

# General Studies and Value Re-orientation for National Development: An Appraisal

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## **Abstract**

*Against the background of the noticeable distortions in the value system that have grossly affected Nigeria's national development, concerns have been raised regarding whether General Studies could help in reversing the trend. Relying on documentary evidence and analytical framework based on a conscionable blend of Systems and Socialization theories, this paper made an appraisal of the incidents of the distortions in Nigeria's value system; highlighted how they militate against national development and; based on detailed analysis, indicated the extent to which General Studies could make any meaningful impact in favour of national development. The position of this paper is that General Studies, as one of the components of agents of (re)socialization, can only make little or no impact in terms of value reorientation so long as the other components within the social system have failed to play the necessary complementary roles. The basic recommendation here is that there is every need to take a holistic approach in tackling the challenge of value re-orientation so as to achieve a meaningful result.*

**Key words:** *Values; Value-reorientation; Development; National Development; Socialization*

## **Introduction**

Nigeria has gone through several phases along the line of her path to development. One of the traditional ways of categorising the country's stages of development is such that takes cognizance of her historical past vis-a-vis the colonial influence. In this regard, there are categorizations that take the form of looking at the country from the viewpoint of the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial eras. Undoubtedly, these phases hold different pictures when rated in terms of the prevalent values, behavioural order, cultural patterns, political institutions, ethical standards, religious practices, educational structures, socialization agents, etc that characterize each.

Historical accounts about the pre-colonial Nigeria reveal an area marked by multifarious ethnic groups that differ in terms of language, culture, pattern of worship, political institutions, etc. These peoples lived under different political arrangements (Mimiko & Adeyemi (2005). They were however brought together under the same political arrangement by the British colonialists. It is in this regard that Enahoro (1966) described the country as a conglomeration of tribes assembled compulsorily and branded Nigeria. Invariably, this incident altered some aspects of the lives of the peoples. For instance, colonialism brought in a new political arrangement in all the colonised areas such that the local people were subjected to showing allegiance to a foreign

authority. Whereas the colonialists adopted the existing structure in areas like the northern part of the country, they had to create new political structures in areas like the eastern part where the existing system was not in tandem with their (colonialists) administrative standards and leadership style.

As Nwankwo (1998) rightly captured, the driving force behind colonial conquest and governance remain the desire by the British colonial masters to engage in capitalist exploitation and not in any way to serve the interests of the colonized. Consequently, one of the first steps they embarked upon was taking direct control of the economy and directing it towards serving colonial interest. In contrast to the existing barter system and forms of currency that lacked general acceptability across the entire areas, the colonialists introduced the currency that eventually became generally acceptable to the various peoples. The indigenous peoples were compelled to accept and use this currency through such means as imposition of taxation and introduction of foreign products. In effect, the currency served as the only medium through which they could pay taxes or purchase the foreign goods. It was in a bid to have access to the money that the local people were compelled to either produce only those cash crops needed by the colonialists or work as wage earners in colonial firms/offices.

The structure for formal education was non-existent during the

pre-colonial era, as the traditional form of education was informal. Fafunwa (quoted in Ibrahim, 2015) traces the origin of formal education in Nigeria to 1842-82 when the foreign missionaries began intensive evangelization activity in the southern part of the country. Though the colonial government did not show remarkable interest at the initial stage (Ani, 2017), her interest in education grew as colonialism progressed. In line with Fafunwa's (quoted in Ibrahim, 2015) opinion that this formal education served as a vessel for transmitting certain European cultural traits, which ran in conflict with traditional way of life of the indigenous peoples, it stands to reason that such activity created distortions on the values and general lifestyle of the people. For instance, agricultural production not only moved from subsistence level to commercial scale but also shifted from the production of only the items needed by the local people to satisfying the export requirements of the colonialists.

The post colonial era witnessed other developments that made impacts on the values of the people. One of the things noticeable in the country as at the early days of independence was the disunity that existed among the people of the various ethnic groups. This affected the form of political engagement that took place in the country. Ethnic politics and violence became the order of the day and within few years after independence was granted, the civilians proved incapable

of managing their ethnic differences and the affairs of governance, which gave the military reason to intervene and take over government. Before long, however, it was noticed that the military not only failed to solve the problem that served as reason for their emergence into governance but also contributed in causing more problems through such means as exacerbating the problem of ethnicity, militarizing the society, frustrating the opportunity for developing democratic values, expanding the space for official corruption, mismanaging the economy and engendering economic crisis, violating human rights, etc. The return to civil rule did not heal the wounds inflicted on the country within the first republic and during the long years of military rule. In fact, a close analysis of the country's situation will reveal that things continued to get worse as the country advanced with age.

