

THE GOOD, BAD AND UGLY SIDES OF VALUES: IMPLICATIONS FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper examined the good, bad and ugly aspects of values and the implications on national development. The crucial nature of values cannot be overstated. Values are either good or bad but the bad values have very terrible consequences hence, graded as ugly values. The paper therefore examined what value is all about, some of the good values in Nigeria, and the attributes that help these values to strive. Furthermore, the bad and ugly values were also examined along with their attributes and the effect on the citizens. It was established that good values when entrenched will lead to national development and global acceptability while bad values will lead to bad leadership, national catastrophe, retrogression, poverty, fear, and terrorism. The paper therefore suggested punishment for those found wanting, corrupt officials should face justice, and that Social Studies should be made compulsory from primary schools to tertiary institutions.

Keywords: Good, Bad, Ugly, Values, National development, Value system.

1. INTRODUCTION

Values are seen as an important aspect of Nigerian culture passed over from one generation to another. These values were marked out from others decades ago. The values of respect for elders, honesty, integrity, tolerance, and cooperation were our pride and forces that bind us together in spite of the heterogeneous characteristics of Nigeria. Over the years, these values have been overthrown by negative values leading to fear, tension, and uncertainty. Values are acceptable standard of behaviors in human society which include fidelity, integrity, honesty, and hard work. Nigeria has a strong culture that prioritizes values and value systems from its inception. For this reason, Nigerians who have received a strong moral upbringing at home and those who have a strong sense of moral principles worldwide hold important and delicate roles. These folks are excelling in many fields and bringing honor to Nigeria. An essential component of commitment, dedication, and obedience (Fatoki & Sofadekan, 2019). It is sad to note that, with time these good values associated with Nigerians started dwindling. This has led to all manner of lawlessness in the society. Dorgu, Nemine and Olu-Obafemi (2019) captured these lawless and unacceptable values to include terrorism, insecurity, drug abuse and trafficking. Several other unacceptable behaviours include dishonesty, armed robbery, lack of respect for parents, and constituted authority be it government or private sectors. Lack of values is traceable to both leaders and the led, and it is gradually becoming a way of life if not checked and nipped in the bud urgently. Saka (2021) explained that value can be seen in the ability of a man to make rational decisions, have respect for the dignity and worth of human life along with sound moral principles, a good interpersonal relationship for the good of all in the society. A society can advance and children, adolescents, and adults can all develop well overall with the promotion of excellent values. Value

education must be instilled in residents for the country to advance and for them to live in peace with one another. This is demonstrated by their timely payment of taxes, provision of necessities, adherence to the law, and upkeep and protection of government property (Vishalache, 2015).

Nigeria is a federation consisting of different religions, cultures, ethics, and nations which makes it very unique (Asaju & Egberi 2015). Nigeria typifies a pluralistic society comprising over two hundred and fifty ethnic groups and over two five hundred languages spoken (Asaju & Egberi, 2015). It is therefore about the most linguistically diverse country in the world with about 371 tribes (Apindi & Simwa, 2022). According to Azuako (2019), the religious, political, economic, social, cultural, and moral lifestyles have an impact on our day-to-day interactions with others. More importantly, this way of living represents either societal joy or tragedy. When everything is operating smoothly, there is respect for established authority, regard for human life, transparency in government operations, and discipline in all areas. Indiscipline, social unfairness, dishonesty, cybercrime, banditry, corruption, ritual, betting, election fraud, and terrorism, to name a few, are examples of societal catastrophes. All these values can be classified as good, bad and ugly value systems.

The good values when accepted, internalized and manifested will form a strong base for a strong and virile nation. The consistent practice, adherence and active participation of good values will help develop a very strong value system, a progressive and developed nation that will attract global respect for both the citizens and the nation. Some of these good values are discipline, honesty, integrity, transparency, and social justice. The bad values are negative values that have impeded the growth and development of the individuals and the nation. Bad values lead to retrogression in every sector of national life. It destroys the continuity of the country, hampers national integration, impedes protection of human rights, and frustrates the ability and capability of human resources. Some of these bad values are injustice, dishonesty, drug abuse and trafficking, and cybercrime (Ikumelu, et al 2015). The ugly sets of values are those that promote attitudes, conduct, and behaviours that are not only harmful but also extremely transmissible and destructive. It spreads quickly because it is highly contagious and because of the offenders. People pursue quick success because it is the fastest way to do so. These tenets include terrorism, kidnapping, corruption, and ritual killing (Mezieobi, et al 2012; Mahammed, 2013).

