

# **MORALS, RE-ORIENTATION, NATIONAL VALUES AND THE**

## **3Rs – Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Re-orientation**

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### **Introduction**

Society, just as knowledge, is dynamic and ever-changing. Individuals make up the society and they determine the direction of growth of the society. When members of the society are enlightened enough, they are easier to govern and there seems to be speedy economic and technological transformation of all the facets of the society. For individuals to be enlightened, they must be properly educated, hence there is a corollary between education and societal growth and development. A society is usually a collection of a diverse group of people or communities that invariably make up a nation.

A Nation is defined as a community of individuals made up of one or more nationalities and having a clearly defined territory and government. The body of a people or tribe is usually characterized by large size and independence in status. Nations are and can be great as a result of their people and their attitudes toward the building of the nation. Thus, any leader of the nation who is interested in the social peace, economic growth, and technological development of the nation has to take the education of the people seriously. This education must not always be provided within the school environment and it can occur through orientation and re-orientation programmes. The aim of educating members of society is to ensure that morals and national values are kept by citizens to assure peace and calm in the environment. More so, whenever the eco

conomy is not measuring up to expectation, the government usually comes up with different programmes and policies aimed at equalizing things for the economy and thus, the nation.

Nigeria as a nation is presently bedeviled by the death of moral values which in turn have led to the perpetuation of all manner of vices such as financial misappropriation, kidnapping, armed robbery, ritual killings, economic fraud, prostitution, vote buying, drug abuse, etc. This situation has necessitated the need to take the reeducation of Nigerians seriously, whether within the school or outside the school through various policies and programmes aimed at orientating and changing the mindset of the people. This can be achieved through reconstruction, rehabilitation, and re-orientation (**the 3Rs**).

**Reconstruction** as it applies to humans has to do with character reformation. Simply put, it is the act or process of repairing, restoring, or rebuilding something to its initial state. Reconstruction becomes important in human beings when there seems to be a perceived moral decadence in the society and the societal goals are no longer being achieved. The Nigerian government has both in the past and present come up with several efforts designed toward the reconstruction of attitudinal change in citizens to facilitate nation-building. Some of such policies or programmes will be addressed in this chapter later.

**Rehabilitation** connotes a state of human character resuscitation to reinvigorate and bring it back to its past status. It literally refers to the process of restoration, especially through therapeutic means, to an improved condition of physical function. What this implies as it relates to society is reorganizing the mindset of the citizens to become more proactive towards society growth and

technological development when there is no longer national interest or nationalism spirit in the citizenry.

**Re-orientation** has to do with rethink. This is the process of getting individuals within the society to recondition their minds towards the general interest of the nation as against their selfish interests or viewpoints and positions. Reorientation assists in the rethinking of policies and programmes of governments in order to reshape the development of the society, especially during periods of economic meltdowns and hardships.

Various strategies have been adopted by the government of Nigeria in the past through re-orientation to enhance economic recovery and self-reliance to bring about reconstruction and rehabilitation of the country. How well such policies and programmes performed in the past is not the bone of contention in this chapter. This chapter will thus x-ray the concepts of re-orientation, morals, national values, reconstruction, and rehabilitation. The re-orientation strategies that have been adopted in Nigeria include Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), Green Revolution, Austerity Measure, War Against Indiscipline (WAI), War Against Indiscipline and Corruption (WAIC), Mass Mobilisation for Self-Reliance, Social Justice and Economic Recovery (MAMSER), and National Orientation Agency (NOA).

### **The Concepts of Moral, Re-orientation and National Values**

**Moral** has to do with one's behaviour, that is, principles and beliefs of what is right and wrong. An individual is mostly judged based on his/her moral

values. Moral refers to what members of the environment where one leaves sanction as right/wrong and acceptable. Individuals who uphold the rules and regulations of society are seen as morally upright. It requires most oftentimes that the individual sacrifice their interest for the benefit of all (society). People who get involved in social maladies or vices such as murder, kidnaping, stealing, prostitution, fraud, rape embezzlements, snatching ballot boxes, cult-related activities, etc. are said to be lacking morals, hence, are morally bankrupt. Some people argue that the concept of moral values is relative depending on the culture. What this means is that what is morally right in one culture may not be acceptable in another culture. For instance, in some cultures, it is morally right to marry underage girls while it's a taboo in some other cultures. Individuals who say one thing and do another have a burden of moral questions hanging around their heads. In some societies, politicians are regarded as mostly lacking in morals because they make promises that they never keep after they win elections.