Concerns have been raised in several quarters concerning the poor image Nigeria cuts in terms of her national development. Apparently, the country will continue to face national developmental challenges unless her citizens drop the negative attitudes that militate against national development. Aware of this danger, various efforts (such as the International Conference organised at the University of Nigeria Nsukka between 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> May, 2017) are being made to determine the role the GS could play in value reorientation and national development. The thrust of this paper includes: identifying the incidents of

value-distortions in Nigeria as well as its incidence on national development; highlighting the essence of value re-orientation; establishing the extent to which General Studies can intervene in value re-orientation that would drive national development; and making recommendations concerning the right steps to be taken in order to achieve the desired goal.

### **Conceptualization of Terms**

People apply the term, values, while discussing those social behaviour and societal order they consider desirable. According to Henslin (2006,p.27), values can be seen as standards by which people define what is good and bad, beautiful and ugly, and this underlies our preferences, guides our choices, and indicates what we hold worthwhile in life. Hence, he summarizes it as ‘personal beliefs about what is good or worthwhile in life’. Ifeanacho (2012,p.115), quoting Light and Keller, similarly defines values as ‘deeply held criteria for judging what is good or bad, desirable or undesirable, beautiful or ugly’, and concludes by saying that the ‘value system in any society states in normative terms the premium placed over things, modes of reasoning and behavioural patterns’. Indeed, every society has its way of life, standards its members aspire to attain and endeavour to maintain, the things they cherish, and what they believe in. All these contribute in shaping their ideas about what is desirable in life or what they *value*.

The simple dictionary meaning of the word, orientation, tells us that it is the type of aims and interests someone or an organization has; the act of directing one’s aims towards a particular thing (Hornby, 2015). When we use it in relation to values, we can say that it means the type of values one aims at maintaining or the act of directing one’s aims towards specific values. True to the fact that societies have their values, it is a known fact that there are circumstances individuals might deviate from the societal values due to one influence or the other. In view of the fact that such deviations are considered undesirable or harmful to the society, the need arises to get the ‘deviants’ retrace their steps and redirect their minds towards the right values. As applied in this paper, value reorientation presupposes that there were deviations from existing societal values. Hence, steps are being taken to redirect the minds of those that have so deviated towards the right values.

Earlier views about development evaluate it essentially from economic standpoint. Seen from this perspective, whether or not development is taking place can be measured through such yardsticks as Gross National Income and income per capita. In order to achieve development, therefore, efforts are concentrated on making planned alteration of the structure of production and employment in such a manner that manufacturing and service industries would significantly overtake

agriculture's share of both (Todaro and Smith, 2011). However, the problem with conceiving development in this form is that it places all the emphasis on these yardsticks, which may not make any meaningful impact on the quality of life of the citizens. This is true, especially in view of the fact that it is possible for the manufacturing and service industries to overtake agriculture in terms of production and employment, yet the quality of the life of citizens will remain the same (or even become worse) as it used to be when agriculture dominated the economy. When we capture the import of this, it stands to reason therefore that it is possible for the economy to witness growth without development. It is in consideration of this that attempts are made to differentiate between growth and development.

Recent views about development try to look beyond existing structures or the national economic level and instead focus attention on the quality of life of substantial portion of the population (Sen, 1999; Brinkman, 1995; World Bank, 1991; Gandhi, 1996; Ake, 1995). It is against this backdrop that Todaro and Smith (2011) contend that development must have at least three objectives that include increasing the availability and widening the distribution of basic life-sustaining goods; raising levels of living and; expanding the range of economic and social choices. Thus, one can say that this view about development is human-centred.

When we understand the meaning of development from its human-centred perspective, it makes sense therefore to say that national development should not be measured in terms of national wealth, per se, but in terms of how the national wealth has contributed in improving the welfare and living standards of citizens. This is because the citizens remain the central essence for the existence of any nation. To this extent, we can say that national development takes place when a country demonstrates the capacity to initiate positive steps that improve the lives of her citizens. In assessing whether national development is taking place, therefore, emphasis should be placed on the political, social, and economic well being of citizens.

### **Theoretical Issues**

In every society, there is a process through which societal values and culture are transmitted from one generation to another. Individuals are relevant in the society through the roles they perform. And the extent to which order is maintained within a society depends largely on the extent to which members of that society share in the societal values, imbibe the culture, conform to the dos and don'ts of the society, and perform their respective roles. It is through this means that the society preserves itself. Achieving this warrants that new members of the society must be taught and initiated into the roles to play, things to abhor, and the values to

cherish in order to keep them from deviating from the acceptable standards.

