

# Value Re-Orientation as a Catholicon to Reducing Banditry in Nigeria

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**Abstract:**-The incessant banditry in Nigeria has posed a big challenge to the country's economy and the world at large. The area of concern has attracted many conferences, workshops, and dialogues about the future of the country's image as other efforts to eliminate banditry in the land seemed abortive. This paper was an examination of value reorientation as a catholicon to reducing banditry in Nigeria. The paper used secondary sources for data collection to uncover issues surrounding banditry. The paper explored value reorientation and found it to mean "the act of intentionally struggling to change the direction which attitudes and beliefs of our value institutions in Nigeria are currently preoccupied with, or the act of altering behavior, attitude and beliefs of Nigerian youths in a new direction with the intention to reduce banditry in our society and the world at large. The Institutional theory was applied to explain the phenomenon. The incessant banditry in Nigeria could be as a result of failed moral institutions in carrying out their responsibility as it supposed. When the quest for wealth acquisitions outweighs quest for moral values, the result would not be far from criminality which among them is banditry. Essential elements such as humility, responsibility, diligence, entrepreneurship, contentedness and respect for elders, among other moral values should be made an utmost priority as values. We recommend that families, the schools, political institutions, religious institutions, and media should work round the clock in creating awareness and make sure that moral values are upheld in society.

**Keywords:** Value, Reorientation, Banditry, Institutional theory, Nigeria

## I. INTRODUCTION

Everyone is brought into the world to fulfill one obligation or the other. But whatever obligation one is to fulfill has to be socially and existentially acceptable by society. That is why the issue of moral value or preferably ethics is very important and cannot be tired of emphasising. It is a belief that a child needs adequate care by the parents and even the society at large. The care is not only in the provision of physical, emotional, mental, and social needs as some people may think, but it also includes raising the child to associate and assimilate the norms, ethos, values, religious and cultural practices of his/her society. There is no doubt that failure to bring up a child properly is a call for social vices of which among them is banditry. Though it can be argued that some exogenous factors also contribute to an individual pattern of behavior. The reason is that it is through these means that the ways of life of the community and society are transmitted to

generations of offspring (Afolabi, 2008). The concept of moral value serves as the bedrock upon which the edifice of a truly righteous and egalitarian society rests. Obasola (2015) posited that moral values form a major aspect of every culture as it outlines comprehensively, codes of behaviours or conducts for the individual on the one hand, and the society on the other. Values such as integrity, discipline, self-reliance, respect for elders, contentment, and good neighbourliness are no more held in our society. If a nation is not proud of its value system or is seen by other national boundaries as a country with a high level of banditry leading to insecurity, what do you expect the foreigners to do in relation to bringing development? The values need to be revisited.

In Nigeria, the level of insecurity is alarming, that people hardly sleep with their two eyes close. The level of kidnapping and arm robbery is at a high rate, leading to a significant loss of lives and properties, and an economy capable of taking people to hunger and loss of hope on the government. According to Stewart (2004), as cited in Onime (2018), the economic cost of insecurity is enormous. The culture of 'get-rich-quick syndrome' has taken over Nigerian ethical standards, thereby, becoming a threat to the nation's image. Insecurity has cut across every part of the country. In the North East, the long issue of Boko Haram terrorism has not been eradicated, in the Northwest, the case is not far from the former. In fact, in Katsina and parts of neighboring Zamfara state in the Northwest, rampaging gangs of armed bandits have engaged in violent acts, by attacking, abducting, robbing villagers, and even killing travelers, and engaging in cattle rustling (Premium Times, April 2019). The incessant killing in the Southwest, the militancy, and pipeline vandalisation activities in the Niger delta and agitations for self-determination by Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in the South East are enough to slow down the economic activities in Nigeria. It is very important to note that the Nigerian government has not crossed its finger over this menace. A lot of men and women have been recruited to join in the fight for security. Some states in the country have signed into a law the Anti-kidnapping Act while the National assembly passed the Antiterrorism Act in 2011. The federal government has also established the National Orientation Agency (NOA) in September 1993, and CLTC in 2000. Yet, socio-cultural values are still being violated.

The area of concern has been attempted by looking at the “Insecurity and Economic Growth in Nigeria” by Onime (2018), “Banditry and Crisis of Public Safety in Nigeria: Issues in National Security Strategic” by Okoli and Chukwuma (2014), “The Nature and Consequences of Armed Banditry in Border Communities of Adamawa State, Nigeria” by Shalangwa (2013), “Corruption and Insecurity in Nigeria” by Nnaemeka (2015), and “Armed Robbery in Post-Civil War Nigeria” by Nkpa, (1976) among others but none dwelled on banditry eradication in Nigeria through value reorientation. When the root cause of a problem has not been uprooted, no amount of solution will solve the problem. It is against this background that the paper attempts to show how re-orientation of moral values can be used to eliminate and by extension eradicate banditry rampaging Nigerian economy.

