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**VALUES AND VALUE SYSTEM AS PLATFORMS  
FOR NATION-BUILDING**

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**Abstract**

*Values play significant roles, and they are of great importance in nation-building because good values position countries on the path to progress. The significance of values and value systems to nation-building is that they inspire orderliness, tolerance, credibility, diligence and patriotism. Failure to imbibe positive values and value system has currently brought Nigeria to her knees. The critical implication is that if many Nigerian citizens truly imbibe values, the numerous tragic happenings that have bedevilled the nation would have been checked. In addressing this concern, the paper looks at the concepts of values, classification of values, sources of values and value system, and concepts of value system. The paper also touches concepts of nation-building, the relevance of values to nation-building and values and value system as platforms for nation-building. To reverse the trend, the researcher suggested that there should be acceptable values which all citizens will confirm to irrespective of ethnic nationality and the pluralistic nature of the country; socialisation and re-orientation agents should increase their efforts in values inculcation and value system re-orientation; Social Studies teachers should be trained on*

*teaching methods for good values and value system building process.*

**Keywords:** Values; Value System; Sources; Nation; Nation-Building.

### **Introduction**

From time long-established, the quest for values and positive value system is a fundamental phenomenon that promotes growth and development and good governance and blissful social life. This is because values and value system plays a holistic role in nation-building. For it serves as the foundation upon which the structure of a genuinely moral or virtuous and egalitarian nation stands. Before now, the home (family) remains the major source for the development and re-orientation of values, followed up with the values education given by schools and religious centres. The problem of values and value system crisis has projected Nigeria as an open society and nation in which anything goes. It suggests that Nigeria is being retarded in many aspects due to lack of values and value systems. The problem of decline in values and value system in Nigeria is very alarming. It is not an overstatement that materialism and inhuman actions reflect all facets of life in Nigeria and have invaded traditional and cultural institutions (Njoku, 2015). Even religious institutions appear to be more materialistic than the secular society. This current situation has been incisively described by Osanakpo (2015) that the rate of values and value system decadence, corruption and inhuman molestations in Nigeria is not only frightening but threatening the foundation and existence of the once peaceful Nigeria society. No meaningful development and nation-building according to can take place when societal values and value systems are broken without remedy or resort. Dishonesty, wastefulness, social injustice, disorderliness, and indiscipline give birth to banditry, corruption, arm robbery, terrorism, kidnapping, sexual perversion, rape, child and human trafficking, human rituals, cybercrime, electoral fraud, and so on, which are negative values and value system that can destroy a nation and send it to oblivion (Ikumelu, Mbang & Oyibe, 2015).

Values and positive value system are those fundamentals that society and nation consider vital to its existence, sustenance and advancement (Abubakar, 2014). Values are sets of norms of behaviour that guide the people to do things that will result in joy, harmony, satisfaction, and peace of mind in a community or society (Njayarkulam, 2003). Values and value systems are like a compass. They provide direction to people's activities and lifestyles in a nation and likewise, serve as tools that could be utilised to evaluate the worth and level of growth and development of the people and nation. For Ajero (2016), values are rudiments that provide distinctiveness, changes and societal advancement to an individual and society. Simply put, values are preferences, enduring qualities, beliefs, norms and standards of behaviour that define and guide a people, their conduct and attitude towards what is right or acceptable. Values serve as broad guidelines in solving problems, taking decisions or setting goals.

In addition, nation-building is the development of behaviours, language, values, physical structures and institutions that explain a nation's history, culture, make real and protect the present, and guarantee the future identity and freedom of a nation. It is a deliberate, keenly directed and energetic prognosis of a nation's culture, philosophy and communal action to building a political, social and economic system (Ahmed-Gamgum, 2014).

Nigeria as a nation has gone through and still going through its share of value and value system laxity mostly as represented in corruption in high and low places, electoral fraud and violence, kidnapping, drug trafficking, human trafficking, smuggling, rape, advanced fee fraud popularly called 419, increasing crime wave, banditry, theft, robbery, terrorism, religious and ethnic violence, insurgency, unemployment, militancy, injustice, ritual killings, etc., (Akpan & Okoro, 2018). In Nigeria, nation-building is seriously challenged by the lack of values and value system. Consequently, the nation is faced with the problem of nation-building, the bedrock for the development of a nation.