The term, socialization, captures this process of transmitting values and culture from one generation to another. Brandwein (1970) describes it succinctly as learning how to perform or fill a role. On the other hand, Obi (2009,p.140) defines it from both the perspectives of the society and the individual to mean ‘...the process of fitting new persons into an organized way of life in an established cultural tradition; ...the process by which a human being acquires a self and develops personality’. There are different agents that undertake this function of socialization, which include: the family, neighbourhood, religious groups, day care, school, mass media, peer groups, workplace, etc (Henslin, 2006; Obi, 2009). As can be seen, these agents are interacting groups. From the work of Schaefer and Hamm (1992) and Henslin (2006), one comes across a related concept, resocialization, and this entails the learning of new norms, values, attitudes, and behaviours to match their new situation. In other words, resocialization means learning a ‘different’ way of doing things so that those involved would discard their former behavioural patterns and, or the things they had valued in order to accept a new one.

As captured by Obi (2009,p.142), there are several strands of theories of socialization and these can be classified into two: the

Macrolevel theories (functionalism and conflict theory) and the microlevel theories (social learning theory, cognitive developmental theory, and symbolic interactionism). Whereas the former ‘view socialization as a process that has important consequences for society as a whole’, the latter ‘examine how socialization occurs’. Generally, the theories of socialization are traceable to the work of Sigmund Freud in his attempt to explain the process of personality development. According to Odum (2016), the basic features in these theories include the attempt to explain the process that helps individuals form values and acquire skills necessary for fulfilling their societal roles as they develop within their environment, as well as the centrality of social interaction in the development process for individuals to be functional members of the society. That is to say, it captures how the social environment and interaction with others contribute in shaping or conditioning human behaviour. With this, it can be understood that social systems are shaped by the values of interacting groups.

As hinted by Ogundiwin (2015) and Beer (1962), the systems theory has a biological origin, as it is traceable to Karl Luwid von Bertalanfy – a biologist. However, the theory has found its application in other fields such as sociology, political science, etc. Ezeokoli (2015,p.244) draws our attention to a description of the general systems theory, which

captures it as emphasizing ‘a holistic, organized unit of interdependent, transacting, and mutually influencing parts within an identifiable environment’. Equally, Kaplan (1967) gives a brief and nontechnical definition of the objectives of systems analysis to include: the study of interrelated variables, as distinguished from the environment of the set, and of the ways in which this set is maintained under the impact of environmental disturbances. According to him, this definition emphasizes the articulation of the system and of its components and the behaviours by means of which it maintains itself over time. Hence, it is quite deducible that a system, though a holistic unit, is made up of interrelated and interdependent parts and that the breakdown of any of the parts will adversely affect the entire system. With this at the back of our minds, it stands to reason that a framework of analysis based on the systems perspective will be appropriate in studying a phenomenon where interaction processes are involved.

This study is anchored on a conscious blend of the socialization theory and systems theory. The essence of this is to help in a detailed analysis and understanding of the main issues under discussion. In appraising the impact of General Studies on value reorientation vis-a-vis national development, there are basic ideas that will guide us. The school, as we have seen above is among the agents of socialization. Our understanding of

resocialization is that it entails the learning of new norms, values, attitudes, and behaviours; learning a different way of doing things so that those involved would discard their former behavioural patterns or the things they had valued in order to accept a new one. Implicit in the definition is that resocialization is actually meant for those that have already been socialized into certain values or behavioural order considered inappropriate, hence, the need to *reason them out of what they have already been reasoned into*. When we talk of General Studies, what comes to mind is an organised structure of teaching/learning that forms part of a wider structure in an institution of higher learning or, using a general term, a school. The target audience for GS are those going through university education. They are, ipso facto, adults or those at the stage of early adulthood and not little children. As such, they are individuals that must have internalized certain values at an earlier stage in life.

In considering the extent to which the GS can serve as a veritable instrument for reorientation/resocialization, it becomes necessary to call to mind the fact that there are other agents of socialization, which may even have a stronger impact than the GS (school). This is where the systems analysis comes in handy. When we view the different agents of socialization as a unit that is made up of different components, which help individuals in forming or re-forming

their values, it becomes clear that one of the components cannot be treated in isolation. This is because what happens in one component is most likely to be conditioned by the influences exerted by others. For instance, when the family, peer group, religious group, and the media tend to be promoting certain values that appear obnoxious, the school may find it difficult to embark on a successful reorientation and reverse the trend. This is especially in view of the fact that, judging by the level of interaction process, individuals spend lesser period in the school (institution for formal education) compared to the family, peer group, religious group, and the media. Based on this analytical standpoint, it makes sense, therefore, to say that the task of reorientation/resocialization will be easier when all the agents are committed towards achieving same goal.

