

# VALUE REORIENTATION AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: THE ROLE OF ART EDUCATION

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## **Abstract**

*For any society to experience positive and sustainable growth, positive values must be upheld and encouraged. Where social values have decayed, underdevelopment sets in hence the need for reorientation of values. The focus of this paper is on the need for value reorientation in Nigeria as a vehicle for sustainable national development. Emphasis is laid on the role of Art Education. The paper believes that using the educational approach to the enhancement of value reorientation is the best to ensure growth and development. It recommends that deliberate primary and post - primary school curricula should embrace values that will build the attitudes and behavioral pattern of the learners to instil consciousness in their positive behaviours.*

**Keywords:** Value Orientation, National Development, Art Education.

## **Introduction**

Nigeria's image as the giant of Africa has suffered some setbacks as a result of anti-social and criminal acts, with a high rate of corruption. The decline and fall of Nigerians in behavior has reached unacceptable level. It is regrettable that the educational system has deteriorated to the extent that instead of being an agent of transformation, empowerment and an instrument of clearing the minds of the young ones to become useful members of the society, has today become an agency of imparting negative values in the minds of the young ones.

Lack of value orientation in Nigeria educational system manifests itself in all levels of education, (primary, secondary and tertiary institutions). As teachers, we have seen different forms of corruption existing in our institutions of today. For example, examination malpractice, financial malpractice between students and lecturers, embezzlement, exploitation of students, lecturers taking advantage of students, etc. The existence of different forms of corruption in may Nigerian institutions has led to the decay of positive moral values in schools. Corruption and lack of value orientation in the society have enormity of negative effects on the output of graduate in the area of productivity and the degree of acceptance in the society.

The National Policy on Education (NPE) identifies two major objectives which Art Education should meet by all post primary level of education. They are: (1) instruction should be geared towards the production of self-reliant, resourceful, creative people; people with initiative and understanding for the need to create; people with a positive identity in the community; and (2) the development of aesthetic awareness in the general public with regard to the products of industry and the environment (FRN, 2014: pp. 1 – 34).

Many programmes have been adopted by various governments in Nigeria to stop the menace of lack of value orientation, but they proved inadequate. In recognition to the provisions of the objectives on NPE, this paper views that, Art Education has a

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unique role to play, looking at the creative nature of the subject to stop these vices in the society. Art Education has a great impact on national development. It displays the most sophisticated forms of visual experience, skill acquisition and information dissemination towards social transformation of an individual. Art Education is important in learning and teaching and can be used as a tool in the present value reorientation processes in Nigeria. Osagie (2016) reflects on President Buhari's slogan, "let the change begin with me" on mass media. This is possible because messages can be translated in practical form where those without any form of formal education can also benefit. Effective communication helps a great deal in national development. The value reorientation process is a high-priority of the present government of Nigeria. Citizens must therefore unite to ensure its success.

### **Concept of Value Orientation**

When one talk of value reorientation, it means the principles of right or wrong that are accepted by individual or social groups (Word Net, 2012). Value orientation can also be seen as high moral intelligence and entrenchment of strong values for the development and prosperity of the Nigerian society. It is a transformation on 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 actions and results which become possible 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.

Reorientation is the act of changing, adjusting, aligning or realigning something in a new or different reaction. Value reorientation is therefore conceptualized as the act "of deliberately attempting to change the direction 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" (Osisioma, 2012:68). This is articulated as a move away from corruption, embezzlement, dishonesty and general indiscipline to the direction of virtues of honesty, patriotism, hardwork, and general abhorrence of social vices (Okafor, 2014:21).

Njoku (2011) sees value reorientation as inculcating good values that can help Nigeria out of her numerous predicaments and can refocus the nation through greatness. A closer look at the above definition, would make one agree that Nigeria would be rapidly transformed if she embraces 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.

This paper believes that value orientation in Nigeria can only be attained through the effective use of the power of creativity in Art Education to reform the schools and to an extent the society in order to achieve meaningful development. What this means is that, if students are instilled with good values at the early stages of their lives, they will grow and cherish them.

