Value Re-Orientation in Nigeria: 
The Role of Women as Change Agents

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ABSTRACT
The re-orientation of values in our society is a search for national culture that would reshape national character and image. When national life is taken over by social sins, the citizens pursue wealth without work, pleasure without conscience, knowledge without character, commerce without morality, and worship without sacrifice. No matter the amount of reforms undertaken by the government, Nigeria will never be great not until value re-orientation is vigorously pursued. In this paper some of the corruptions due to today’s faulty value system which include embezzlement of public funds, theft, killing and assassination, disrespect for rules and regulations and so on, were critically examined. The paper also brings into focus, the role of women as change agents in value re-orientation in Nigeria. The paper recommends among others that women when economically and socially empowered; they become a potent force for change, as caretakers, women should play their monitoring role and to rebuild their trust in the minds of their children by always being there for them, women must help their children/youths return to God, and so on. The paper finally concludes that the family unit is the primary focus of value re-orientation, informed by the parental roles, goals, values and manners that influence the children moral and social behaviour as characters and values are better instilled from the formative years of a child.

Keywords: Value, Re-Orientation, Women, Change Agent

INTRODUCTION
As described in vision 2010, Nigeria is a multi ethnic society with a value system that derives from the diversity of its people, religion and culture. The element of this value system include: respect for elders, honesty and accountability, cooperation, industry, discipline, self-confidence and moral courage.

It is a fact that all is not well with our nation and that the values we once held dear, sadly belongs in another era. Where are the values like honesty, integrity, good neighbourliness, religious tolerance and so on that once defined our society? Taking the issue of corruption and insecurity for instance, Soludo (2013), stated that ten years ago it would have been really appalling to hear of individuals stealing billions of naira, but that is a norm today. What about being our brothers’ keeper? Today, Nigerians have grown so numb and they are no longer shocked when people are slaughtered in a senseless terror campaign by some deranged individuals. As a result there are many internally displaced people in Nigeria, yet citizens carry on as if all is well. Everything has reduced to politics.

Growing up, it wasn’t unusual seeing Christians and Muslims mingling together celebrating Christmas and Selah, but today bigotry reigns supreme. People perpetuate the worst kinds of ethnic chauvinism and idolatry you could ever think of. Driven by greed and inordinate lust for the “good life”, we seek the shortest possible route to riches. We revere criminals and treasury looters as our “best of men” bestowing upon them honorary degrees, chieftaincy titles or even “purchase” election forms for them.
and in return, use our youths/our children as thugs to perpetuate evil. They sit on special seats in churches because they donate or give more.

According to Eikenberry (2011), it is assumed that a nation’s value system is sacred and could extend beyond that nation’s boundaries. All nations are supposed to be proud of their value systems, just as a person is proud of his or her upbringing and character and would try to impress that behaviour and beliefs on others. In fact a value system is based on averaging the total human experiences and producing a compromised version for all to follow.

Ododo (2016) opined that Nigeria is now in an era of “everyone is for himself and only God is for us all”. The degree of distrust has become congenital to the extent that most Nigerians have since stopped trusting God as well. This is evident in the habit that only Fridays or Sundays are the visiting holy days, whereas other days are taken as free for all kinds of ungodly heinous engagements. It is not uncommon to find that a lot of professing and practicing religious fundamentalists in Nigeria have been associated with crimes, beastly and cruel acts of torture, killing, fleecing, lying and manipulation of fellow citizens for money and for high positions.

The pursued of material success over and above every other laudable virtue has become deep-rooted among all cadres of Nigerians. These are the cankerworms that have eaten deep into the hearts of our society. Nigerians are now possessed by a delusion of grandeur where everybody has obsessed with the pursuit of vainglory and vulgar success. Every Nigerian is desirous to “make it” and to have a “good life” by hook or crook. This ruin is the most difficult to diagnose and to cure because it is hidden in the mind.