### **The Nigerian State and National Development**

Whether viewed from the socio-political or the economic perspective, recounting Nigeria's experiences in relation to issues surrounding her national development can sound quite pathetic. Beginning with the socio-political aspect, it can be recalled that prior to the advent of colonialism the area that is presently known as Nigeria was inhabited by people of different ethnic nationalities that operated under distinct political arrangements (Mimiko & Adegemi, 2005). Hence,

the 'first major problem that the incipient colonial administration had to tackle was...the problem of diversity' (Balogun, 1983,p.69). In actual sense, they did not tackle this problem; they did not make any positive attempt to handle the problem of diversity in such a manner as to promote nation building and national development. Rather, they took steps that exacerbated the social distance existing among these peoples; steps that would continue to keep them apart and disunited even while operating under the same political arrangement. It is in a bid to achieve this goal that they adopted the divide and rule pattern of administration over the colonised peoples. Nnoli (2008) cited the example of the policy of Sabon Gari (strangers' quarters) as one of the ploys employed by them to achieve this objective. With this policy in operation, the northerners and the southern migrants in the northern cities who had lived together peacefully prior to the advent of colonial rule were separated in such a manner that the northerners had to live in the section of the city called Tudun Wada while the southerners were restricted to living in Sabon Gari. From the accounts of Nwaka (2014) and Hembe (2005), it is clear that the indigene-settler syndrome, which has constituted part of the complex set of problems resonating from different parts of the country up till the present moment took its roots from the colonial era. In the light of the above, one can rightly say that the colonialists actually crafted those challenges that



militated against nation building and national development.

The problem associated with nation building was not surmounted with the gaining of independence. Events that took place within the independence era showed that the seeds of disunity sowed by the colonial masters had germinated and taken firm roots. As Ihonvbere (2003) rightly observed, the local elite who transformed into the custodians of state power at independence failed to build those elements that pull a people together in order to cultivate national identity and culture. They engaged in ethnic-based politics wrought with mutual suspicion, hatred, bitterness, and violence. The inability of the civilians to manage the ethnic and political differences led to the collapse of the first republic and the incursion of military into politics. Yet, the emergence of military did not make any difference in terms of promoting nation building. The country eventually witnessed a civil war that was triggered off by ethnic problems, which eventually ended after about three years in favour of keeping the country as one entity. But by the time the war ended, it was clear that the country had wasted enormous resources not just in terms of human lives that were lost but also in terms of the financial resources and the time dedicated to prosecuting the war, which would have been channelled towards national development. It is pertinent to note that many years after Nigeria waged a civil war that was

aimed at keeping the country united, events still show that true unity has continued to elude the country. It is in the light of this that Ogban-Iyam (1989) stated that the country has proven incapable of attaining nationhood despite attaining self-government (indigenous statehood) and as a matter of fact, unable to transform from nations-state to nation-state.

It suffices to say that Nigeria's political development has been far from being fantastic and has taken a pattern that frustrates national development. As already noted, the failure of the civilian class to manage their political differences within the first republic gave the military reason to emerge into politics. However, the military equally got politicised and in all, the activities of both the military and civilians polluted the political environment. The long stay of the various junta that took the reins of governance at different times created adverse effects on the polity in such ways as militarizing the environment, institutionalising gross human rights abuse, and destroying opportunities for building strong democratic institutions and cultivating democratic culture. Their civilian counterparts, as politicians, turned politics into a do-or-die affair based on their mindset that political positions are meant to be an avenue for self-enrichment rather than opportunity for offering selfless community services. With this mindset and concomitant activities directed towards actualizing their selfish

desires, they usually find it convenient to embark on actions that militate against national development.

Indeed, the inability to manage the country's problem of ethnicity has continued to generate problems that keep militating against National development. For instance, ethnic consideration has continued to feature as a major factor in offering employment and political recruitment at the national level. It is a common thing for meritocracy to be sacrificed at the altar of ethnicity and this creates opportunity for mediocrity to thrive within the system. It is equally a common incident to come across situations where, based on ethnic reasons, the most-qualified hands were neglected while their inferiors were recruited into sensitive positions and saddled with the onerous responsibility of steering the wheel of national development.

