedience to rules and regulations. Also, they should decide the type of films and association their children be exposed to. In this way, the ideas and attitudes of the children in the home will reflect their performance with larger society.

Education

The reorientation process in education system in Nigeria would lead to redemption and salvaging of our national character and image. The concept of education in human values requires direct and indirect techniques through the schooling process. If the schooling process should nurture and entrench values positively in children, their teachers should function as role models (Calhaum, James, Elizabeth, 1976; Dike 1988; Maheshwari, 2009 & Somy, 1999).

Teachers should acquire intellectual competence, emotional stability and unquestionable moral standards as well as commitment that our nation needs to be developed by them in their pupils. Making national character reorientation an integral part of the curriculum of teacher education will be necessary to enable teachers internalize values they will develop in children. The fact remains that good teachers build enduring foundations that make good schools and a good nation. The import of education in contemporary society is on reorientation of pre-service and in-service teacher education in order to develop holistic concept of education in entrant teachers and to empower in-serving teachers to apply direct and is indirect techniques in the development of values through the schooling process. The in-serving teachers would promote and use information and communication techniques in school education as well as develop resource materials on indigenous thoughts on education. The reorientation programme for presence and in-service teachers should be conducted by experts in the field of value education and stress laid on production of multi-media resource materials on education in human values. Then reorientation would produce education for tomorrow that would ensure character development and transformation, skill acquisition and entrepreneurship along with job creation.

Government

The Government, Corporate organizations, non-governmental agencies and individuals would as matter of due responsibility encourage and finance research development, inventions and mass production of invented products to encourage hard-work and, productivity among students.

The participation of government at all levels and corporate organizations in research would instill creativity and rewards as well, discourage indolence and exam malpractice among students. The research sub sector has been the basis for socio-economic, political scientific and technological advancement of our most cherished developed nations of the world today. Therefore, conscious efforts towards qualitative and durable educational system need to be put in place for posterity in Nigeria.

The government should adequately fund education to maintain, rehabilitate physical facilities, instructional and living conditions in schools as well as libraries, classrooms and laboratories.

Adequate funding of education cannot be left to government alone as private and corporate organizations participation would enhance procurement of imported technical and scientific equipments, books, journals and other instructional needs in the education sector

Proper financing would empower restructuring and overhauling of education to improve the performance of higher education in scientific knowledge in global economy (Igboke, 2001). Funds are required and necessary to maintain both human and material resources of the system. There is felt need for effective supervision and monitoring of the management of funds as accruals to education sub sector in our country.

Economy

The poverty level of most Nigerians has been predicated by school drop-outs and people living in isolated areas without civilization. Government should not lose sight of schools drop-outs rather it should establish schools and skill acquisition centres near to mechanic villages, slums and other isolated zones. The government at all levels should build linkage roads to enhance economic growth of the members.

Job creation must be a central objective of government policy and government should provide enabling environment for private sector to develop into entrepreneurs and enhance job creation. The current wave of the central bank of Nigeria's drive to expand micro finance ought to be driven fast with all its vision. Group employment would increase the sense of purposefulness and ordered life of mainly Nigerians.

Religion

Religion as system of belief exerts influence in daily lives, values and attitudinal reorientation of members. Although belief system differs from individual and places yet it is an indication that one's belief system is determined by geographical, historical and social under current. But the underlying factor is the question for meaning of life which man must always face in his attempt to explain ultimate reality. Religion permits us to examine our own uniqueness, our thoughts and actions with reference the purpose of human life on earth (Njoku, 2005). Spiritual values are used more in secular context than in connection with religious practice. Indeed, religious values have never changed and reflect laws of nature. Those values include truth, trust-worthiness, integrity, honesty, patience and obedience as well as humanity, faithfulness love and kindness (hospitable). Such higher values promote self imposed discipline. Compassion, respect for human life and joy of personal happiness and freedom. They nurture the human soul and make the human person genuinely rich, wealthy in life and expand individual's ability to self reliance, and have need of others along with the ability to discern and follow the path of fairness and justice in dealing with people. The religious

groups should stress those higher values in their teachings, preaching in our collective bargain to reorientation of Nigeria's value system.

Mass Media

The media has viable role to play in enlightening the general public on the overall effect of negative values and need for hard-work, fair play, self employment and law abiding citizens through advertisement, seminars, symposia and other measures. These no doubt would go a long way in repositioning the positive values in Nigerians.

In conclusion, we do not need to look for new ways of behaviour for Nigerians rather re-orientation of the positive values that have once sustained the Nigerian public and private sectors, If Nigerian institutions and individual collaborate in reorientation of value education, the image and character of our national life would be changed.

REFERENCES

- Achehe, C. (1983). *The Trouble with Nigeria*. London: Heinemann.
- Agha, U. A. (1999). *Early European mission to African: An introduction to West African history – come over to Africa and help us*. Enugu: SAPS Nigeria Ltd.
- Arnold, S. (1999). *Importance of value orientation in the corporate environment*. <http://www.shaeruca.edu/research/dsi/Rd/files/paperS/vol.3/PE/1455.pdf>.
- Bull, F. N. (1980). *Moral education*. London: Routledge.
- Caillaun, L. G.: James, W S. and Elizabeth (1976). *Dealing with crisis: A guide to critical life problem*. Englewood cliffs: New Jersey Prentice Hill Inc.
- Darling, N. and Steinberg, L. (1993). Parenting stile as content: An integrative model. *Psychological Bulletin* (113), 487.
- Dike, B. O. (1988). *Man with man (political psychology)*. Owerri: Ihem Davis press.
- Dundes, A. (1968). *Every man his way*. Englewood Cliffs: New Prentice Hill Inc.
- Ebob, B. O. (1994). *Living beyond materialism*. Enugu: SNAAP Press nig Ltd.
- Fafunwa, A. B. (1974). *History of education in Nigeria*. London: Allen and Union Ltd.
- Girvetz. H. K. (ed.) (1968). *Contemporary moral issues (2nd ed)*. Belmonth California: Wadsworth pub. Company Inc.
- Igboke, S. A. (2001). *Educational policies in Nigeria, implementation and issues*. Enugu: Cheston Publishers Ltd.
- Ikpe, F. (2002). *The Igbos of southern Nigeria*. Benin: Rinehart Publishers,
- Keith, W. (1976). *The divine image: The foundation of Christian mo*. Great Britain: Northumberland Press Ltd. Gateshead.
- Maheshwari, AN. (2009). Value orientation in teacher: *An education Address of Chairperson National Council for Teacher Education in India* <http://www.Geocities.Com/amarmalwshwariivalues> Litm
- Morris, V.C.C. (1956). *Path of life*. New York: American Book Company
- Njoku, D. I. (2005). Religion and human values in our contemporary. Society in Gladys Bozima (edited) *Journal of Research and theory Education* 2(1). Faculty of education, University of Jos, National Association for Education Research and implementation.
- Njoku, D.I. (2006). Ethics of value theory in our society: A case study of Nigeria. *Ebonyi State University Journal of Education (EBJE)* 4(1), Faculty of Education March.

- Omeregbe, J. (1990). *Knowing philosophy*. Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publishers Ltd.
- Somy, S. A. (1999). *Relationship between organizational values orientation-team based managerial practices and time-based manufacturing practices*. Toledo, Ohio: The University of Toledo.
- Titus, H. H. (1957). *Ethics for today*. New York: American Book Company.
- Uka, E. M. (1989). *Missionaries go home*. New York: Pa