“Wealth without work, pleasure without conscience, Knowledge without character, politics without morality, worship without sacrifice are problems the nation must deal with”. Any attempt at restoring the fallen Nehemiah complex of Nigeria must accommodate value re-orientation, otherwise today’s predicaments will forever remain in our land” (Ayokunule, 2006).

One of the four major goals of the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) is value re-orientation and the other three goals are wealth creation, employment generation and poverty reduction. NEEDS (2013) anchored in the imperative to restore the fundamental values of Nigerian, which have been weakened over the years. This they cant achieve alone, so all hands must be on deck.

Ododo (2016), is of the view that it is now being realized that nature is every bit as important as nurture. Genetic influences, brain chemistry, and neurological development contribute strongly to who we are as children and what we become as adults. While each child is born with his or her own distinct genetic potential for physical, social, emotional and cognitive development, the possibilities for reaching the potential remain tied to early life experiences and the parents-child relationship with the family. When we talk of early childhood we refer to the role of women as mothers. Therefore this paper will discuss the role of women as agents of change in the re-orientation of value system in Nigerian.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This paper will be analyzed from the perspective of historical method of research. The historical method of research is the process of learning and understanding the background and growth of a chosen field of study or profession that can offer insight into organizational cultures, current trends and future possibilities. It is the process of systematically examining an account of what has happened in the past, the dynamic account of past events that involves an interpretation attempt to recapture the nuances, personalities and ideas of that events. One of the goals of historical research is the communicating of past events (Kumar, 2013).

Historical research method is a scientific method in which comparison is used to reveal the general and the particular in historical phenomena and to gain an understanding of the various historical stages of development of one and same phenomenon or of two different but cotemporaneous phenomena. In historical research, attempt is made to establish facts in order to arrive at conclusions concerning past events or predict future events. It is also a process of collecting, analysing and interpreting information to answer questions.

In traditional African societies, the women in the families, both nuclear and extended, plays an enormous role for the survival of its members. The implication therefore, is that for effective re-
orientation of value systems, women who are nation builders have to be at the forefront as change agents and have to go back to the drawing board using the historical research method to find out where they have missed the path. Historical research method would provide re-orientation of value system and would promote national image, respect for human life and corporate values. Women as home and society makers must therefore serve as the change agents Nigerian need because charity they said begins at home.

Value Systems in our Society
Ayokunne (2016), described value system as the sum total of our ideas and beliefs. It includes every opinion we hold about life. Each thing we like or dislike and the importance each one has to us, merge to form our unique value system. Our value system develops through what we are taught and experience, combined with our reactions to them, forming our preferences and our unique perspective on life. Ultimately, every opinion we have in life is based on something in our value system. According to Njoku (2008), the quality of any society is directly linked to the importance of the shared values, and religion is often present at the heart of a human value system. Value implies acceptable standard, ideal way of doing things and living virtuous life in the society.

Positive and Negative Value Systems in our society
The positive or dominant values that serve different societies include respect and honour accorded to parents, elders, men and women of honour. Love and protection of family and family name has been the practice in traditional contemporary Nigerian society. The society is now characterized by high level of distrust, suspicious, and everybody has become a suspect of misplaced value. Immorality and lack of sanctity of life have increased as murder and kidnapping have become daily occurrence that pervaded the society.

Education
Njoku (2015), is of the opinion that education that is seen as life long formal and informal processes of equipping individuals to be aware of their environment and to exploit, manage and dominate same for their benefits and of the society at large has also negative influence. However, it can not be over-emphasized that through formal education, all forms of misdemeanour are learnt. Education breeds even negative knowledge to the disadvantage of the society. In this way education has both influenced and affected the dominant value system in Nigeria. Moral education was abandoned in schools, when government took over all schools, (Ikpe, 2002).

Religion
The influence of religion according to Agba (1999), on value system in our society cannot be doubted. In the days of missionaries, religious teachings, sanctions and admonitions are guides to people’s moral conducts as well as our traditional religions. Nowadays, Nigeria religious scene is beset with daunting doctrinal differences that resulted to further splits, division, pomposity, pride, lack of fear of God.