There is a taint in our value system given the events that are occurring in Nigeria on a daily basis, such as the Boko Haram insurgency, ENDSARS, herdsmen attacks, kidnapping, and high rate of corruption, in addition to the awful circumstances brought on by the shift of naira notes and election. Njoku (2015) revealed that Nigerian ideals have been so corrupted that the country constantly suffers from spiritual and moral bankruptcy. Nigeria is in danger of dissolving because it is a pluralistic country surrounded by misaligned principles. This paper therefore examined numerous facets of values under the categories of "the good, bad, and ugly" as well as how they relate to national development.

Conceptualising Values

Values commonly connote moral standards; and principles that show what is right or wrong in society. Value stresses what is desirable and it shares common attributes with moral tenets. Okekeet (2021) viewed value as these norms, beliefs, principles, and practices that are cherished by the people. Values system covers the culture of the people stressing those ideas, attitudes, behaviour, and concepts that are desirable in the society. It also covers the interest, dispositions, needs and position that reflects actions that are worthwhile to the people. Values entrenched in

culture or norms are cherished, respected, and transmitted and should generationally be preserved from fading away. Values are standards that distinguish between what is good and evil, right and wrong, desirable and not desirable, necessary and not necessary in a society. Every society has values that they hold in high esteem. Value is also rooted in “likes” and “dislikes”. It is expected that we should be like other humans like us. We are also expected to dislike actions like lying, stealing, and fighting. As a result, values serve as a yardstick for determining what behaviours and things are worthy. Furthermore, values are so important to individuals and the generality of people that they have become a veritable substance for individuals, groups of people, and the nation at large to drive development and growth. According to Osalusi and Ajayi (2021), values are ideals and standards with strong foundations that help in making the right decisions on actions to take and beliefs to uphold. All these beliefs and principles form the acceptable way of life of the people and when put into practice, lead to progress and peaceful coexistence. These acceptable values include discipline, loyalty, integrity, honesty, cooperation, social justice, courage, humility, tolerance, dedication, commitment, and so on. The manifestation of values is at individual and societal levels.

Individual levels of manifestation of values are expressed in their lives, attitudes, character, conduct, and actions of a person. These individual values are a pointer of who a person is and determine one's way of life. It drives the actions and decisions of individuals. It is a true reflection of a person and it is seen in what people do in their places of work, school, or business. It is also displayed when one is entrusted with duties, positions of leadership, and how one manages affairs entrusted in their care. Osalusi and Ajayi (2021) opined that individual values can be developed from the home front through socialization processes and agents in society.

Societal values manifestation is driven by the code of conduct, norms, and acceptable and cherished ways of life that are collectively accepted by the generality of the people entrenched in their way of living. It becomes strongly satisfactory when the people in the society can draw a line between good and bad values. Where good values are celebrated, encouraged, and rewarded and bad values are relegated, discouraged, and punished, it will create a healthy, peaceful, progressive, and developed society. A society with insecurity, anger, underdevelopment, and doom.

An Overview of Good Values

Good values are those admirable values that should be coveted and possessed by every good and well-meaning citizen of the nation. Some of these great and amiable values are discussed below.

Integrity: This is a quality of having a sound moral and upright principle. This quality makes it difficult for people with such principles to be corrupted. Some attributes associated with integrity are uncompromising, hard work, fair play, contentment, and probity. The implication is that people with integrity are honest, satisfied with what they have, stand for the truth, and never compromise their stand for any reason (Mohammad & Danladi, 2017; Okeke, et al, 2021). Nigeria today needs more citizens with integrity for the realization of national development. They are open-minded, straightforward, and honest with themselves in their actions, thoughts, and words because of their integrity-based personality. (Isichei & Bolaji 2017). Invariably, their words become their bonds.

