

**VALUE RE-ORIENTATION AND TRANSFORMATION:
A PANACEA FOR THRIVING IN TURBULENT TIMES**

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Abstract

This paper concentrates on the evaluation of value system in Nigeria and how it can be used as a potent tool to thrive in turbulent times. The challenges of insecurity; wide spread corruption; lack of respect for the dignity of human persons; lack of value for lives manifested in violence and killings and various forms of vices in different parts of the country are pointers to the degree of decadence that permeates the society as a result of the erosion of moral values. These conditions are antithetical to the transformation and development of the society. It is against this background that this paper attempts to analyze the role of value re-orientation and transformation as a panacea for thriving in turbulent times. The re-orientation and transformation of value system in our society is a search for national culture that would reshape national character and image. This paper employed the review of literature and making logical inferences from them. It is revealed that when national life is taken over by social sins, the citizens pursue wealth without knowledge and character, pleasure without conscience, commerce without morality, worship without sacrifice, science without humanity and politics without principles. This paper provided that re-orientation of value system would promote national image, respect for human life and corporate values. It is on this premise that the people would imbibe the culture of hard work and productivity, wealth creation, employment generation, entrepreneurship, intangible wealth and competition. Hence, it is advocated that, for the country to thrive and move forward, there must be value re-orientation among citizens engendered by transformational leadership with good values, correct ideas, appropriate strategies and policies, good institutions, political will, building state capacity and accountable governance among others. No society can thrive

in turbulent times if its value system is left at the mercy of individuals' situations, circumstances and times.

Keywords: Re-orientation, Value System, thriving, turbulent times.

Introduction

Every country desires to thrive in turbulent times to achieve growth and development. Good values can be a motive force that can drive positive development. Growth is a necessary but insufficient condition for development to take place in any country. In the past decade in Nigeria, there has been enormous growth but the growth has not translated into development. This is a result of the fact that development does not and cannot take place in a social vacuum. The decay in values is manifested in the many challenges facing the country as Nigeria has turned into a community without respect for human lives. The serial bombings, hostage takings, armed robbery, cold-blooded killings and ethno-religious conflicts traceable to militant groups with conflicting ideological, political and religious agenda, widespread corruption, examination misconduct in our schools, the quest for illegal wealth accumulation among other vices point to the loss of societal values. At a time when Nigerians thought corruption and power failure were the main challenges, insecurity took central stage. A total of about 2000 lives were lost to bomb explosions from 2010 to 2014; between March to December, 2012 alone, there were a total of 153 successful explosions (Shittu & Ismail, 2014).

One huge challenge in Nigeria is lack of internalization and practice of the core values as enshrined in the constitution. There are certain conditions and factors required for the growth and development of any country. Among other things, it requires the right values and transformation of the political, economic and social spheres. In this paper, we argue that value re-orientation is a panacea for thriving in turbulent times in Nigeria. But first, we examine the concepts of value re-orientation, transformation, growth and development.

Conceptual Discourse

In this section, the authors explore the meaning of relevant concepts that will give a clear understanding of this discourse.

a. Value Re-Orientation

Values are deep seated beliefs that influence people's actions and the rules by which they make decisions within their society. Values determine attitudes which in turn influence behaviour. It has been documented that value ascription is a motive force that drives positive achievement. It is therefore essential that every individual, group and indeed the entire nation must have core values which serve as the driving engines of development, growth and progress. (National Orientation agency, 2009).

b. Transformation

The word transformation comes from a Greek word 'metamorphoo' meaning "to change into another form." Transformation leads to change in appearance and character for the better. The Nigerian ruling political elite have recognized the need for transformation in Nigeria. During the 2011 general elections, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan campaigned under the slogan of transformation. After being elected President, the government elaborated the transformation agenda. The transformation agenda is hinged on the argument that Nigeria's development efforts have over the years been characterized by lack of continuity, consistency and commitment (3Cs) to agreed policies, programmes and projects as well as an absence of a long term perspective. The agenda draws its inspiration from Nigeria's Vision 20:2020 and a set of priority policies and programmes which when implemented, it is hoped will lead to the transformation of the Nigerian economy to meet the future needs of the Nigerian people. The agenda assumed a GDP growth rate of 11.7 percent per annum from 2011-2015. It was also hinged on greater harmony between fiscal and monetary policy; pursuit of sound macroeconomic policies including fiscal prudence; review of the budget process so that budget can be enacted within the first month of the year; passage of Planning and Project Continuity Bill; job creation; improved public expenditure

management; improved governance; improved judiciary; economic diplomacy; improved performance of the legislature; human capital development; infrastructure development and execution of policies, programmes and projects especially in the priority areas of agriculture and food security, manufacturing, oil and gas, information and communication technology, transportation amongst others. (Nigeria vision 20:2020)