Taken from the economic angle, it is undisputable that Nigeria is blessed with immense natural resources and has all it takes to attain a dizzy height with regard to national development. Unfortunately, the level of development is still grossly inadequate to account for the enormous wealth at the disposal of the country. The country thrived with agro based economy during her early days. With time, crude oil became one of the major foreign exchange earners. Ordinarily, the discovery of crude oil in commercial quantity ought to serve as an added advantage towards the expansion of the country's revenue

base. But the emergent political economy under which the Nigerian state assumed a distributive character made it impossible for the other aspects of the economy to be taken seriously and managed properly. This explains why crude oil eventually turned out to be the major source of revenue while the agricultural sector declined to a point of insignificance and, along with other non-oil sectors, remained grossly neglected.

Corruption stands out as one of the major problems militating against the Nigeria's national development. The incident is so endemic within the system to the extent that most people now see it as a way of life (Bakare, 2015). It is a common thing for individuals occupying official positions to divert public funds into private pockets through such means as inflating contract sums to accommodate selfish interests, executing poor quality projects in order to make tremendous gains, awarding contracts and diverting the entire contract sum into private pocket without executing the project, etc. Given the high level of corruption in the country, one can imagine the amount of resources that were stolen from public coffers, which would have served the purpose of national development.

Aside cases of outright corruption, cases of ineptitude and mismanagement of resources abound. Though there are several projects abandoned on the grounds of corruption, there are some others

abandoned on reasons not necessarily based on corruption but because of poor planning. Some projects are equally executed not based on sound economic reasons or on the grounds of necessity but based primarily on political considerations. In spite of the enormous wealth the country generated during the period of oil boom, Nigerian leaders were unable to diversify the economy and launch the country into the realms of industrialization. There is no other way of explaining this tragedy than blaming it on mismanagement.

There is an extent to which one can say that the character of the Nigerian state encourages indolence among the constituent units and prevents them from pursuing national developmental goals. It is a known fact that the federal allocation formula is such that the share of revenue accruable to the states on the basis of derivation is insignificant. Based on this, the states are no longer motivated to devise creative means of generating revenue internally. This explains why the states are more interested in issues concerning how to share the national cake than how to bake the cake. In the light of these, it can be seen that the country has not been fully favoured to engender satisfactory national development.

### **Issues on Distortions in the Value System**

It is obvious that colonialism had effects on the culture, norms, and value system of the indigenous people.

It is quite believable that in view of the fact that it does not exist at that period, no value was placed on money at a time the barter system was in operation. And by the time money system was introduced (whether under the pre-colonial or colonial period), it served merely as a measure of exchange and was seen as a tool for overcoming and surviving hunger and destitution. Certain values existing within the society helped to keep it from assuming a significant position over human life.

In the Igbo society for example, the value placed on money, compared to human beings or human life, is demonstrated by such adage as: '*Onye nwele mmadu ka onye nwele ego*', which totally 'contradicts the popular belief today that Ndigbo are especially money-minded' (Nnoli, 2017,p.28). Encapsulated in this adage is the understanding that a person that has (human) companions is greater than the person that has just money, or roundly put, human companionship is better than mere possession of money. A related adage goes thus: *Ezi afa ka ego*, which means that it is more valuable to have a respected image (earned through good deeds) within the society than possess money (without having a good image). It is these values that sustained communal lifestyle and extended family systems. The wealthy individuals took it as a duty to care for the less-fortunate members of the society.

A look at the related concepts of *Ogbenye* and *Ubiam*, as they are

used in Igbo language, can make for a better understanding. Though they are terms that represent poverty or a poor person, a more detailed semantic analysis shows that they have different meaning or suggest different types of poverty. *Ogbe*, in Igbo, stands for a settlement or an area occupied by members of the extended family/ kindred and, *nye* means 'give'. Thus, *Ogbenye* was seen as a less-privileged member of the community that should live on the goodwill of other members of the family/community. On the other hand, *Ubiam* can be explained as someone who is extremely poor and with nobody to rely on. This kind of poverty occurs mainly when someone is suffering estrangement or ostracism from members of the community. It was more satisfying, therefore, to consider a poor relative as *Ogbenye* and not *Ubiam* because the former connotes the ability of the family members to live up to the responsibility of caring for their less-privileged ones. This explains why it was difficult to find professional beggars in the traditional Igbo society. To this extent, it can be said that money was seen by the people as a tool for building better relationships and not in any way an instrument for building a fortress around oneself, intimidating others, and boosting one's ego to the detriment of other members of the society.