Various regimes and administrations in Nigeria have come up with multiple programmes for nation-building. All these programmes were initiated to help restore values and value system. Still, no

significant result has been achieved. In other words, they barely accomplished their goal. The blame is due to values and value system in our society and nation. Falade and Falade (2013) opined that there were series of values and value system re-orientation such as National Orientation Agency, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, Ethical Revolution, War Against Indiscipline, among others. All is to remedy the problem of values and value system in Nigeria. Njoku (2015) asserted that there was at no time a nation is so tainted and spiritually bankrupt, as is evident in the events seen in Nigeria daily. Thus, nation-building has been largely halted, and the country should be saved from the verge of disintegration or collapse. It is on this basis this paper discussed values as platforms for nation-building in Nigeria.

### **Concepts of Values**

The term 'values' is from the Latin word "valere" and the French word "valoir" connoting 'be worth'. The psychological and social sciences define values as preferences or as desirable goals, emotions and interests. In discussing the concept of values, several expressions are seen; still, it is difficult to get a globally accepted definition and conceptualisation, which is the case with many abstract concepts. Some of such expressions attempting to define values see values as general preferences in relation to appropriate undertakings or outcomes (National Council of Educational Research and Training, 2014). Values, according to Gana (2002) are philosophical concepts, varied in nature and debatable in content. Scholars differ on the concept, classification, subjectivity/objectivity of values. Notwithstanding its controversial nature, values are still extensively acknowledged as a significant factor in humans' undertakings. It is believed to have the ability and propensity to influence and propel one carrying out certain actions/activities while staying away from others (Mohan, 2014).

Values are core elements in the concept and theory of choice. They are as fundamental to man as wisdom; they determine what is cherished/treasured or refused, accepted or rejected. Values are rules by which one takes decisions relating to right or wrong, should or should not, good or bad. Values are principles or standards of

behaviour. Njayarkulam (2003) opined that values are seen as a set of norms of behaviour that guide the people to act in a manner that promotes and results in joy, satisfaction, peace of mind, and harmony among individuals and society. To be of value is to have a particular virtue. The sense of value is an essential attribute of human consciousness.

In a general way, the word 'values' expresses the qualitative significance or importance of ideas, feelings, activities and experiences (Quora, 2014). Values are immaterial but well demonstrated as people interact with one another and with their environment. Values are abstract across situational goals, diverging in importance related to desirable end-states and influencing selection or evaluation of actions and events. Values can be defined as how people perceive what is essential in their lives (Schwartz, 2012). They refer to desirable goals and are a guiding system for all kinds of human behaviour. For Ajero (2016), values are fundamentals that provide identity, transformation and progress to the individual and whole society. Again, Osanakpo (2015) asserts that values are beliefs or convictions that guide and direct a person's behaviour, purpose and vision.

Simply put, values connote acceptable standards, idea way of doing things and living a virtuous life in society. Values cannot function in a cultural and social vacuum or entity as it needs to serve humanity.

### **General Classification of Values**

In a broad spectrum, according to the National Council of Educational Research and Training (2014), values could be classified as personal, social, moral, spiritual and behavioural values.

**Personal Values:** denote those values which the individual cherish and desire irrespective of his social relationship. The individual defines his standards of attainment and accomplishes these goals without direct interaction and involvement of others.

**Social Values:** are those values which focus on society. People practised social values because of their relationship with other people.

Unlike personal values, they necessitate the interaction of two or more people.

**Moral Values:** related to an individual's character conforming to what is right. They reveal a person's self-control.

**Spiritual Values:** refer to ethical values. It arises from the inner depth dimension of man. It confers the ability to see what is wrong and the truth. It is like a key to the integration of man. Spiritual values are an awareness of itself.

**Behavioural Values:** These are all the good manners that are needed to make life successful, meaningful and joyous. They are exhibited through one's behaviour in his daily life. These values adorn life and spread friendliness cordially.