This paper argued that transformation means radical social, economic and political change. Transformative change should lead to eradication of poverty, improvement in the Condition of living of citizens, economic empowerment, reduction of inequality, citizen participation and ownership of the political and development process, elimination of corruption and transparency and accountable governance.

c. Growth and development:

Growth is one of the indices of thriving in turbulent times which is a measure of sustained increases in output or Gross Domestic Product (GDP). GDP is the total quantity of goods and services produced in an economy in a given period of time, usually one year. Although different scholars have different perspectives on development, most students and practitioners of development accept that it must mean progress of some kind. It is seen as a multi-dimensional process, one that changes the economy, polity and society of the countries in which it occurs. Sen (2008), sees development as a process of expanding the real freedom that people enjoy. According to her, development requires the removal of major sources of 'unfreedom', poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as systematic social deprivation, neglect of public facilities as well as intolerance or over activity of repressive states'

In this conceptualization, freedom is central to thriving in turbulent times which consist of the process of development and the achievement of development is dependent on the free condition of the people. For the people to be agents of their own development require advancement in five distinct types of freedom namely political freedoms; economic facilities; social opportunities; transparency and protective security. In a similar vein, the UNDP Human Development report 2007/2008 stated that: Human development is about people. It is about expanding people's real choices and the substantive freedoms-the capabilities-that enable them to lead lives that they value. Choice and freedom in human development mean some thing more than the absence of constraints. People whose lives are blighted by poverty, ill health or illiteracy are not in any meaningful sense free to lead the lives that they value neither are people who are denied the civil and political rights they need to influence decisions that affect their lives.

According to Utomi(2006), development simply put is discipline. It is about how discipline drives the human spirit to triumph over odds of poverty trap, physical geography, fiscal trap, governance, cultural barriers, geopolitics, lack of innovation and demographic trap. Kambhampati(2004), argues that development requires growth and structural change, some measure of distributive equity, modernization in social and cultural attitudes, a degree of political transformation and stability, an improvement in health and education so that population growth stabilizes, and an increase in urban living and employment. As the United Nations has established, one of the surprising results of human development research in recent years is the lack of a significant correlation between economic growth and improvement in health and education. It has been shown that human development is different from economic growth and that substantial achievements are possible even without fast growth. Examples include the Indian state of Kerala and countries such as Costa Rica, Cuba and Sri Lanka that attained much higher human development than other countries at their income levels.

d. Turbulent times: It simply means a chaotic, disordered condition that is characterized by conflict. A time of war is a turbulent time for a country. It is also a time of uncertainties for a country.

Growth and Development in Nigeria

Economic growth has been a big challenge in Nigeria for the past three decades. The annual real Gross Domestic Product growth rate between 1999 and 2009 was a mere 2.9 percent with a dismal 0.4 percent in 1999. However the real GDP grew at an annual average of 5.6 percent from 1999 -2008. (National Bureau of Statistics, 2012). Unfortunately, the high growth rate level is not translated into improved well-being for the generality of Nigerians. This growth without employment is a result of the neo-liberal policies of a resource cursed country which does not place premium on labour intensive approach, small holder agriculture and no value added manufacturing. There is therefore a new kind of growth, a radical growth that we should advocate for. This kind of growth should generate employment, improve local content, reduce corruption, diversify the economy and become competitive. More importantly, this kind of radical growth must deal with inequality. This is because experiences all over the world show that inequality is the greatest obstacle to development which can only be tackled through state intervention. According to the UNDP Human Development Report (2015), Human development gaps within countries are as stark as the gaps between countries. These gaps reflect unequal opportunity-people held back because of their gender, group identity, wealth or location. Such inequalities are unjust. They are also economically wasteful and socially destabilizing. Overcoming structural forces that create and perpetuate extreme inequality is one of the most efficient routes for overcoming extreme poverty, enhancing welfare of society and accelerating progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This is why countries that have focused on dealing with the challenges of inequality in the last few decades have made monumental progress. It has been documented that in recent time, a combination of pressure from below and enlightened leadership from above has produced some remarkable exercises in redistribution. In several East Asian countries, for example, elites have embraced the long-term case for equality, to prevent social division and to stoke a thriving economy. Taiwan and Vietnam have combined astonishing growth with high levels of equity. Indonesia and Malaysia have managed to reduce inequality over an extended period through government-led redistribution and generation of employment.