The value attached to money began to change with time. The introduction of currency by the colonialists (and the urge to secure it)

brought about situations whereby, in pursuit of wage-earning jobs, bread winners were separated from the members of their families. As at a period the extended family system was still intact and functional, those involved did not suffer serious stress because it was possible for a young man living and working in the city to leave his wife and children under the care of his parents or other members of the family. This situation, too, began to change with time. As economic pressure increased, the attention of breadwinners dwelt more on the members of their immediate/nuclear family. Based on this, individualism began to overtake the communal sense of living that had existed in the past. Again, city dwellers/civil servants depended solely on the money earned from their business/jobs and rarely engaged in other means of survival like agricultural production. With these, money continued to gain more relevance and the value placed on it continued to increase. Some other factors, as we can see in subsequent discussion, contributed in creating the money-conscious attitude being exhibited under the present period.

One of the values that had existed during the pre-colonial era was the type that encouraged responsive and responsible leadership. With the advent of colonialism, this became distorted. Colonialism served foreign interest and changed the traditional society in many respects. Through the indirect rule system, the local leaders were transformed as part of the larger

structure that represented the interest of the British crown. The colonialists had to create the position of chiefs where none had existed and imposed them on the people. In places with existing system of kinship, they dethroned those that offered resistance to colonial policies and in their stead, appointed those willing to serve the interest of the British Crown. Given this arrangement where the local leaders owed their allegiance to foreign powers, the system began to develop a political culture that made it possible for leaders to show greater attention towards serving foreign interests to the detriment of the interests, choices and preferences of their subjects. Apart from the traditional leaders, the civil servants of the colonial era were oriented towards serving the 'white man' or foreign interest. This explains why the Igbos refer to civil service as *olu oyibo* (white man's job).

The pattern of leadership that served interests other than that of the citizens did not change significantly at independence. As it appeared, the local elite were more interested in inheriting the structures left behind by the departing colonial masters rather than changing the irresponsible pattern of power relations between the people and their leaders. Ihonvbere (2003,p.196) rightly captured the situation when he observed that the colonial state was absolutist in every sense, as it dispensed power without consultation or accountability, and the indigenous elites that had been

structurally incorporated into the power and economic networks of colonialism were nurtured in the context of these undemocratic values. According to him, the tenuous relation of the elite to productive activities landed them in a situation whereby the gaining of independence translated to the capture of political power without economic power. Under such circumstance, accumulation, survival, and domination can only be guaranteed through the unmediated control of state power. Hence, the new elite were 'forced to devise strategies of ideological containment, de-politicization, diversion, violence, and human rights abuses to ward off opposition'. Indeed, this captured the pattern of political engagement that characterized the independence era.

The civil war and the numerous cases of ethnic violence have undoubtedly affected the values the people had always placed over human life. Those that witnessed those incidents were exposed to gory and horrible scenes. Some of the young men that took part in the war (especially on the Biafran side) were not regular soldiers and had to get back to civilian life at the end of the war. The exposure to killings and extreme violence reduced the premium placed on human life. Besides, the hatred and bitterness that trailed such encounters were such that keeps breeding the spirit of vengeance and destroying opportunities for nation building and national development.

Apart from the war, the long stay of military rule on the political scene grossly affected the values people shared about the civil society. Under military rule, civilians were exposed to the military command style and the society became militarized. Human rights were brazenly abused and intimidation, harassment, torture and various forms of violent attitude became a normal way of life. It was not surprising that university students began to engage in violent cultism aimed at harassing and intimidating the weaker students in a military style. Through a gradual process, the menace has spread even to the streets and secondary schools.

The irresponsible style of leadership, high level of corruption, ostentatious lifestyle of leaders, and the unproductive means of wealth accumulation that exist within the system have led to distortions in values. These days, political offices are seen as the most lucrative industry whereupon the majority of those aspiring to occupy such positions are doing so mainly as a means of amassing personal wealth. Aside political positions, the other means of making quick money include 419 (swindling), dealing on drugs, and other sundry criminal activities and many a great number of Nigerian youths are more interested in taking that line than undertaking a productive path to livelihood. This lifestyle is indeed being promoted by the erosion of the culture of honesty and integrity. It is a common practice for some

traditional rulers to confer chieftaincy titles on people with questionable character in return of financial or other forms of rewards. The churches are not left out in this game, as pastors and religious leaders offer 'blessings' to the highest bidder irrespective of the person's source of wealth. As a consequence, the culture of hard work has been lost in the system.

As noted earlier, the country thrived on agricultural production during the early days of independence. The constituent units operated with productive spirits that promoted national developmental values. Apparently, they were encouraged to engage in productive ventures based on the inherent incentive/reward enshrined in the principle of derivation. The values that promoted regenerative production and initiative became eroded when the allocation formula changed and deemphasized derivation as a basis for sharing federally collected revenue. These days, the state governments are more interested in sharing of the national cake and are not necessarily interested in how to generate revenue.