### **Sources of Values and Value System**

**Life Experience:** Numerous values originate out of the personal experiences of the individual and those of others. Man always determines what values they must follow to find happiness and fulfil their destiny as human beings.

**Cultural Background:** Our values are usually grounded in the core values of our culture, which reflect the culture's orientation of beliefs of child-rearing and social control, the attitude to take nature as fatalistic or seeing it as a challenge to be conquered in the interest of man's comfort, the question whether man should live for the present or the future, the kind of activity most valued; and the type of interpersonal relationship whether it is competitive or cooperative.

**Religious Background:** The pursuit of true religion is also concerned with values. Many fundamental values are common to all faiths.

**Scientific background:** It helps us make value judgments only to the extent to which we relate it to value assumptions. New information on the scientific front need not pose a threat even if it involves a change in the current frame of reference.

### **Concept of Value System**

Value Systems play an essential role in an individual's life as they determine or the behaviour of members of society. Value Systems

have been studied in distinct scientific areas, such as knowledge management, sociology, economics and psychology. Scholars in different disciplines established different concepts of value system, based on their divergent suppositions about value. Value System refers to prioritising the values that a person or society holds (Kamakura & Novak, 2014).

Value systems are unbending beliefs and principles; they affect an individual's moral behaviour and are the foundations and sources of intended activities or actions. A value system connotes a set of unswerving values utilised for moral or philosophical integrity or honesty. Their choices prove the ranking of values of all honest or virtuous people possesses. The value system of a good number of people differs. Thus, it is an individual concept. One's virtues or vices mould his or her value system (Psychology Wiki, 2020).

According to Ella (1992), a value system is a collection of personal (individual) and social values; that is, the individual's mind and guides their day-to-day activities. It refers to the recognition, structure, organisation and measurement of a set of values that an individual creates, holds, exchange or gives for particular reasons. A values system is established by three (3) significant fundamentals: *the value making objects, the attainment measurement system/structure, and the moral values.*

### **Concept of Nation-Building**

The scope of the term nation-building is at present broadened to include national and socio-political development, national consciousness and integration. Adigun (2015) asserted that nation-building is a logical process of making people from different ethnic, tribe, socio-cultural, religious, racial or national backgrounds, have a feeling of belonging in a nation. Nation-building according to Adelaja (2015), is the effort made by the country leaders to advance the nation progressively and permanently in the direction of self-sufficiency and reliance, and development through tolerance, commitment, quality leadership, orderliness, honesty, mutual respect and discipline in national affairs. Reimer (2005) described nation-building as a phenomenon intertwined with modernisation. Thus, leaders' intensive effort to bring people of different society together

to fashion an economically, viable, politically strong and socio-culturally stable nation.

Nation-building is the process in which the people of a named territory irrespective of their ethnic, religious, linguistic or tribal differences; identify with the institutions and national symbols of that state and share a collective sense of identity and destiny. Nation-building is all about strengthening socio-political institutions to live up to their responsibilities and make them work within the sphere of morality and integrity (Gambari, 2008).

### **The Relevance of Values to Nation-Building**

Nation-building involves the actions, behaviour, thoughts, and feelings aimed at sustaining a nation's aspiration and optimism. Values provide a workable guide to serve as a check, an objective or rule to be observed by all citizens as it concerns national development. The importance of values and value system to nation-building is that it encourages orderliness and good conduct: For successful communal living resources will have to be shared, individuals must appropriately tolerate turns, control positive and negative excitement. This entails good behaviour, discipline, ability to control one's emotions, desires and impulses; it also requires respect for people, institutions and authorities (Obasola, 2003).

Values ensure law and order needed for development and nation-building because nothing goes on well when there is chaos, indiscipline and disorder. It encourages credibility required to fight against corruption in our nation. Credibility connotes having integrity or being incorruptible, and this is termed integrity. Nation-building without values on the part of leaders and followers is as dangerous as sitting on a keg of gun powder. The ultimate end of values is to make a nation prosperous. Adelaja, (2015), perceived that one of the numerous reasons Nigeria is in state and verge of collapse could be located within the ambit of lack of values and value system. Values and value systems ensure equal distribution of resources, opportunities and privileges, and social justice irrespective of one's status or background, thereby promoting nation-building. Values and value system are the platform upon which nation-building stands. This is because values encourage tolerance and



corporate co-existence. For a nation with diverse tribes, tongues, and religions, like ours, values are the needed ingredients for propelling such a nation to a greater height as concern for national development.