In Brazil, under the governments of Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Luiz Lula da Silva, popular movements have carried business elites along in redistributing wealth and opportunity in a hitherto appallingly unequal society. In the past decade, Brazil has managed to lower its world inequality ranking from second to tenth by a mixture of good economic management ... and redistributing income to poor people through various government schemes such as the Bolsa Familia (Family Stipend), which pays poor families a monthly stipend if they ensure that their children attend school and are vaccinated. Lula's first term saw the poorest 10 percent of the population increase their incomes by 7 percent a year, while the incomes of the richest 10 percent were stagnated. As a result, some five million Brazilians were lifted out of poverty, and inequality fell to its lowest level in 30 years (UNDP, 2015)

On the other hand, countries that have not focused on bridging the inequality gap have poorly fared in addressing poverty and hunger. Unfortunately, many countries of the world especially in Africa, including Nigeria continue to formulate and implement policies and programmes that further widen the gap instead of closing the gap between rich and poor nations on the one hand and rich and poor citizens of individual countries on the other. Part of the problem is that the dominant knowledge in the world promoted by the dominant classes naturally lead to widening of the gap. The challenge is therefore to propose concrete, practical and workable alternatives that will close the gap. What is needed in Africa today are more "common sense" approaches that open up new avenues for increased productivity, by laying the conditions for development through improved governance, increased investment in education and infrastructure, and improved access of the poor to productive assets and information (UNDP, 2013).

It is therefore clear to us that the kind of radical growth that we advocate is only possible with massive state intervention with measures to protect the poor and vulnerable. Action Aid studies has shown that China through strong state support and heavy investment in supporting its poor farmers and a relatively equitable distribution of land was able to reduce the number of undernourished people by 58 million

between 1990 and 2001. In the same vein, Malawi, one of the poorest countries in the world was able to halt famine and became a net exporter of grains within three years by massive state intervention including increased budgetary allocation to agriculture, fertilizer subsidy, irrigation schemes and grain reserves. Similarly, President Lula da Silva of Brazil has made it a political objective to eradicate hunger and launched the programme Fome Zero (Zero Hunger) with introduction of food banks, community kitchens, locally produced school meals along with simultaneous support for small holder family farmers and land reform settlers. The result is a drastic reduction in child mortality which fell by 73 percent and child death also fell by 45 percent.(UNDP, 2015)

On the other hand, since the mid-nineties, despite the rising per capita GDP, 30 million more people in India have been added to the ranks of the hungry because of its neo-liberal policies.

Nigeria ranks very low in all socioeconomic and development indices. In its Human Development Report, the UNDP (2013) ranked Nigeria at 156 out of 187 countries. The country has been consistently rated by Transparency International (TI) to be among the most corrupt countries in the world in its Corruption Perception Index. In its report released in December 2012 TI ranks Nigeria 143 out of 183 countries surveyed in 2011. Several probes by the National Assembly indicate that there is a high level of corruption in the country. One of the major problems is that economic growth in Nigeria has not created meaningful employment as many of the country's youth including those with university degrees are currently unemployed.

The problem is that Nigeria's economic growth is driven, in part, by rising global oil prices. The manufacturing sector in Nigeria represents only 4 percent of GDP compared to 20 percent in Brazil, 34 percent in China, 30 percent in Malaysia, 35 percent in Thailand and 28 percent in Indonesia. Meanwhile, it has been shown that "no country can banish mass poverty unless it creates millions of new jobs a year in manufacturing and services." (UNDP, 2010)

Nigeria Value System and Development

Countries are judged by how her citizens act. Nigeria's reputation is upheld by how Nigerians live up to her core values of honesty, integrity and respect for people. The nation's principles are based on these core values and indicate how citizens promote trust, openness, teamwork, professionalism, transparency and pride in what we do. These core values drives the principles of what is right and wrong that are accepted by an individual or a social group (Utomi, 2006).

Development experts had outlined three major indices: education, life expectancy and per capital income, as accurate measurement of national development. While these may be true, Utomi (2006) feels the likely error in this is that the springboard upon which these legs stands - national value, had been overlooked and hence there is a need to re- evaluate such yardsticks if wholesome national development will be achieved especially within Nigeria context.

