

SOCIOPOLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF VALUE RE-ORIENTATION FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

For any nation to encounter reasonable development, positive values should be maintained and supported. Where social values have decayed, underdevelopment sets in hence the need for reorientation of values. The focal point of this paper is to assess the sociopolitical implication of value re-orientation for national development with emphasis laid on the role of Education. The paper accepts that utilizing the instructive way to deal with, and improvement on value reorientation will guarantee development and advancement. Hence, it suggests that school curricula should embrace values that will build the attitudes and behavioral pattern of the learners to instill consciousness in their positive behaviours.

Keywords: Value reorientation, Values, National development, Sociopolitical.

Introduction

The core ethos of any human society is a mark of its fundamental value system, which implies acceptable standards, ideal way of doing things and living virtuous life in the society. Premised on the foregoing, value re-orientation has for a long time been recognized as one way to address the myriad societal problems confronting complex societies like Nigeria. This recognition is predicated upon the manifest crisis in the value system in the country. Evidently, societal values of honesty, industry, integrity, good neighbourliness, religious tolerance, negotiation,

accommodation of diversity among others, which were once held very dearly in Nigeria, have gradually been inverted by anti-progressive value system that is characterized by such ideas as:

- corruption and nepotism,
- unbridled quest for political power,
- electoral malpractice and violence,
- political gangsterism and brigandage,
- youth restiveness,
- examination malpractice,
- armed robbery,
- kidnapping and hostage-taking for ransom and immorality,
- nudity,
- lying and
- cheating, among others.

The persistent crisis where the value system in Nigeria has occasioned a sustained negative impact on national development, manifests in retarded economic growth, threat to national unity and cohesion, evident political instability and lack of societal progress. In Nigeria, corruption indices have skyrocketed and there is virtually no sector of the national life that is free from its influence. Given the pervasive influence of corruption and unbridled quest for materialism that has taken over government, political institutions, as well as traditional, religious and cultural institutions, the Nigerian state is constantly projected as either a failed state or a failing state, where poverty, insecurity and instability hold sway.

Successive administrations, especially at the Federal level, have articulated and pursued various value re-orientation programmes, such as War Against Indiscipline (WAI) that metamorphosed into War Against Indiscipline and Corruption (WAI-C) and the Rebranding Nigeria Project, among others. Regrettably however, these laudable attempts and interventions have not yielded the desired results. There still exists all negative attributes that hold Nigeria down as a nation.

The concept of values

The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (1995) says that values are principles about what is right and wrong or ideas about what is important in use. Values occupy a central position in all human endeavours. They form the basis for social interactions in every society whose survival depends largely on people's roles in transmitting essential value patterns to the incoming generations. Values therefore, may be referred to as desires,

interests, goals, ideals, approvals/disapprovals, preferences and standards (Nduka, 2005). To Ehman, Mahlinger and Patrick (1974), values are standards used to decide whether some objects are good or bad, right or wrong, important or worthless, preferable or not preferable. These societal values are often referred to as the “norms of society”. In defining norm, Clayton (1979) sees it as an expectation associated with a position role within a group. This shows that norm is the expected behaviour from human beings within a group and if not up to expected standard, it is considered bad.

Values may be either pragmatic or absolute. Pragmatic values are values which an individual develops as a result of doing something, it is in fact, doing something in a particular situation, while absolute values are those metaphysical values, which are not bound by the physical world as perceived through the senses, nor by time and place (Schofield, 1976). To Socrates, to do right is rational and to do wrong is irrational (Schofield, 1976). We can deduce that values have to do with purposes, relationships and moral codes of behaviour. As Mkpa (1987) in Ukoha (2004) puts it, values are the determiners in man that influence his choices in life and thus direct his behaviour. As an example, the goal of African traditional education system is to produce an individual who should be honest, respectful, and cooperative and who conforms to the social order of the day (Salami, 2002). Specifically, the cardinal goals of the African traditional education system emphasize hard work, respect for legitimate and human authority, public spiritedness, attachment to the community and family, truthfulness and honesty in all dealings and promotion of cultural heritage of the community (Fafunwa, 1974).