Honesty: Honesty as a value refers to the quality of being honest, sincere, frank, always telling the truth, and candid. According to Isichei and Bolaji (2017), it is the ability to know what is right and appropriate in our relationship, roles, or behaviour. Some attributes connected to honesty that should be appropriated by citizens are truthfulness, impartiality, sincerity, dedication, and respect for people and constituted authority. Other attributes include consistency, boldness, integrity, and

fairness. Mohammad and Danladi (2021) aver that an honest person/ citizen who is hard-working does not cheat and is fair in every endeavor no matter who is involved. Such value is a driver of national development.

Cooperation: Cooperation is a collaborative action willfully engaged by people of like minds to achieve a common goal. Cooperation engineers peaceful coexistence. Osalusi and Ajayi (2021) posited that for people to cooperate, and work together, they must accommodate each other's weaknesses as well as ensure that their differences are appreciated through tolerance. Cooperation leads to teamwork, team spirit, and result-oriented achievement in the country. Countries with distrust, conflict, and disagreement will never make progress. Therefore, the following attributes are essential in cooperation. They have tolerance, friendship, support, understanding and sharing.

Tolerance: This is a value that is associated with patience. It is the ability to bear with people and accept them for who they are. Tolerance aids in accommodating people amidst all odds. The beauty of tolerance is that it helps to douse conflict and enhance cooperation and togetherness. Some attributes of tolerance are calmness, forgiveness, cooperation, and understanding irrespective of religious, political, or tribal affiliation and background. Tolerance is needed for peaceful coexistence in the nation. It reduces hate speech that divides and promotes national unity and cohesion. For this nation to make progress in its pluralistic nature, there is a need for the virtue of tolerance by all and sundry. Tolerance is the water that mixes the sand (difference) and cement (similarities) of this nation into one indivisible nation called Nigeria.

Discipline: This is an act of being able to control one's emotions, behaviour, and temperament at all times. A disciplined citizen is a virtuous person who does the right thing at all times both in the private and in the public. Such people operate under a very high moral standard and are very law-abiding. Obvious characteristics associated with discipline are moderation, respect for rules and regulations, self-control, modesty, and dedication. Disciplined people are also honest, have respect for people, and are very patient when dealing with others. Oluwagbohunmi (2017) opined that loyal people are faithful to their allegiance and it takes discipline to be loyal and faithful.

Analysing the Bad and Ugly Values in Human Society

These are values that have a negative effect on citizens and by extension the entire nation if allowed to flourish. These values have destroyed the fabrics that hold people or nations together. Some of them include social justice, disharmony, cybercrime, greed, malpractices, and much more.

Social Injustice: This is an act of depriving people of their rights with impunity. This is a clear perversion and miscarriage of justice. Today, many people endure unfair suffering as a result of influential individuals or those who know influential individuals. Social injustice leads to outright denial of rights or punishment for offenses not committed. Some attributes of social injustice are pride, power drunkenness, impunity, aggressiveness, selfishness, inordinate desire, and wickedness. It is a known fact that several people today have suffered terribly due to injustice. Injustice has made people lose their jobs, fail examinations, denied promotions and appointments. Often, electoral mandates by the electorates have been stolen in broad daylight. This is the reason that quantum electoral cases are in tribunal courts up to date. This will drastically reduce when injustice is tackled headlong.

Dishonesty: This is the complete opposite of honesty. This is a value that spreads falsehood, insincerity, and cheating. Dishonest citizens are never trustworthy, they never tell the truth or discharge their duties in the best interest of the generality of the people or nation. They are very selfish and will remain a problem in society (Ukegbu et al 2011). Dishonest people are the bane

of the nation, they hinder the progress of any establishment and institutions. They also go the extra mile to destroy people's reputations to gain undeserved favour. Attributes linked to dishonesty are cheating, lying, insincerity, falsehood, backstabbing, and selfishness.

Greed: This is an excessive desire for material possessions. Greedy people would do anything to obtain things like wealth, power, fame, and positions in society. According to Okeke et al. (2021), greedy people have an excessive desire for materialism, wealth, and power for the sake of bragging rights and societal recognition. Greed, which is a negative value, has a detrimental effect on society. It hampers national development and destroys friendships and relationships. Insatiable craving, hoarding, mistrust, corruption, short-term thinking, exploitation, and selfishness are characteristics of greed.