A critical look at various opinions (Kambhampati 2004, Utomi 2006; Sen 2008, Seong 2016,) on what value system means and the need to promote its expediency suggest that national value systems are principles, standards of behaviour and judgment of what is acceptable by all within a nation. A national value then is a representation of what the people generally consider and strictly adhere to as very integral to their national success. In many ways, this attitude reflects in their daily practices. Researchers constantly ask themselves: what are our national values and how does these impact on our national development? In most cases, many Nigerians cannot and do not know nor hold one another accountable to values we all jointly cherish. Often, there are none to be honest. A look at our lopsided appointments and reward system can make one sick. What about the value placed on a Nigerian life? There is an uneven quota system and federal character parameters which impede on speedy development plan and execution. Contracts are awarded based on ethnic or close relations basis while we ignore vital issues of merit. Many deserving Nigerians had been sidelined from national honour while known public fund 'thieves' had been awarded. Our traditional chiefs are not left behind. Chieftaincy titles are

given to the highest bidder as long as they can show a level of opulence. Sources of such display are never genuinely queried (Utomi, 2006).

Despite all these, we produce solid development plans every now and then with the hope of achieving them when fundamental issues of honesty, meritocracy, hard work, mindfulness and respect for others as well as putting others and the nation's interest first before self, had not been settled. Without these, we can hope against hope and achieve nothing. The springboard will have to be in place first. In our efforts to find a case study upon which we could benchmark our position, with regards to any country which had made great strides in achieving faster development through strong national value, we stumbled on Prof. Seong (2016) analysis of Singapore. It will be good to share some of Seong Chess' reflections, at least for those who have not come across it before.

Singapore, a heterogeneous nation just like Nigeria, may be smaller in population when compared with Nigeria but it had gone through some of the challenges Nigeria is going through. These challenges include national conflict, unemployment and political unrest, but Singapore began its development strides with national value internalization which rests on national unity and common purpose. As a matter of expediency, Singapore enshrined the supremacy and legitimacy of civic rights and justice irrespective of class or race. There was also community-wide mobilizations of resources for communal upliftment. In all these, communities are seen as partners while government plays facilitative role. Singaporeans understood that, for this project to work, there must be an establishment of a merit-driven society. This demand for meritocratic society raises its standard beyond influence of race, class or culture. Every effort is focused on talents and economic efficiency with assurance of equity while reward will be based on performance and function. To ensure this works, legislation was tightened against use of religion for political ends. Government always and swiftly respond to activities that can sow the seed of racial and religious discords. In order to enhance economic security, Singapore placed huge commitment on educational standard of the population (Seong, 2016)

In addition the national value system, Singapore also made efforts and ensure people who gain political powers are imbued with honesty and integrity. To tame greed, corruption as well as attract quality private people into government, political appointees' salaries are tied to what obtained in the private sector in relations to function and performance. There was a deliberate entrenchment of a value system which promotes service to the nation for its sake and not for reward. Other issues solidly entrenched in Singapore national values which they borrowed from Confucius include respect for properly constituted authority, society before self and family as foundation of the society, respect for education and knowledge, hard work as virtue, frugality and judicious management of resources, sense of shame, delayed gratification, fidelity among friends etc. We do know some of these may have its challenges, Singapore carefully took the good side in all these virtues and jettisoned the bad sides. Just to ensure continuous adherence, Singapore includes all these in their educational curriculum (Seong, 2016).

But here in Nigeria, history and civic education which should capture all these are being stylishly eliminated. If Nigeria must survive in her turbulent times in order to achieve the much needed development, we may have to learn from Singapore experience. It is true, for national value system to help, it must reflect, promote community sense of identity as well as be internalized beyond the lip service. In Germany, there are things you do and everyone will shout 'this is not the Germans' spirit'. When last did we hear such language in Nigeria and in regard to what?

Value Re-Orientation and transformation

Every society needs to define its values and engage in activities that will sustain those set of values. The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria provides for the motto, social order and national ethics which underpin the values of Nigeria. The Constitution provides that the motto of the country shall be unity and faith, peace and progress. The Constitution also provides that the state social order is founded on the ideals of freedom, equality and justice. Section 23 provides that the national ethics shall be discipline, integrity, dignity of labour, social justice, religious tolerance and patriotism. Section 24 further prescribes duties for citizens of Nigeria to abide by the constitution, respect its ideals and its

institutions, the national flag, the national anthem and legitimate authorities; help to ensure the good name of Nigeria, defend the country and render national service and respect the dignity of other citizens. However, the live experience of Nigerians is quite different from the constitutional provisions on ethics and values for the country. There is a lot of indiscipline in every facet of life in the country. Integrity is no longer cherished by many people. The get rich quick syndrome and pursuit of easy money has reduced the dignity of labour. There is high level of religious intolerance and the love for the country is waning. Many Nigerians have no respect for our institutions and national symbols. There is therefore a great need for value re-orientation.