Leadership
Corruption has been a challenge to leadership in Nigeria. Failed moral teaching of children gave birth to corruption in our society (darling and Steinberg, 1993). The high level of corruption and indiscipline compelled past leaders of our country to wage war against it. Buhari first administration instituted War Against Indiscipline (WAI), while Obasanjo set up Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) just to mention a few. These attempts were geared to shun corruption which has not been eradicated. The problem stems from leaders to the led. When leaders are corrupt, the people cannot help but follow the same bane in the name of survival thereby ignoring desirable and acceptable standards of society.

With the few factors highlighted above, it is obvious that corruption have eaten up the value systems in Nigeria, therefore re-orientation of the value systems through historical research method may be the solution.

Re-Orientation of Values in Nigeria
Re-orientation is the re-positioning of Nigerians, where we ought to be in the future. The re-orientation of values system as stated by Njoku (2015) is conscious development of human resources through ideological appeals, planning, training, productivity and efficiency in achievements through
cooperate culture. The re-orientation on materialistic needs and never-ending lust to earn more and more by putting in less and less effort can be exchanged for value based life and for helping others who are disadvantaged. The re-orientation of values has been structured under parenting (family unit), education, government, among others. This paper is concerned about the parenting (family unit) and that is the role of women in the family and society as change agents in the re-orientation of our values in Nigeria.

The Role of Women as Change Agents in Value Re-Orientiation

According to Greensboro (2011), a change agent is someone who knows and understands the dynamics that facilitate or hinder change. Change agents research, plan, build, support and partner with others to create change. They have the courage and willingness to do what is best for the community. Being an agent of change is an active way to create safer, healthier future for you, your relationship, your world (Anderson, 2011). It’s been said that parent are the architect of the conduct of a child’s development. As a parent, especially mother, you model appropriate behaviour in the way your talk to and treat your child. Positive parenting will help a child development positively and this stands as a foundation that a child will build on throughout his/her life time. Although the father plays an important role in educating the child, the mother plays a more important and greater role in this process. It can be rightly said that the mothers/women contribute the greater share and play the best role in early training and education of their children. Moreover the mother is more loving, kind and patient than the father and she is nearer to the children and they are more free and attached to her. This makes her more capable of training her children in the most proper way. The meaning of this is that every child is born pure. It is the environment created by his parents that determines his future. “The parent is like a mirror, the reflection it gives, the child adopts. If the reflection is good, the child is good. If the reflection is bad, the child is bad” (Moulana, 2010).

The entire future of the child depends entirely on the parents teachings, training and environment in which the parents bring up their child. The home environment and the parents’ upbringing of the child make or mar the child’s future. Hence the biblical teaching in Proverbs 22:6 “Train or bring up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it”.

Many parents complain that their children are ill-mannered, disobedient and disrespectful. The cause of their disobedience is only the fault of the parents especially the mothers. Economic conditions in Nigeria have created moral vacuum in the lives of parents and they that cannot meet up with their financial obligations. Harsh economic situations have encouraged cheating, stealing, bribing and corruption that ravage the society. Even women as mothers now spend lesser time in taking care of their children as they have to materially sustain their families. On account of their greed for worldly things and love for money women kept their children blank in religious as well as cultural norms. The young people are even ignorant of the reward for obeying their parents and of the punishment for disobeying their parents. All aspect of a man’s life – his character, sense of responsibility, good and bad habits, ability to cope with difficulties and his piety – are shaped primarily during his childhood. The bright memories of his childhood can strengthen a man during trying times, and contrarily, those who have not had a happy childhood can in no way remake it (Aliu, 2015).

It is sad to note that some women have abdicated the responsibility of instilling core positive values in their children and have left that to schools, nannies and the society to do, but what such women fail to realise is that schools don’t train children, parents do. Character and values is better instilled from the formative years of a child. What a school or society does is to guide, the onus is still on the women/mothers to provide the moral foundation in which their children’s future would be firmly anchored.