### **Why the Need for Value Reorientation in Nigeria**

In Africa, the larger a country, the larger the problems in terms of governance. One of the difficult things to effect in Nigeria today is restoration of our national values and integrity especially when a negative attitude has been formed by past governments.

Value reorientation means restoration or a change of attitude towards a number of things that have been identified as wrong actions or wrong attitudes.

Nigerians are suffering because of its non-social and criminal activities such as: "Boko Haram insurgency", "herdsmen/farmers crises" among others. Erinoshio (2008) notes that Nigeria is listed among the most corrupt countries in the world today occupying number 157 in contrast to Ghana which is number 70 in ranking of countries worldwide". ERnoshio (2008) further states that Nigeria has earned a despicable reputation for all manners of fraudulent practices and vices. These are issues that bring degradation to a people.

Fraudulent practices in Nigeria are too numerous, so much so that people are at a loss on what to do. When one reads through the highlights of newspaper and magazine as well as watch television, one reads and sees stories of the many crimes that Nigerians indulge in. The decline and fall of Nigerians in behaviour is a well-known fact all over the world. Countries such as Britain and the United States of America have lost faith in Nigeria to the extent that the former British Prime Minister, David Cameron could declare Nigeria as 'fantastically corrupt nation' leading to total loss of confidence. This decline is rooted right at the family and schools set up, where many parents and teachers are failing in their responsibilities of bringing up children. Once the right upbringing is not received at the initial stages of a child development then, many thurgs will go wrong later in life.

It is common to hear people complain on the state of affairs of the country, particularly on the government of the day. Many people do know that effective communication through creativity in Art Education is synonymous to development. Failure to reach out to the people brings confusion, distrust, envy and many other negative tendencies that can cause emotional instability. Much has not been done regarding information and enlightenment. Using the arts to inform the populace of what to do to improve on personal character is the starting point of national development.

From the above discussion, it is obvious that so many things have gone wrong. There is need to place premium on sound educational base targeted at societal transformation. Education is a crucial sector in any nation especially as a major investment in human capital development. Education plays a critical role in long term productivity and growth in both micro and macro levels. According to UNESCO (2000), education refers to the total process of developing human ability and behaviours. It is an organized and sustained instruction designed to communicate a combination of knowledge, skills and understanding value for all activities of life. Education and society are inseparable. Society equips education with the values to be transmitted while education exposes each generation to the existing beliefs, norms and values of their culture (Schacfer, 2000).

Fafunwa (1974) defines education as 'what each generation gives to its younger ones which makes them develop attitudes, abilities, skills and other behaviours which are the positive values to the society in which they live. In fact, education develops and imbues in individuals those values which make good citizenship, such as honesty, selflessness, tolerance, dedication, hardwork, and personal integrity, all of which provide the good foundation for veritable leadership. The NPE also specifies value system as acceptable in the country. This can be inculcated to the learners through the quality of educational instructions. It is only individuals who have ben positively transformed that can transform the society. It is from this perspective that it can be

conveniently argued that only a good educational approach can transform a society by reorienting the values.

This paper believes that the best approach is the adoption of Art Education for gradual and sustainable value change towards national development. Art Education and its activities have unique roles to play. Art like wind is everywhere and if well utilized, can sustain and improve an already collapsed nation like Nigeria. The idea of getting rich quick and by whatever means has not helped matters. Art Education can provide solutions that are practicable because of its nature. Art gives no room for laziness but hardwork and greater creativity to the level of which the artist's involvement through intelligent imagination is required. Value reorientation amongst Nigerians can be possible only when our focus is to ensure that everyone understands the importance of value reorientation towards national development using arts, which as the best media to reach out to the people in a more effective way using banners, posters, billboard etc. To ensure the sustenance of a well-cultured education and to create new frontiers of success, Art Education must be emphasized. Unagha and Ibenne (2010) believe that, nothing is more important than broadening our horizon, escaping from ourselves and making discoveries that make the individual a more valuable member of society.