**Re-orientation** refers to the process of changing the purpose or aim of something. It is most often associated with direction or location. It can be figuring out where one is about his or her environment. In terms of an organization or a society /nation, re-orientation has to do with rethinking the focus of direction to deliver services that will bring about the attainment of objectives. In the case of the nation, it has to do with promoting behaviours and commitments toward ensuring steady growth and development of the nation. Put simply, working towards nation-building. Re-orientation is the process of figuring out or the act of educating, again and again, to rehabilitate and adapt to a new situation.

n to assist and improve on what has been set out to be achieved. It has to do with reformation and can be seen as a dramatic and wide-reaching alteration of attitudes, operations, or conditions.

**National values** refer to what the society holds dear and wishes members of the society to cherish. Values according to Bolarin (2005) are the worth, merit, or esteem that is given to a person, or an object/idea. The value given to something or somebody differs in quality and as a result, in the degree. Hence, objects that are of value naturally hold attraction for us and we desire to possess them.

National values, irrespective of the culture or society, are the things the governments inculcate and instill in the citizens which form the foundation of the nation or nationhood. It has been defined as standards, and principles of good behaviour. Hence, national values imply the dos and don'ts, behaviours or attitudes exhibited and encouraged by members of the society for the fact that they are both good and desirable to mankind and the society in general as against those behaviours/attitudes condemned and discouraged. National values can be defined as a representation of the paramount values upheld throughout the common cultural experience of the nation. Some examples of national values are; independence, democracy, justice, peace, security, payment of tax, obedience to constituted authority, etc.

Nigeria as a nation is presently battling with insecurity and corruption as a result of moral bankruptcy brought about as fallout and the question of national value. The traditional value systems are gradually being eroded and the Nigerian citizens have started questioning the core values of nationhood. Accord

ding to Osalusi and Ajayi (2021), values are the beliefs and standards that are important to us and that make us behave the way we do as individuals. Examples of Nigerian national values include respecting elders; speaking the truth; studying hard to become useful; being kind; being punctual; not being wasteful etc. The fall of successive Nigerian governments and society has affected the standard of values and moral character formation in the country. This has been reflected in so many anti-social vices. Anti-social behaviour exhibited includes corruption, dishonesty, greed, violent crimes, lack of accountability, indiscipline, disrespect to constituted authorities, laziness, and low moral courage among many others. All these have instituted a serious moral problem for the Nigerian State and have constrained all sincere efforts targeted at achieving national development.

It is common knowledge that if any society, nation, or state must succeed, it must have certain core values to which it attaches considerable significance. In Nigeria, it is generally accepted that the core values of the nation inherent in a democracy is respect for the rights and differences of others as enshrined in the constitution. What this implies is that both the leaders and the followers must obey the rules and the regulations guiding the nation. The perceived disobedience of the constitution by certain members of the society and the inability of the judicial system to bring to justice the acts and actions of the deviants is what has today led to the level of impunity, lawlessness, and civil disobedience that the Nigerian government is currently facing.

### **Operation Feed the Nation (OFN)**

In the colonial era according, to Wikipedia (2024), the integration of Nigeria into the world economy was driven by the production of cash crops such as palm oil, cocoa, and groundnut (the groundnut pyramid), and the initial official intervention programmes concentrated on cash crops aimed at increasing Nigeria's GDP. A large number of small subsistence farms and farmers across the country produced the majority of the food crops for local consumption. The farmers largely in the rural areas sold their surplus produce to feed the nation. But by the early 1960s, many of the smaller farms were not profitable, and leaving their farms to lie fallow for months, the farmers supplemented their incomes by working on farms producing export crops, in addition, a new generation of educated youths moved to the urban areas to look for White-Collar paying jobs. Between 1965 and 1970, per capita food production was stagnant. In the mid-1970s, the aftermath of a drought in the Sahel region, stagnant crop production, and an oil boom led to increased food prices and the importation of food crops. Food importation also shifted the food taste of an increasing urban class from locally produced crops to imported food such as rice and wheat, making Nigeria more dependent on food importation to feed the urban elites. The government soon sought ways to curtail importation and rising food prices and promote a back-to-earth mobilization programme, thus, the birth of OFN.