Lunenburg (2011) also define a change agent as anyone who has the skill and power to stimulate, facilitate, and coordinate the change effort. The success of any change effort depends heavily on the quality and workability of the relationship between the change agent and the key decision made within the society. Women are associated with peace and tenderness.
Verveer (2010) noted that women are a vibrant force in civil society, as they work to advance social, economic and democratic progress, safeguard human rights and promote peace. When women are economically and socially empowered, they become a potent force for change.

Since family unit is the primary focus of value re-orientation informed by the parental roles, goals, values and manners that influence the children, women as mothers and home managers are expected to teach and train the children, adequately monitor their children especially on the type of friends they keep, type of films they watch, most of all, control, restrict and restrain the type of foreign films, phonographic publications, satellite broadcasts, videos and similar products of modern teleology. But how can women do these, when they are out of the homes almost all day in the name of survival or modern life.

According to Dawson (2010), women are to guide the behavioural patterns of their children at home and adopt gradual and systematic process to sensitize their children initiatives as well as develop in them self control in the absence of external authority. They should apply mild physical punishment as the bible clearly spelt out in Proverb 22:15 “Children just naturally do silly, careless things, but a good spanking will teach them how to behave” (Good News Version).

Also, mild withdrawal of love, emotional appeals or threat of disapproval to develop in their children self imposed discipline and obedience to rules and regulations. In this way, the ideas and attitudes of the children in the home will reflect their performance within the large society. This may bring back the values we all long for in our youths.

Women’s value will not be in trying to imitate men or in becoming more like men. Women’s value is in honouring the womanhood and feminine and offering to the world the wisdom that is held in this other, vital half of humanity. How well can women use their natural abilities as peace makers and mediators to begin to turn the tide against the evil vices in our society? Where are the Delilahs and the Esthers in the Bible?

Women can use their natural abilities as harmony-seekers and nurturers to change the men also. Shiner (2010) asserted that history is now demanding that women quickly play a key role in solving their world’s ills at this critical time. Women are seen as a trumpet of truth in these days of confusion. The writer is of the opinion that as women we must be bold in our commitment to defending traditional values and those things we hold sacred and dear in every aspect of life. It is clear that what the nation needs most urgently is not another business executive, not another Ph.D, not another lawyer. These things may be important, but they alone will not bring us a world of peace. What the nation needs very simply, are individuals with commitment and genuineness of heart. And as women of commitment, we must have confidence that we can and will make the change and difference by being very serious about the example we set and the legacy we leave. Therefore we women must step forward at this time to fill the moral gap, as change agents. Women’s true emancipation lies in creating a secure family unity and therefore, a secure society by playing this role in an emotionally, intellectually and spiritually perfect manner.

CONCLUSION
The crises of values system in Nigeria suggests that the growth and progress in the society is being retarded in many aspects through outburst of materialistic tendencies of our youths. It is beyond doubt that materialism, has taken over government, political institutions, invaded traditional and cultural institutions while the church seems to be more materialistic than the secular society. The malady of value crises has predicated Nigeria as open society in which anything goes.

Therefore, value re-orientation in this paper is focused on redeeming Nigerian youths currently faced with crushing identity crises, resulting from misunderstanding of the purpose of human life. Women therefore must serve as the chance agents in redeeming the image of our national life in the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS
The primary aim of value re-orientation in Nigeria with women as the change agents is to create a new Nigeria citizen who values hard work and who realises that one cannot have something for nothing.

- Moral education should be re-introduced in schools.
- Women as a vibrant force have to be sanitize to instil the core values in our youth.
As caretakers, women should be sensitized to play their monitoring role well and rebuild their trust in the minds of their children by always being there for them.

Women should realize that the hope for this 21st Century will be determined by how much they (women) are willing to work with men to influence the direction of the nation.

Women as change agents should live to be of good example to their children the community

Women must help their children return to God.

Women must also seek ways to heal the wounds and erase the radical, religious and cultural animosities which allow brothers to kill each other.

Therefore in conjunction with women, education, government/leaders, religious, mass media, civil society and indigenous communities should ensure that the values being inculcated permeate all levels of management and staff of private and especially public sectors.

REFERENCES