### **Concept of National Development**

The concept of national development is all encompassing. It entails industrialization, human capital development and social as well as educational quality of the people. All nations of the world attain such height only by tapping the tremendous power of education in their pursuit for the attainment of national objectives. For example, the Germans during the second Reich of 1871 used education as an instrument par excellence for the unification of all the Germans, while Japanese during the Meiji Restoration used education to inculcate and propagate such cardinal virtues as benevolence, fidelity, justice and integrity in the life of the people. In all these cases, each country demonstrated unflinching commitment to the realization of national imperatives. When the Meiji period ended, with the death of the emperor in 1912, Japan had a highly educated population free of feudal class restrictions.

The Soviet Union as it was called then, showed great commitment to a high quality educational system as an instrument of national development for planning through scientific and technological fields. In addition, Russian Spurtunc of 1957 at which Americans felt challenged threatened, and turned to the schools for help as stated by Bottcher (1996). In the full realization, Ukeje (1996) states that one of the functions of schools is to provide a setting in which boys and girls can grow intellectually to help in the national development.

The United Nations Human Development Report (UNHDR, 2005) pronounced a grim verdict on Nigerian developmental statues. The report says alleges that "while people are living long throughout the world, the reverse is the case in Nigeria". UNHDR (2005) specifies that life expectancy in Nigeria has fallen from 51:6 to 43:4 years, rating our developmental table from 151<sup>st</sup> position it occupied in 2004 to 158<sup>th</sup> position out of the total of 177 countries covered in the assessment. Umoru (2005) notes a front-page report title "World Bank rates Nigeria second poorest nation". The report further "cites Nigeria as a resource dependent nation, which could have produced capital five times higher than it did in 2000, if only it had made a moderate effort to save".

Umoru (2005) further observes that Nigerians have numerous problems ranging from declining productivity, ignorance, mismanagement of resources, hunger, disease,

imports of petroleum products to meet domestic demand. "United State of Africa" as Nigeria is often called, has many challenges because of mismanaged and misdirected resources. All these are rooted in the character and attitudes of Nigerians entrenched by corrupt disposition and the desire to acquire all for self. Njoku (2007:11) expresses the decaying nature of the society that "everything about Nigeria is corrupt, the political power elites are corruption, and the people are aspiring to be corrupt. Elections are corrupt. Electricity is corrupt. The water is corrupt. The land is corrupt. The air is corrupt. Even the war against corruption is corrupt". Njoku goes on to state the consequences of corruption are worse than HIV/AIDS, nuclear bombs, armed robbery and terrorism combined.

### **What is Art Education?**

Art Education has its roots in drawing, which, with reading, writing, singing, and playing instruments comprise the basic elementary school curriculum in the seventeenth century (Mamza, 2007). Drawing has continued to be the basic component of the core curriculum throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when educators saw drawing as important in teaching handwork, nature study, Geography, and other subjects. Art education later expanded to include painting, design, graphic art, and the 'plastic arts' (e.g. sculpture and ceramics) although art has continued to be seen primarily as utilitarian. This is the view of 1993 Arts Education Partnership Working Group study. The group study believes that art improves multicultural understanding and the development of higher-order thinking skills, creativity, and problem-solving abilities. Art Education also refers to learning, instruction and programming based upon the visual and tangible arts. It is the set of instructions on how to use the language of arts. It is all about giving opportunities to people, whether children or adults.

Denen (2013:23) highlights some benefits and roles of Art Education for sustainable development as follows:

### **Benefits of Art Education for National Development**

1. Art Education stimulates and develops imagination, critical thinking, refines cognitive and creative skills.
2. It has a tremendous impact on the developmental growth of every child and has proven to help level the "learning field" across socio-economic boundaries.
3. Strengthens problem-solving and critical-thinking skills, adding to overall academic achievement and school success.
4. Develops a sense of craftsmanship, quality task performance, and goal-setting—skills needed to succeed in the classroom and beyond.
5. Teaches children life skills such as developing an informed perception, articulating a vision, learning to solve problems and making decisions, building self-confidence and self-discipline, developing the ability to imagine what might be, and accepting responsibility to complete tasks from start to finish, nurtures important values, including team-building skills; respecting alternative viewpoints; and appreciating and being aware of different cultures and traditions.