### **Values and Value System as a Platform for Nation-Building**

Nation-building defined in terms of values and value system has been described as a normative concept which applies to the context of people's sense of values (right or wrong, good or bad), (Elakhe, 2014). Therefore, it is a fact that whatever is not generally accepted as right or good in a particular society or nation cannot contribute to the development of that nation. Suppose values and value systems have to do with right and wrong, good and evil, acceptable and unacceptable, etc, in that case, it, therefore, implies that individual values and convictions are involved. These values and beliefs play a critical role in determining human behaviour and thus, nation-building.

A wide range of socio-cultural, economic and political lapses according to Enu and Esu (2011) have been associated with failure in the government and other institutions due to widespread of ethical, values and value system hazard in private and public places, institutional failure, and so on. Obasola (2015) opined that for the intent of maintaining law and order which sequentially, will enhance development and nation-building, values and value system are treasured, and such values are standard the society holds in high reverence. Conformity to these values and value systems, undoubtedly, results in an organised and purpose-driven citizens and society, which eventually brings the anticipated societal growth and development in a nation. Values and value system are also the instrument through which citizens of a nation grapple with the necessities and rudiments of daily lives. The people cherish it, treasured and practice it as members of society and citizens of a nation, and serves as the centre or foundation for social, peaceful co-existence, unity cum nation-building (Obasola, 2003). Therefore, values and value system are those inherent or inborn qualities present in every individual for the promotion and realisation of

peace, social order, unity and peaceful co-existence, which are the ingredients for nation-building.

Consequently, values and value system are the platforms for nation-building because they control the personal, social, interpersonal interaction and relationship of people within a nation, thus, creating and building the way for peace, harmony, unity, integration, discipline, patriotism which are the harbingers of nation-building. Therefore, nation-building will be incomplete without the residue of values and value system. Values and value system are tools for nation-building because they are catalysts and agents for nation-building. Fundamentally, good values and value system foundation are indispensable and unqualified elements for nation-building. Nation-building efforts should begin with human capital development. Human capital here implies the investment in values and value system development and re-orientation of the citizens or people. Values and value system development and re-orientation are the most significant aspects of nation-building. Efforts for nation-building cannot be actualised if a nation's citizens lack the needed values and value system. In a similar viewpoint, Adelaja (2015) stated that a nation preoccupied with scientific development without the consciousness of the development and sustenance of values and value system must be fixing her rope of suicide. This validates that the role of values and value system in nation-building cannot be compromised or undermined. Therefore, importance should be given to the acquisition and development of values and value system in a nation rather than vague and abstract projections. The imperative of values and value system as a platform for nation-building is fundamental. There can be no advancement or progress in a nation if values and value system is extracted from such a nation. Therefore, without good values and value system foundation, a nation socio-economic, political development cum nation-building will be in chaos. Thus, for the realisation of national development and nation-building, development must be related to values and value system (Ikwumelu, Mbang & Oyibe, 2015). The significance of this is that values and value system are germane to nation-building. Nation-building cannot be accomplished without the

development of values and value system that promote and sustain national integration and unity and progress.

### **Conclusion**

Since every individual, community, society or nation is guided by one value and value system or the other developed ultimately to attain a particular objective of growth and development. It is thus, imperative to conclude here that adherence and sustenance of values and value system is a key pointer to achieving nation-building. Values and value system have been proven to promote and platform for nation-building. Therefore, the goal of nation-building will be attained if values and value system are promoted and sustained. This study concluded that values and value systems are fundamental for nation-building. Every citizen should be very conscious of attaining positive values and value system for nation-building and individual development.

### **Suggestions**

The following suggestions are made:

Irrespective of ethnic nationality and pluralistic nature of the country, there should be acceptable values conform to by all citizens; Socialisation and re-orientation agents should increase their efforts in values and value system inculcation and re-orientation; and Social Studies teachers should be trained in teaching methods for effective values and value system building process.

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