General Olusegun Obasanjo, who was the then Head of State, while presenting the 1976 budget proposed Operation Feed the Nation. It was a national agricultural extension and mobilization programme instituted by the military head of the government of Nigeria as a measure to achieve self-sufficiency in food production and to inspire the new generation to return to farming. OFN w

as formally launched in May 1976 and in the following months, appeals were made to individuals, schools, universities, and institutions to become self-sufficient and reliant in food production by growing their food and selling the surplus. Teachers were encouraged to take crash courses in farming to include it as part of their curriculum and way of life, while students were advised to work on farms during holidays.

Apart from the extensive publicity given to farming, government involvement in promoting OFN included extension services, subsidized fertilizer distribution, and an interest in increasing commercial farming by large-scale farmers. Aircraft were acquired to spray pesticides; poultry chicks were distributed to farmers. In addition, the government acquired large parcels of land to establish agricultural estates whereby plots were leased to farmers who received extension support from the government and banks were encouraged to give support to farmers by reducing lending rates. Despite the mass mobilization campaign to return to farming and focus on agricultural entrepreneurship, five years later, food production was still lagging behind the population growth. A new administration again launched a new programme – “Green Revolution” to replace Operation Feed the Nation.

### **The Green Revolution**

Green Revolution which was a major agriculture policy of the Shehu Shagari administration was introduced in April 1980 to ensure self-sustained and self-sufficiency in food production through the introduction of modern technology in Nigeria's agriculture sector.



Before 1967, the government of Nigeria concentrated on expanding the farming areas. However, the rapidly increasing population, more than food production, called for drastic and immediate action to increase crop yield which came in the form of the Green Revolution. It is the period when Nigeria's agriculture was converted into an industrial system due to the adoption of modern methods and techniques like the use of high-yielding variety seeds, tractors, irrigation facilities, pesticides, and fertilizers. The method of the green revolution focused on three basic elements which include:

1. Using seeds with improved genetics (High Yielding Variety seeds).
2. Double cropping in the existing farmland.
3. The continuing expansion of farming areas (Wikipedia, 2024).

### **The Concept of Austerity Measure**

Austerity seems to be derived from the word Austere. Austere refers to a cold or stern appearance, being morally strict, or markedly simple. Austerity can therefore be described as being stern and serious in quality. Austerity measures are the economic policies promulgated when a government's debt profile is larger than its income or sources of revenue, thus, putting the country at risk of defaulting on its payment obligations. The goal of austerity is to reduce or potentially eliminate the budget deficit. Austerity is reached when there is a shrinkage or gap between government income and government spending.

Historically, according to Wikipedia (2024), austerity measures were introduced

d in Nigeria when there was a collapse in world oil prices and a sharp decline in petroleum output. The latter resulted from a lowering of Nigeria's OPEC quota in the early 1980s, which brought to the forefront the precarious nature of Nigeria's economic and financial position. The rising and ill-directed government spending during the 1970s, neglect of the agricultural sector, and inward-looking industrial policies left Nigeria vulnerable to profound changes in the external environment in the following decade. Thus, the dramatic fall in oil export revenues entailed a sharp deterioration in the country's public finances and balance of payments. The overall fiscal deficit rose from  $\frac{1}{2}$  percent of GDP in 1980 to  $9\frac{1}{2}$  percent in 1981, and the external current account balance shifted from a surplus of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  percent to a deficit of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  percent in the same period. The severe weakening of the external position was reflected in a dwindling of international reserves. Stepped-up foreign borrowing by federal and state governments and public enterprises increased external debt to the equivalent of 23 percent of GDP by 1985, from only 5 percent in 1980. The growing scarcity of foreign exchange affected output in the import-intensive manufacturing sector, with capacity utilization falling from 73 percent in 1981 to 38 percent in 1985. The steady appreciation of the real effective exchange rate also depressed agricultural output, which remained at levels below those achieved in the early 1970s. As a result, annual GDP growth decelerated sharply and turned negative in 1981.

There are three types of austerity measures a government can adopt and they include Revenue generation (this could be through paying higher taxes); Raising taxes while cutting down on non-essential government functions or services

es; Lowering taxes and lowering government spending or expenditures. All of these austerity measures have been adopted and are still being implemented in trying to curb inflation and cut the budget deficit in Nigeria. It is important to note that austerity measures can be used at any given time whenever there is a concern about the government's expenditures superseding the government's revenue.