Nigerian Values

Enu and Esu (2011) considered values to be basic beliefs and attitudes in a society, which are worthwhile, serving as guides for behaviour in daily life. According to Kanu (2005), values are ideas that guide or qualify some one's career, and give direction to one's conduct meaningfully in life. It is in this direction that Bolarin (2009) in Enu and Esu (2011) states that values means traits, practices, arts, ideas, attitudes and principles that a group or individual considers to be worthwhile or of merit. The heterogeneous cultural background in Nigeria must be the reason behind the diversity of definitions of values. Some core values include respect for elders, self-confidence, honesty, accountability, cooperation, discipline and respect for constituted authorities. Bohlila (2001) confirmed the above assertion when he submitted that if moral values are so compromised, the manifestation would be greed, corruption, dishonesty, violence, crimes resulting in political killings, drug peddling and many various anti-social behaviors which are capable of jeopardizing all sincere efforts directed at the progress of the nation's self- development.

It is for this reason that Bala (2010) calls for the strengthening of Values Education in our country's school system in order to alleviate unemployment, corruption and several forms of violation of laws of the land. These problems go a long way in distorting official policies directed towards national development and self-productivity. With these

prevailing circumstances, it therefore becomes imperative for Value Education to be entrenched in our school system for inculcating education for character, for good and moral values (Bello, 2011). Such will make students become responsible adults. Enu (2010) enjoined that the fundamental moral values in Nigeria's national life to be taught in the schools should include among others, respect for constituted authorities and sanctity of life, values of honesty, fairness, tolerance, compassion, cooperation and courage alongside some fundamental procedural values that are looked upon as basic ingredients of national peace, interrelationship and love which are the basics for national development and self-productivity.

The above cherished values are radically getting eroded; and to corroborate Aderinwale (2003), the paradigm has shifted and Nigerians have generally slipped away from those cherished core values and embraced a new culture, a new way of life and a new world views. The consequence is that those cherished values have been diluted by the prevailing societal vices. According to Kanu (2005), the core public values of the society were the primary contents of education that hitherto constituted child-upbringing and it emphasized development of such attitudes as hard-work, open competition, high achievement orientation and communal cooperativeness. Within world view, the worth of every individual is measured by the extent to which he/she contributes to the progress and welfare of the society and not by the amount of personal wealth amassed. The report of a National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools (2002) for instance, identified global education curriculum to have emphasized the development of positive values and attitudes, based on a strong sense of identity and self-esteem and encompassing caring for others, recognizing responsibilities, a commitment to upholding the rights and dignity of all people and an appreciation of diversity and difference. It also encourages and empowers learners to translate their knowledge, skills and values into a preparedness to participate actively in community life.

Concepts of Value Re-Orientation

Reorientation is the act of changing, adjusting, aligning or realigning something in a new or different reaction. Value reorientation is a transformation or a fundamental shift in the deep orientation of a person, an organization, or a society such that the world is seen in new ways, new perspective, new actions and results which make possible things that were impossible prior to the transformation (Asobie, 2012). It also means the change of the moral character for better through the renewal of the innermost nature. In addition, value re-orientation can be viewed as the act of deliberately attempting to change the direction in which attitudes and beliefs (in Nigeria) are currently orientated or the act of adjusting or aligning behavior, attitudes and beliefs (of Nigerians) in a new or different direction within the public discourse of contemporary Nigerian politics (Osisima, 2012). This is articulated as a move away from corruption, embezzlement, dishonesty and general indiscipline which pervades the society to the direction of virtues of honesty, patriotism, hard work, and general abhorrence of social vices (Okafor, 2014).

Njoku (2011) sees value reorientation as inculcating good values that can help Nigeria out of her numerous predicaments and can refocus the nation to greatness. A closer look at the above definition would make one agree that Nigeria would be rapidly transformed if Nigerians embrace good moral values, which have the potentials to re-orientate the attitude and behaviours of Nigerians and to bring significant reduction in corruption, indiscipline, immorality, terrorism, kidnapping and other social vices.