The significance of Art Education in the development of a child cannot be debated, Art Education is a tool subject. It is the child's lingua franca, through art the child's understanding and thoughts are made clear. Other subjects require visuals and illustrations to back up the process of learning. To support the processes of learning

from visuals, Enamhe (2013) carried out a study of the importance of visuals in Primary and Secondary schools in Calabar, Nigeria. The researcher came out with the discovery that students performed better using visuals and illustrations to learn than those who learnt without them (Enamhe, 2013). Art is therefore a correlation of all other subjects in school, it influences their successful teaching through sketches or illustrations. The roles of Art to nation – building are numerous: arts promotes our cultural heritage and creates identity. Nigeria is known for her traditional art cultures of Nok, Ife, Tiv, Owo, Benin among others.

### **Nigerian Governments' Efforts towards Value Re-Orientation**

Considering Governments 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 seized power with the primary aim of tackling the ills of tribalism, nepotism corruption and favouritism. In the second republic, the late President Shugu Shagari proclaimed an “ethical revolution”. Major General Muhamadu Buhari in 1983 took over the Government of Shagari and launched “War Against Indiscipline” (WAI) while Mass Mobilization, Self-Reliance, Social Justice and Economic Recovery (MAMSER) was established by President Ibrahim Babagida.

The aim of MAMSER, according to Onyia and Iyida (1987), was to get Nigerians to embrace the values embodied in the programme. MAMSER was a product of the Political Bureau that submitted reports to the Nigerian Military Federal Government on March 27<sup>th</sup> 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 Abacha's administration which came shortly after Shonekan's interim government reintroduced War Against Indiscipline and Corruption (WAI-C). The Goodluck 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 initiates the 'Change Agenda'. Unfortunately, the so much desired change is not being envisaged. For Agbese (2016), what the country needs is regimentation, not empty sloganeering. According to Agbese, leaders drive regimentation by demonstrating their discipline, their incorruptibility, their obedience to the rule of law, 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 militant ethnic groups. Little wonder, that “Nigerians are politically angry, economically hungry and socially militant. Millions of Nigerians are wallowing in abject poverty, existing under primal standards of living. No jobs for timid youths and graduates while individual and ethnic interests reign supreme” (Osagie, 2016).

The 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 discovers that the implementation of these

policies were not rooted appropriately. The best approach here is to adapt a holistic approach considering the growth and development of the child. It is true that education curriculum is being reviewed in order to address these issues. This explains why the National Policy on Education has several editions. Unfortunately, emphasis is not laid on the role of Art Education.

### Conclusion

The main concern of this paper is that Nigerians need values reorientation. In other words, to what extent can Art Education help in the process of values reorientation for national development? Nigerian youths are seen to be generally active and creative. There is the need for assisting them at whatever level towards engaging themselves meaningfully. Importantly, there is need to re-orientate the minds of Nigerians for a total turn around. Nigeria will improve in terms of how we perceive it and by the kind of environment created. Values reorientation process should be a high – priority of the present government of Nigeria. Every Nigerian should be part of this exercise for a better tomorrow. On this note, the paper concludes that the desired reorientation that we look for can only be achieved through a vibrant educational programme. That is to say, instead of living the concepts in their theoretical forms alone, practical efforts should be made to employ Art Educators in the implementation of the educational policy documents.

### Recommendations

- Based on the issues discussed in this paper, it is therefore recommended that:
- i. The Federal Government should develop a strong Art Education curriculum so as to provide the opportunity for students to solve real-world problems through creativity and to convey their talents to others.
  - ii. Materials needed in these fields of creativity are to be provided so as to facilitate students' communication skills.
  - iii. The government should also establish standing frameworks for training youths to acquire practical skills.
  - iv. Federal government and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) should embark upon massive youths development programmes on creative skills as this may be a viable intervening tool for employment.
  - v. Reorientation of the youths should form part of the school curriculum in order to instil discipline in the youths. Students should be taught not to give and receive bribe no matter what.
  - vi. Workshops and seminars should be organized to educate the masses of the value of Art Education to encourage parents to send their wards to study in the various aspects of the discipline.

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