### **War Against Indiscipline (WAI)**

The concept of "war against indiscipline" was coined in Nigeria during the military era as a mass mobilization programme to re-orient the mindset of Nigerians against deviant acts. The programme which was started by the General Buhari military regime began in March 1984 and lasted up till about September 1985. This was because indiscipline and corrupt practices among Nigerians, especially within the political class had attained unprecedented heights, the War Against Indiscipline, a comprehensive and controlled corrective measure was announced. The goals of the measure were to strengthen national unity and cohesiveness, promote economic growth and self-sufficiency, and instill national consciousness, and personal, cultural, and moral discipline in Nigerians to control and curtail indolence, corruption, and criminal tendencies/practices. The military government showed commitment to the success of the plan; decrees were announced that imposed harsh punishments for crimes and vagrancy.

According to Wikipedia (2024), the "War Against Indiscipline" was announced in March 1984 by Tunde Idiagbon, the Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters, a

nd the launch event was held at Tafawa Balewa Square in Lagos. The military government of which Idiagbon was a member had seized power on December 31, 1983, and a key underlying reason given for the coup was unprecedented, rampant corruption and indiscipline amongst the elites, especially within the political class. Before the coup, newspapers wrote articles alleging corrupt practices within the Shehu Shagari administration, including fraud in the Housing Ministry and External Communications Agency, bribes given to Central Bank officials to obtain foreign currency, and government-supported hoarding of rice. Government officials and the political class lived in luxury, while the civilian administration began a policy of austerity. Support for a coup that would correct the excesses of the political class was growing. When the military took control of the government, they established measures to impose order and discipline within the country. One of those measures was the War Against Indiscipline, a comprehensive programme to correct many social ills that the new military ruling class perceived to afflict Nigeria. Earlier corrective measures were specific in scope; for instance, public unity schools with student populations from all over the country were founded in different states to promote a national feeling, the National Youth Service Corps had a goal to serve a similar purpose, and Operation Feed the Nation was established to promote self-sufficiency in food production.

The war against indiscipline (WAI) was organized in phases and they include 1. **Orderliness**, 2. **Work ethics**, 3. **National unity**, 4. **Corruption and criminal activities**, 5. **War against filth**. Each state was charged with the responsibility of enforcing the phases of WAI and reporting to the central while at the national level.

level, the Ministry of Information took charge. The military government took steps to demonstrate its commitment to structural reform of social maladjustment and corruption. Initially, uniformed men played both supervisory and enforcement roles of the tenets of WAI. But with criticism of the lack of input from the community, and to give a civilian face to the enforcement of the War Against Indiscipline programme, the **WAI Brigade** was launched.

There were **three levels of WAI**. The first were primary school students called the **Vanguard**, the second were secondary school students called the **Crusaders**, and the third were those above the age of eighteen years who were called **Patriots**.

### **War Against Indiscipline and Corruption (WAIC) as a Concept**

The war against indiscipline metamorphosed into a war against indiscipline and corruption. In 1994, General Abacha formally launched the War Against Indiscipline and Corruption (WAI-C) at the parade ground in Abuja to curb and possibly ameliorate the widespread corruption that permeated the fabric of Nigerian society. Abacha is noted for having been the first Nigerian Army officer to attain the rank of a full military general without skipping a single rank. His rule saw the achievement of several economic feats and also recorded human rights abuses and several political assassinations. The WAI-C became necessary because the fight against indiscipline and corruption seems to be becoming a l

ost battle. This is perhaps why General Buhari tried reintroducing WAI when he became a civilian president. A hallmark of Muhammadu Buhari's 1983-1985 military government was his "War Against Indiscipline. With extensive media support, Buhari sought nothing less than to change fundamentally the behaviour of Nigerians for the better and restore traditional virtues.

John (2016) avers that in 2016, President Muhammadu Buhari said: "The long-cherished and time-honored, time-tested virtues of honesty, integrity, hard work, punctuality, good neighborliness, abhorrence of corruption and patriotism, have given way in the main to dishonesty, indolence, unbridled corruption, and widespread impunity". He said much the same thing when he was military chief of state from 1983 to 1985 when the war against indiscipline was first launched.