### *Problem Statement*

The banditry violence became obvious as a farmer/herder conflict in 2011 and intensified from 2017 to 2018 to include cattle rustling, kidnapping for ransom, sexual violence, arm robbery, and killings. The violence has affected about 35 out of 92 local government areas in the 4 states of Northwest Nigeria. About 21 million people living in these states have been exposed to insecurity from activities of bandits. Some Nigerian institutions for shaping behaviour have been observed to have been performing below the expectation if not neglected their duties. Many studies indicated that the 18-30 year age group accounts for most crimes in almost all societies (Igbo, 2007). This is the youthful age when young men and women are full of energy and always on the look-out for excitement and trouble. According to Igbo, persons in this age group may indulge in armed robbery, rape, burglary, arson, and looting. According to the Centre for International Cooperation and Security (2005), the youth population in Nigeria who are economically, socially, and politically deprived are among the main perpetrators of armed criminality and ‘gangsterism’. In the same way, those over 30 and 40 years of age generally indulge in less violent offenses such as fraud, drunkenness, embezzlement, and gambling.

Prior to this age group of 18-30, individuals are either in their basic educational levels such as family, Primary and secondary schools, and even in technical schools where norms, values, morals, and skills capable of training and bringing up productive citizens in the society supposed to have been inculcated into them. The case here is that institutions such as family, schools, religious institutions, the media, civil society groups, and other forms of formal and informal educational institutions have allowed over economic ambitions to take over their roles as the training grounds for youths in a more acceptable standard. According to Ogude (2017), the pursuit of material achievement over and above every other admirable virtue has become deep-rooted among all cadres of Nigerians. These are the cankerworms that have eaten deep into the hearts of our society. Some researchers have traced the causes of the banditry from the angle of border sharing between Nigeria and neighboring countries, poverty,

and corruption while others were coming from the angle of the discovery of gold mines and the activities of illegal miners competing for control of gold reserves.

There is something more dangerous, hazardous, and even deleterious than that existing in the environment. The socio-cultural and communal value systems have lost their weight in Nigeria. When the necessary institutions responsible for inculcating moral values failed to do so, the resultant effect of behaviors will no doubt be disastrous. It is based on this that the researchers deemed it fit that effort to proffer solutions to this incessant banditry in Nigeria especially, in Zamfara and the neighbouring state Katsina will be of great value. In this paper, the existing literature on banditry, value reorientation would be examined and energize intellectual discourse on the importance of value reorientation as key to reducing persistent banditry in Nigeria.

Research questions:

- I. What is value?
- II. What is the current situation of banditry in Nigeria?
- III. How can Value re-orientation reduce banditry in Nigeria?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

### *Concept of Values*

The concept of value has been put forward by some scholars. Value is defined by Oyedepo (1986) as such concepts as good, bad, desirable, beautiful, ugly e.t.c. which tends to examine the justification of judgments that involves these concepts, the logic of the argument by which they are supported or challenged. A definition by Ayokunnu (2006), described a value system as the sum 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. Going by this definition, if Nigeria is known for banditry where on earth will a Nigerian be accepted or welcome outside the country? That is why more needs to be done. All hands must be on deck.

Bohn and Haley (2002) look at values as “products of human experience that regulate not only what is, but also what should be acceptable conducts....” In sharing his experience, Barack Obama (2006: 55), the 45th President of America, said the regulatory aspect of values often creates conflicts, and “... we cannot avoid these tensions (conflicts) entirely. Ogude (2017), states that Value is the acceptable standard, ideal way of doing things and living a virtuous life in society. This reminds us of the popular saying “train up your child in a way he should go so that when he grows he will not depart from it”. When a child is continuously trained and monitored from the family, schools, religious centers, tertiary institutions, civil society groups, and the rest on morality, there would be a total reduction of banditry if not eradicated in the country. That is why Kehinde (2015) concludes that moral values are those intrinsic attributes and characteristics which are innate in

every person for the actualization and promotion of social order, cohesion, and peaceful co-existence which are fundamental indices for growth and development in the society. Obasola (2003) posited that value is the basis on which sound moral and wholesome judgment is based. Values are respected and such values are the moral worth, principles or standard which the society holds in high esteem. When moral values are upheld, inculcated, and made first-order priority in our society, children tend to grow with them and the result is an orderly and productive society capable of bringing desired citizens for desired development in the society.