Malpractices: This is a very dangerous value that can ruin individuals, society, and the nation in every sphere of endeavor. It manifests in either examination malpractice or electoral malpractice. Several students today in our higher institutions are not academically sound. They engage themselves in one form of malpractice or the other aided by parents, invigilators, examination conducting and monitoring bodies. No wonder some of our graduates are not worthy of learning and character. Worst still is the electoral malpractice practiced by our leaders. Many leaders today are not the choice of the masses. They come into power through every disgusting means possible and some citizens also sell their consciences (vote) for financial gain at the expense of their future and the future of the younger generation. This is a show of shame when you are forcefully leading the people that do not want you. All forms of malpractice are clear indications of a lack of integrity, discipline, and commitment to national development and cohesion. Malpractice in all facets manifests in cheating, lying, greed, and falsehood.

Corruption: An act of corruption is a dishonest activity done to further one's interests at the expense of others. Corruption in its deprived form moves from the state of being good to becoming bad or ugly. It has moved Nigeria from glory to shame in global rating. Kreck in Obalonu (2021) posited that Nigeria has the highest rate of people living in abject poverty. In 2015 Nigeria rated 136th position out of 190 countries, 136th out of 176 countries in 2016, and in 2018, 144th position out of 176 countries and 146th out of 180 countries (Ibrahim 2019, Asesoji 2020, Transparency International, 2020). Corruption and corrupt practices have destroyed the very fabric of this nation's values. Corrupt practices are displayed in virtually all facets of this nation. For example, fighting among siblings over family inheritance and authority, and playing politics for positions and money in religious circles and educational sectors Politics prevent certain states from fully supporting the establishment of more governmental institutions. Political leaders are splitting up their portfolios to pay for their political allies while the general populace suffers from hardships like hunger, suffering, unemployment, insecurity, and anxiety, among other things. Corruption can also be seen among followers. They extort money from people before rendering the service they receive a salary for. Files get missing in the office until the Clerk is settled. Contracts are not awarded until the percentage is arrived at. Students cannot pass or proceed to the next level until they settle their teachers or lecturers. The list is endless corruption destroys the foundation blocks of a fast-growing society or nation leaving the citizens in abject poverty, struggling for survival in the midst of abundance thereby increasing crime rates.

Kidnapping: Kidnapping occurs when individuals are taken against their will to extract a ransom from them or coerce them into doing an undesirable task. The cases of kidnapping are very rampant and highly worrisome. From January to March 2023, about 1230 people were killed while 658 were kidnapped (Eromosele –Vanguard, 2023). Not less than 706 persons were killed while about

302 were kidnapped in April 2023. From April 2022 to April 2023, a 20.4% decrease generally, although 30 deaths were recorded while 19 people were kidnapped in a landslide in Abuja (Sanusi Punch 2023). Sanni (2022) in Premium Times recorded that over 653.7 million was paid to kidnappers for ransom from July 2012 to June 2022 to free kidnapped victims. This is a negative value that is deeply rooted in the nation. Both youths and adults are seriously involved in these despicable actions. This unwholesome means of making money is dragging our values into the mud, and destroying the country's reputation internationally. The most tragic part is that the perpetrators of this act are the youths, undergraduates, and school dropouts. It is also interesting to note that some of these kidnappers are sponsored by some of our big shots in society. Attributes associated with this value are extortion, deception, use of weapons, coercion, and so on.

Ritual Killings (Yahoo Yahoo): Yahoo Yahoo is a common conversation today in Nigeria. These are groups of boys and girls who are desperate to make huge sums of money without decent jobs. These criminally minded people have graduated from cybercrimes to ritual killing to make money. To this end, they kidnap or lure their victims to places where they are used for sacrifice for them to make huge amounts of money through ritual activities. To carry out these rituals, they harvest the body parts of their victims ranging from eyes, breasts, heart, kidneys, sexual organs, and so on. Harvesting of body parts is a common sight today. Young boys or girls of about 15 years have turned millionaires overnight. The inordinate desire and greed have pushed them to become killers. Ukegbu et al (2012) opined that greed is an excessive urge to acquire wealth and material possessions at the expense of others. This sadly means that making such bastard money includes killing their parents, siblings, lovers, friends, and strangers. Attributes of this value include greediness, avarice, wickedness, selfishness, impunity, drug addiction, criminal-mindedness, evil-hearted and so on.