### **Appraising the GS and the Agenda of Value Reorientation for National Development**

To what extent can the GS help in value orientation aimed at actualising Nigeria's national developmental dreams? In answering this question, it is necessary to call to mind those values that promote national development and see how possible it is

to re-invent them within the Nigerian context. In order to achieve national development, there is need for citizens to display a sense of patriotism. But patriotism, as we know, is not something that drops from the sky. It is the kind of feeling developed by citizens based on certain conditions or circumstances, which include that they must believe in their country and have a leadership they can trust. The country must make meaning to her citizens and give them cause to pay their allegiance. So, how possible is it for the GS to instil the spirit of patriotism on her citizens, especially those at the stage of early adulthood and beyond? According to Ihonvbere (2003,p.189), the Nigerian state “has never been able to build an appreciable degree of confidence among Nigerians, ensure some discipline within the ranks of the elite, manage the economy in the interest of the people, or construct the much needed platform of inclusion, tolerance, and participation”. This statement is indeed a true reflection of the situation. Most Nigerian youths nurse the feeling that they have not benefitted anything meaningful from the Nigerian state and that the leaders have been unfair to the citizens. After being exposed to the fact of the immense resources at the disposal of the country and the corrupt/ostentatious lifestyle of politicians vis-a-vis the suffering in the land, they nurse the feeling of being short-changed. Given the opportunity to choose, it is certain that many of them would opt to travel and stay

outside the country instead of staying back. To say the least, the conditions surrounding them are not the type that breeds a sense of patriotism.

Again, achieving national development requires that citizens must have unity of purpose and sense of nationalism. That is, there is the need for the people to internalise those values that promote sense of nation building and unity of purpose. But how possible is it for the GS to achieve value reorientation towards this end in a country that has been witnessing a continuing bastardization of those values that promote inclusiveness, peaceful coexistence, and unity? The politicians and older members of the society are busy engaging in ethnic based politics and mobilizing support on that basis. The current Nigerian President, Buhari, had said openly that he cannot treat the sections of the country that had given him more votes in the same manner as the areas where the votes given to him were insignificant. There are echoes of ethnic and religious violence resonating from the streets. Owing to the manner national issues are being conducted, Nigerian citizens are continually being reminded that Nigeria is not home to Nigerians and that their real home is their State of origin. As such, signs of divisiveness still exist across the country.

Next, achieving development requires that the people must have the value of success in them. As highlighted by Henslin (2006), the value clusters surrounding success

include hard work, efficiency, education, material comfort, etc. But from the look of things, those value clusters surrounding success have suffered distortions under the Nigerian situation. The youths no longer believe in hard work because there are incidents they can point to, which may seemingly appear to align with the argument that hard work no longer pays in the country. Owing to the incident of nepotism and favouritism, it is common to come across situations where someone with poor qualification secured appointment while brighter individuals were rejected. The general belief is that *everything depends on who you know* and not necessarily how fantastic you are. When we say that someone has value for education, it means that the person values the relevance of acquiring knowledge. In Nigeria, the main aim for attending educational institutions appears to be for the acquisition of certificates (paper qualification) rather than acquisition of knowledge. It may not be out of place to say that the national culture is averse to efficiency because the operational standard of the public sector supports this line of thought. In spite of the fact that everybody knows that it requires quality hands to deliver qualitative services, the country still retains and executes certain policies that encourage mediocrity in her public institutions. Coming to the issue of value of material comfort, one might be tempted to say that it exists among Nigerians. But on a closer look, it becomes clear that this exists at the

level of desire and lacks the practical prerequisites; lacks the value clusters to make it happen. Most youths (in their poor and unemployed state) openly nurse the desire to ride big cars, own big houses, and indulge in ostentatious display of wealth. Yet, they cannot point out a workable plan they have on grounds towards actualising their dreams. They prefer to spend their time attending religious crusades and praying for things that would miraculously accord them material comfort than engage in practical and productive activities.

Nigeria is not showing good signs about national development in view of the fact that her public sector remains the highest employer of labour while the private sector is still wobbling and showing no serious sign for take-off. The future still appears bleak in this regard owing to the fact that the teeming number of unemployed youths are still hoping to depend on paid employments as a means of survival. There is no doubt that one sure way of overcoming this developmental challenge is by cultivating the culture of enterprise and self-employment among the youths. To what extent can the GS help in a value re-orientation that would help revive the spirit of enterprise under a circumstance where the government is not serious about providing the basic infrastructure and creating a level playing ground for the private sector to thrive? To what extent can the teaching of Entrepreneurial Studies for just a few semesters drive



the youths into taking interest in entrepreneurship?