Education for Value Re-Orientation

Education had been defined differently by different people. One of the greatest educational historians, Cremin (1978), defined education as a deliberate, systematic and sustained effort to transmit, evoke or acquire knowledge, values, attitudes, skills and sensibilities". Fafunwa (1974) saw education as the human act of informing, forming and strengthening of the powers of the body and mind; a process for transmitting culture for the knowledge to ensure social control and guarantee national direction of the society. He also holds that the purpose of education is to develop attitudes, abilities and behaviours considered desirable by society. Durkheim (1956) a great sociologist, posited that education is a systematic socialization of the younger generation by which the latter learn religions. According to Okafor (1984), education is a process of the development of the potentialities and their maximum activation when necessary, according to right reason and to achieve perfect self- fulfillment

With the above definitions, one can deduce that education is not and cannot be an end in itself. Education is used to mean the consciously planned systematic imparting or acquisition of knowledge in a system called schools. Many philosophers have articulated their individual reasons for education. Plato holds that a good education consists of giving the body and the soul all the beauty and all the perfection of which they are capable (Okafor, 1984). While Mann (1990) stated that education alone can conduct us to the enjoyment which is, at once, best in quality and infinite in quantity, Peters (1966) suggested that education implies that something worthwhile is being or has been intentionally transmitted in a morally acceptable manner.

For Dewey, education is to be considered as intelligently directed development of the possibilities inherent in ordinary experience. He regarded education as a reconstruction of experience which aids a person to the direction of subsequent experience. It is a continuous process of growth. For him, an experience is an educative experience only when it can be transferred. Education is a means to life and living. The implication of this is that the greater part of education should be functional. The ultimate end of education is man's happiness.

Like philosophy, education banishes ignorance and liberally criticizes people's values and life options and redirects societal goals and pursuits. Plato, in his laws, for instance, decrees that it is education that determines whether man becomes the tamest or the wildest animal on earth. "If man lacks education" he maintained "he is the most savage

of beasts”. As a matter of fact, the production and maintenance of a good society is the main objective of Locke’s theory of education. John Dewey defined the task of education as “an emancipation and enlargement of experience”. Education frees individuals from the prejudices and irrational assumptions of everyday life and enlarges their experience. It also emancipates the human mind from error, prejudices, false opinions and values that Francis Bacon advanced and classified as his doctrine of the “idols” and gave “power” as the aim of knowledge. For him, knowledge is power to master and interpret one’s environment.

With reference to the Nigerian society, what Nigerians need as an important starting point is a relevant, dynamic educational philosophy and a certain-pedagogy which ultimately should give them a new life and value system. Ignorance is heavily at work in Nigeria. Encrusted prejudices, wrong values, wrong priorities, erroneous assumptions, disordered and disoriented ambitions and goals are manifestations of ignorance, the results of false opinions in life and false philosophy of life. Some higher goals and values which this new education philosophy should inculcate in Nigerians should be discipline generally, and self-discipline specifically

Discipline

Kazeem (2018) views discipline as a notion that is related to the very existence of any social order, structure or organization. In essence, it refers to the rigorous adherence to or conformity with laid down rules, procedures, values and patterns of acceptable behaviour within any specified context. This element of rigorous adherence or conformity with the required standard is a necessary element of system persistence and orderly change. The point is that no system can survive if there are no laid down rules of conduct or behaviour related to different aspects of its operation and if there are no minimal standards beyond which deviation will not be tolerated. Discipline thus, is contextual. Each organization or social unit, be it the political system, the educational system, the employing organizations, any other economic units, the family or the community possesses an understanding, definition or its order and the standard required to maintain and ensure its development. This is the basis for discipline and it is a necessary aspect of the attainment of the goals of any unit. At the wider national level, discipline is also an essential component of good citizenship. Through it, the various units of the society can individually attain their goals thereby contributing to the ultimate attainment of the overall national objectives. This is however said, with the understanding that the component units of the national society possess a correct and patriotic sense of direction.

Self-Discipline

Self-discipline is among the absolutely necessary higher values which should form the basic educational philosophy for Nigeria. It is singled out for the sake of emphasis. Nigerians need a new orientation in self-discipline. They must be prepared to restrain their unruly desires, goals and ambitions which is generally defined in materialistic terms.

In the eagerness to have more, to display more, to enjoy more, particularly since the oil boom decade, Nigerians have lost all sense of self-control in the lust for money and what it can buy.