Implications for National Development

No nation can strive under a sick values system. National development is hinged on the values system rooted in the beliefs, culture, and practice of the citizens. A departure from good values will surely result in a national catastrophe. A nation that is enveloped in corruptive values such as dishonesty, social injustice, greed, and all forms of malpractices ranging from examination, electoral, and financial, to judicial malpractices, corruption, kidnapping, ritual killing, and lots more will find it extremely difficult to develop. To achieve national development through values calls for a total overhauling of our attitude towards what is perceived as the right and acceptable way of life.

National development is viewed as a steady advancement of the nation's economy, education, social, cultural, political, and technological spheres. It is associated with improvement, effectiveness, efficiency, and innovation. National development is also driven by technology, sound initiative, and good moral judgment.

Exhibition and practice of bad and ugly values will lead to retrogression in every facet of the nation's endeavor. Where corruption, dishonesty, ritual killing, and greed strive, the citizens live in abject poverty. Bad values are to be treated as treason because it keeps the nation in perpetual backwardness. The perpetrators get richer while the masses get poorer.

Negative values where allowed to thrive will keep foreign investors away from the nation. No inventor will want to do business in the swamp of evil leaders and politicians who are only interested in increasing their bank accounts, home and abroad with stolen national money. Ugly values when not checked become a way of life for individuals, companies, politicians, and nations. When ugly values become systemic, they destroy the pillars of truth, loyalty, patriotism, fair play, and social justice that bind the nation. All these terrible values put together hinder national development and crimes that war against humanity (Okeke et al 2021).

Based on the foregoing, good values must be advocated at this juncture in Nigeria. Good values system must be a platform for national development and it should start with human development (Obro 2021). This implies that there should be a deliberate and conscious effort to reorient the citizens on the need to go back to our cherished values such as honesty, unity, fair play, integrity, commitment, dedication, accountability, patriotism, and so on. With the aforementioned values, promoted and displayed by the citizens the nation will be able to stand tall in the global community and restore the image of Nigerians and Nigeria.

Furthermore, it will attract foreign investors with integrity to invest in the nation leading to socio-economic development. Moreover, cases of crime, killing, robbery, ritual, and kidnapping will be reduced very seriously. It will also result in the dignity of labour as people will now take joy and pride in earning money decently and genuinely. It will also enhance peaceful co-existence and cooperation among citizens.

2. CONCLUSION

No nation can grow or develop standing on values classified as bad and ugly. The ladder to sustainable development is a good value that must be accepted and displayed by every citizen in Nigeria. Bad and ugly values are not only detrimental to individuals and the nation, it also drag the nation's integrity into the mud globally. Based on these, good values such as honesty, integrity, love for the nation, social justice, and more were advocated. This will enhance cooperation, peaceful co-existence, and dignity of labour.

3. SUGGESTIONS

Based on the foregoing discourse, this paper suggested that appropriate measures should be taken to punish those found guilty of illicit acquisition of money in both private and government. All corrupt officials and politicians should be made to face justice. Also, any leader be it federal, state, or local government as well as the head of various establishments should face the wrath of the law when found culpable. This will serve as a deterrent to others. Communities, religious assemblies, and traditional rules should never bestow honour to anyone whose means of livelihood is shady. People with questionable characters should not be allowed to hold any position of any form.

Social Studies should be made compulsory from primary school to senior secondary school and should be a GST course for two years in every tertiary institution. This will help instill values in the children from childhood to adulthood and bridge the gap of not having Social Studies at secondary schools. Social Studies teachers/lecturers should be committed to instilling the right values in their students through teaching and practical examples. Finally, all the yahoo boys and

girls should be brought to justice especially because of the negative influence they are having on the innocent and naive youths in the society.

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