The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) recognized this need and value re-orientation was one of the four key strategies of the development strategy. The approach was to “lead a campaign to re-instill the virtues of honesty, hard work, selfless service, moral rectitude, and patriotism. Unfortunately, throughout the period of the NEEDS, very little was done to actualize the campaign” (Nigeria Vision 20:2020).

The development of Nigeria has posed a lot of challenges to development theorists, development practitioners, development partners, government officials and civil society organizations. We argue that for progress to occur in turbulent times in Nigeria there has to be transformation especially in the economic, social and political spheres. On return to civil rule in 1999, many scholars and politicians argued that what is needed is reform of the various sectors. But after a decade of implementation of reforms, it became clear that what is needed is much more than reform but transformation. The idea of transformation resonates with many Nigerians. The Goodluck Ebele Jonathan administration embarked on a lot of projects and activities ostensibly to bring about transformation and development. But, transformation and development are complex issues that require more than implementation of projects and activities. It requires concrete changes in the political, economic and social spheres. Despite the reform efforts in the last few years, there has been little change in the political, social and economic sectors in Nigeria. This study argues that what is needed in Nigeria is not reform but transformation and that leadership is critical to bring about transformation in Nigeria. The importance of leadership for the success of organizations and nations cannot be overemphasized. Some scholars have pointed out that everything rises and falls on leadership. Despite this recognition, there is scarcity of leaders all over the world. According to Munroe (2014), the world is filled with followers, supervisors and managers but very few leaders.

Nigeria has been promoted as the most populous black nation in the world with enormous human and natural resources. Nigeria gained independence in 1960 after 99 years of British colonial rule. The political history of the country shows that there has been a lot of political instability with about eight (8) military coup de tats and 29 years of military rule out of the 59 years of Nigeria's existence. There is lack of transparency and accountability in governance and increasing state of insecurity occasioned by armed banditry and ethno-religious conflicts. Most infrastructures are in a state of decay. There is a great need to build institutions, systems and processes for a just and accountable governance and a complete overhaul of the electoral process with adequate provisions for gender equity and regulation of party financing and campaign finance. Furthermore, over the years the social fabric of the Nigerian society has been destroyed. A lot of people become wealthy overnight without questions about the sources of the wealth. People who embezzle public funds are rewarded by their communities with chieftaincy titles. There is brazen display of wealth in the midst of widespread poverty. The extended family system is being destroyed. The get rich quick syndrome has caught up with a great number of the population (National Orientation Agency, 2009). There is the need for concrete programming on re-orientation, social values, promotion of good work ethics and values and social corporate responsibility.

The way forward for Nigeria

For the past sixteen years, there has been enormous growth in Nigeria. But this growth has not translated into development especially in terms of life expectancy, health and quality of life. What is required are

good values, correct ideas, appropriate strategies and policies, Strategic leadership, good institutions, political will, state capacity and accountable governance. What is important for Nigeria is not just growth but development. For that development to happen, it requires value re-orientation. Although the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999) provides for values that can help in development, the values are observed more in breach. There is therefore a great need for intervention to sustain the values that have been provided for in the constitution that will make the country to be a great country of good people.

It is clear to us that the concept of transformation resonates with the Nigerian people. The context in which we are operating requires transformation in all its ramifications: economic, political, social and cultural. But since the return to civil rule in 1999, there has been undue emphasis on economic transformation to the neglect of political, social and cultural transformation. There is little attention to value re-orientation.

A programme for value re-orientation of Nigeria must have several components. First, there should be research on the core values and how Nigerians can internalize the values. Secondly, there is the need to create the Nigerian story, a new strong compelling story of the Nigerian dream. This story should be canvassed with documentaries and slogans that resonate with the people. Thirdly, there should be strong communication strategy and tools to drive value re-orientation using radio, television, newspapers, film and social media. Fourthly, concerted efforts should be made to build institutions based on the core values of the country. Finally, the country should recognize people who display the values. National honours and awards should be given to people who display these values and not on people who have accumulated wealth through dubious means.

In addition, it must be pointed out that there are different kinds of leadership required for different eras. Scholars have argued that the turbulent times requires charismatic leadership with a combination of intelligence, purpose, grace under pressure and consideration for followers. The period of change requires transformational leaders who are courageous, value driven and visionary people that are uncomfortable with uncertainty while steady times require transactional leaders who maintain the status quo and strengthen existing structures, cultures and strategies.

The Nigeria of today does not require transactional leaders. We need leaders who can combine attributes of charismatic and transformational leadership in all sectors (public, private and civil society); all organs of government (executive, legislature and judiciary) and in all tiers of government (Federal, State and local governments) so that they can be the vanguards of value re-orientation and transformation in the society.

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