In fact, the very opposite self-indiscipline, according to Okolo (1993) has characterized the way of life of Nigerians and it is an important root-cause of the past and presents economic and social woes. Continuing, on indiscipline Achebe, in Okolo (1993) asserted thus:

Indiscipline pervades our life so completely today that one may be justified in calling it the condition par excellence of contemporary Nigerian society. We see and hear and read about indiscipline in the home, in the school, in the public service, in the private sector, in the government and in the legislative assemblies, on the roads and in the air.

He, (Okolo, 1993), defined indiscipline as a failure or refusal to submit one's desires and actions to the restraints of orderly social conduct in recognition of the rights and desires of others. This has been the problem with Nigerians.

Nigerian Government's Efforts towards Value Re-Orientation

Considering government's efforts towards value re-orientation, Imaekhai (2010) reviews series of attempts made by Nigerian leaders towards ethical revolution from January 15, 1966 when Major Kaduna Nzeogwu led junta staged a coup with the primary aim of tackling the ills of tribalism, nepotism corruption and favoritism. In the second republic, the late President Shehu Shagari proclaimed an "ethical revolution". Major General Muhamadu Buhari in 1983 launched "War against Indiscipline" (WAI) while Mass Mobilization, Self-Reliance, Social Justice and Economic Recovery (MAMSER) was later introduced by President Ibrahim Babangida.

The aim of MAMSER, according to Onyia & Iyida (1987), was to get Nigerians to embrace the values embodied in the programme. MAMSER was a product from the report by the Political Bureau submitted to the Nigerian Federal Military Government on March 27th 1987. The Bureau noted with misgivings that the behaviour of Nigerians in the political process has been largely negative adding that the negativism was easily exemplified in a culture of helplessness, apathy, and indifference to the political process. It therefore called for urgent and concerted efforts towards the creation of the right political culture in Nigeria, which should be executed through a coherent programme of social mobilization and political education.

The General Sanni Abacha's administration which came shortly after Shonekan's interim government reintroduced War against Indiscipline and Corruption (WAI-C). The President Goodluck Jonathan's administration came with a Rebranding policy agenda. This was in recognition of the continuous decay of the country's image which emanated from poor attitudes and behaviours. The present administration of President Muhammadu Buhari initiated

the ‘Change Agenda’. Unfortunately, the so much desired change is not being witnessed. For Agbese (2016), what the country needs is regimentation, not empty sloganeering. According to Agbese, leaders drive regimentation should be by demonstrating their discipline, their incorruptibility, their obedience to the rule of law and their respects for the rights of others, including and especially the poor. Lack of all these, no doubt, has exacerbated the level of injustice in the country resulting to self-determination agitations from various ethnic militant groups. Little wonder, that Nigerians are politically angry, economically hungry and socially militant. Millions of Nigerians are wallowing in abject poverty and are existing under primal standards of living. There is no job for the teeming youths and graduates while individual and ethnic interests reign supreme (Osagie, 2016).

The major aim of these policies was to inculcate positive values in the citizenry and build self-confidence and human dignity. The ‘change’ is expected to be imbibed by everybody irrespective of social class. It is on the basis of this that this paper, having realized the continuous failures of these consistent programmes in attaining the desired objectives examines critically and noted that the implementation of these policies was not rooted appropriately.

Conclusion

The main concern of this paper is to examine the sociopolitical implications of the various value re-orientation programmes for national development in Nigeria. Importantly, there is need to re-orientate the minds of Nigerians for a total turn around. Nigeria will improve based on our perceptions and the kind of environment we create. Reorientation of values should be a high priority of the Nigerian government. Every citizen, community, political and religious leader should be part of this exercise for a better tomorrow. Hence, the desired reorientation that we crave for can be achieved through vibrant educational programmes.

Recommendations

This paper will like to recommend that:

- a. Reorientation of the youths should form part of the Nigerian school curriculum in order to instill discipline into them.
- b. Issues and topics bothering on discipline should be central to the school curriculum at all levels of education.
- c. Members of the general public, the political class, public and civil servants should be re-orientated through a replica programme of MAMSER. This is to instill discipline generally in the Nigerian socio-political system.

- d. The Federal government and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) should embark on massive youth development programmes on creative skills as a viable intervening tool for employment because an idle hand is the devils workshop.
- e. The government should establish standing frameworks for training youths to acquire practical skills.

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