In 2016, as a civilian chief of state, he re-launched the effort and christened it "Change begins with me." Now as then, the goal is to fight against dishonesty, indolence, unbridled corruption, and widespread impunity so that Nigerians can "embrace daily introspection over their 'moral' conduct." A difference between the two campaigns has to do with enforcement. Under the military government those late for work might be required to do frog jumps in public. However, in the current democratic dispensation, no such penalties are possible. The 'War Against Indiscipline' rapidly became unpopular, at least among the elites. That unpopularity may have helped set the stage for Ibrahim Babangida's successful coup against the Buhari government in 1985 (Wikipedia, 2024).



## **Mass Mobilization for Self-Reliance, Social Justice and Economic Recovery (MAMSER)**

Mass Mobilization for Self-Reliance, Social Justice, and Economic Recovery (MAMSER) was Inaugurated by General Babangida on July 25, 1987. It was an exercise in political orientation in Nigeria undertaken as one of the recommendations of the Political Bureau headed by Dr. Samuel Joseph Cooke. The bureau's task was to consult with as many as possible Nigerians and recommend to the Armed Forces Ruling Council, which was then the highest decision-making body, a respectable and methodical transition programme after a long period of military rule. The ruling council also wanted a national orientation to enunciate abstract policies and ideas in its economic programmes and promote value orientation among Nigerians.

The central goal of MAMSER was to cultivate support for the transition programme of the then-Military Government of Nigeria. It was also an opportunity to enlighten Nigerians about the political process, by mobilizing them to participate in the upcoming political debates and elections, and also inculcate in them a dependence on locally made goods and Nigerian products as a result of the depreciation of the Naira.

Some of MAMSER's official policies were as follows:

1. Re-orient Nigerians to shun waste and vanity.
  2. Shed all pretenses of affluence in their lifestyle.
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3. Propagate the need to eschew all vices in public life, including corruption, dishonesty, electoral and census malpractices, ethnic and religious bigotry, etc.

The responsibilities of MAMSER were handled by a Directorate, with Professor Jerry Gana as chairman and Ken Saro Wiwa, a political activist, as one of its directors. However, after a few months as a director, Ken Saro Wiwa left the directorate. The directorate produced a few notable Nigerians, including Tunde Adeniran, who became the Head of the National Orientation Agency, Molara Ogundipe-Leslie, and Jonathan Zwingina, a Senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

MAMSER was eventually renamed National Orientation Agency (NOA) with a huge presence spanning all 774 Local Government Areas in Nigeria.

### **National Orientation Agency of Nigeria**

On August 10, 1993, the military government of General Babangida established the National Orientation Agency (NOA), which is currently under Lanre, Issa-Onilu as the Director General. The purpose of establishing NOA is to communicate government policies, promote patriotism and provide a feedback channel on the mood/pulse of the Nigerian society towards the government and its programmes. The Head Office of NOA is in Abuja.

The National Orientation Agency of Nigeria is the body tasked with communicating government policy, staying abreast of public opinions, and promoting patriotism, national unity, and the development of Nigerian society. The motto on its website states "Do the right thing: Transform Nigeria". Its specific objectives were set out in Decree 100 of 1993. The National Orientation Agency has worked on a variety of issues, including health, cooperation with non-governmental organizations, and prevention of electoral violence. The NOA apart from car



rying out public enlightenment programmes also gets involved in organizing rehabilitation programmes. For instance, during the tenure of Dr. Mike Omeri as the DG 2,167 repentant Boko Haram members were rehabilitated and graduated from the National Orientation Agency's Operation Safe Corridor (OPSC) which is a programme meant for the deradicalization, rehabilitation, and reintegration (DRR) of terrorists. The graduates of the programme were made up of 2,140 Nigerians and 27 others from Chad, Cameroon, and Niger (Wikipedia, 2024).

Dr. Mike Omeri was appointed Director General of the Agency on 16 January 2012. In DG's 2014 New Year message, he urged Nigerians to increase their faith in the country and expressed appreciation to the people for standing by the government and the nation throughout the year 2014, especially in the war against insurgency.

Under the current leadership of NOA, the re-orientation, and rehabilitation of needing Nigerians have continued to be given the attention it deserves.

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