Nigeria is a country that has continually demonstrated the preference for entertainment and consumption while paying lesser attention to things that would promote ideas that drive sustainable development. In spite of the fact that the country is finding it difficult to direct her youths towards assuming the spirit of enterprise and being productive, beauty contests, promotions for consumer items, carnivals, Big Brother Africa/Nigeria shows and other unproductive events appear to attract greater prominence and higher rewards than events that promote creativity and knowledge-driven excellence. Whereas the overall winners in events like the Gulder Ultimate Search, Big Brother Nigeria show, and beauty pageants go home with mouth-watering prizes such as brand new cars and huge sums of money, the overall winners for academic competitions and best graduating students go home with items like laptops or even mere handshake.

In view of the foregoing, it is doubtful whether the GS could undertake the task of value reorientation without certain conditions being in place. There are several agents of socialization and some have greater influence than the others. It may prove difficult for the GS to re-order some of the values that have already been distorted at the level of the family, within the circle of peer groups, and the society at large. For

instance, there are some parents that do not see anything wrong in hiring 'mercenaries' to write exams for their wards or paying for special centres where they would be permitted to engage in exam malpractice. For a student from such family, it is most likely to prove difficult for the GS to undertake a successful reorientation programme geared towards promoting the right values that support academic excellence based on hard work and conscientiousness. The task will even prove more difficult when such a person mingles with peer groups that celebrate 'fantastic' results secured through dubious means. In the same vein, it may prove difficult attempting to teach students about values that promote unity when there are echoes of disunity resonating from all the nooks and crannies of the country. Patriotism cannot be taught in the classrooms and imbibed as a habit by students when the events taking place in the wider society keeps giving them cause to believe that they are being short-changed and, for that reason, owe nothing to their country. Without ensuring that the other agents of socialization are working in the same direction regarding value reorientation; without ensuring that the negative traits being exhibited within the society are checkmated, any effort being made by the GS towards value-reorientation for national development would end up as a mere academic exercise whereupon students will simply attend lectures on value

reorientation and sit for exams without witnessing any form of transformation.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The Nigeria's journey towards national development has been tortuous. Many years after the country gained her independence, her national developmental report card is still looking abysmal. One of the factors that account for this poor result can be traced to the distortions in the value system. Against this backdrop, any move geared towards value orientation is a step in the right direction. While accepting that it is a good move for the GS to undertake this task, it is necessary to ensure that other agencies involved in character formation or shaping of behaviour are ready to play a positive complementary role. Things taught in the school may not endure if they have no practical relevance in the society.

While students are being tutored about nation building and national integration in schools, there is need for the government to ensure that national policies and attitudes of both public officials and other members of the society are such that promote such values. It is very difficult to imbibe the values that would support national integration in the face of the continuing menace of inter ethnic/religious violence. It may prove an uphill task to imbibe the values that would promote national integration when 'state of origin' is still playing a critical role in national policies. In a bid to promote a patriotic spirit, the

government must take up her responsibilities towards the citizens so as to win their confidence. For instance, it is very difficult to make the youths develop love for their country under the circumstance they are not only constantly facing harassments and abuse of rights in the hands of the state's security agents but also lack confidence in their (security agencies) capacity to offer security. It is difficult for them to develop love for their country when they are living under severe hardship and high rate of unemployment whereas the political office holders are constantly displaying ostentatious lifestyle based on wealth generated through the pilfering of public funds. Thus, there is every need to have a responsive and quality leadership in place.

In order to help the students imbibe the values of hard work, the government must take steps towards strengthening the reward system in the society. To achieve this, special care must be taken to ensure that hard work gets adequate reward while those that cut corners must be meted with adequate punishment. There is no doubt that things will begin to take shape if the government is able to fight corruption, which currently appear to be part of the national culture, and discourage the unproductive approaches to generating wealth. In the light of this, the anti corruption agencies must be strengthened and the leaders must show sincerity in fighting this menace through exemplary actions.

There is every need to promote the value of honesty and integrity within the society and the first step towards achieving this is for the family, traditional institutions as well as religious bodies to join hands in discouraging and condemning criminality. The family should endeavour to guide their young ones into raising questions of integrity and uprightness of character before embarking on any form of social relationship and not to base their judgements, primarily, on the issue of wealth. In the same vein, the traditional and religious institutions should desist from the current practice where awards of recognition are bestowed on people with questionable character.

Indeed, the wider society is the real theatre where values are taught and inculcated. What happens there can easily overwhelm whatever efforts being made through the GS towards value reorientation for national development.

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