#### *Banditry in Nigeria; the current situation*

Banditry according to Slatta (1987) is the taking away of property by force or the threat of force, often by a group, usually of men. Of necessity, bandits usually operate in the shadows, often on the fringes of society, in geographically isolated areas. According to Shalangwa (2013), armed banditry is seen as the practice of raiding and attacking victims by members of an armed group, whether or not premeditated, using all sorts of weapons of offense, or defense especially in semi-organised groups to overpower victim and obtain loot or achieving some political goals. Such bandits are usually regarded as outlaws and desperate lawless marauders who do not have a definite residence or destination, and they roam around the forest and mountains to avoid being detected or arrested. In the same line, Odinkalu (2018) opined that banditry is used to describe different variants of outlawry. Banditry can be seen in homes, workplaces, schools, highways, banks, and even in neighborhoods while it has its records majorly in urban areas and major highways. It is also very important to state that those who engage in this act are not far from the residents where banditry takes place. As Igbo proverb states “Oke noo na ulo gwara oke noo na ohia na anu di na ngiga”. Meaning that the rat in the house tells the rat in the forest that there is meat in the kitchen”. Bandits not only steal from people, but they also raze communities, and get persons displaced. Conklin (1992) posits that it usually involves theft with violence or threat of violence by a person with whom the victim has had no previous contact, and it is usually unprovoked and unpredictable.

Banditry whether organised or random is a global phenomenon. In the Southern Ethiopian/Kenyan border, banditry and incidents involving ethnic conflicts are common while in the west, the Gambella region is subjected to inter-ethnic conflict and political violence originating from Sudan. Mburu (1999) observed that “with the destruction of the economy, the only employment left for young men is banditry as a fleeting opportunity or under the ambit of the militia of one fiefdom or the other”. He further noted that similar experience in Somalia has also shown how banditry can be exported to another country through refugees that include former regular soldiers who hide sophisticated firearms in the bush for use to rob or execute rivals. Armed bandits in

Morocco operated in mountainous areas attacking travelers, raiding livestock, enslaving children, and raping women.

In Morocco bandits are known as “iqatta’ em n-ibriden, “cutters of the road” (Hart, 1987) Hart further observed that banditry in Morocco was localized in two mountainous regions, the Jbala in the north, and the Atlas, in the Centre and South. The history had it that The Jbala gave rise to one Ali I Bu Frahi. Ali was a physical man and found himself several followers, eventually emerging as a highwayman leading a gang which waylaid caravans on the main road between Tangier and Tetuan. He never molested the poor and enjoyed the support of the local villagers who fed him and invited him for their weddings. One can infer that banditry is targeted to harm and rob the rich than the poor.

In the Nigerian context, bandits do not spare anybody. Both the rich and the poor are their targets for economic gains. In the study of armed banditry in Borgu, Akinwumi (2001) noted that in precolonial Borgu in Kwara state, Nigeria, ‘Bakin Jaki’, one of the notorious raiders in the nineteenth century, had a gang made up of about 400 robbers on foot and 60 horsemen. When they attacked, they loot the traders of their goods (Shalangwa, 2013).

In Katsina and parts of neighboring Zamfara state in the Northwest, rampaging gangs of armed bandits have engaged in violent acts, attacking, abducting, killing, and robbing villagers and travelers, and engaging in cattle rustling too. It was recorded that between January and April 2019, several operations by the Nigerian Army, such as *Operation Harbin Kunama*, *Operation Diran Mikiya*, and *Operation Puff Adder*, were carried out to challenge banditry in the Northwest. The Government of Zamfara alone has spent over N17 billion funding military and security operations in the state (Abubakar, 2019). It was observed that on the first of March 2020, armed men suspected to be bandits killed at least 51 people in an early morning attack on Igabi LGA of Kaduna state. The violence has hampered agricultural activities and heightened the risk of acute food insecurity. Also, Livelihoods have been disrupted, fear, and insecurity among the population have also been increased, and IDPs and host communities are competing for scarce resources such as water, land, and food. Zamfara state particularly has problems with armed groups stealing cattle, kidnapping for ransom and attacking communities, which has, in turn, prompted some local people to form vigilante gangs.

The Nigeria Security Tracker, produced by the Washington-based Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), monitors level of violence by collating local media reports. According to these figures, from the beginning of 2019, there have been 262 civilian deaths. In the whole of 2018, there were 288 and for 2017, the figure was 52. The CFR data also indicates a sharp rise in killings of members of armed groups which include bandits, vigilantes, and others involved in criminal activities. In comparing Zamfara state with other states in Nigeria, taking total civilian deaths from the beginning of March to 6

April, 2020 there have been 169 deaths in Zamfara, 28 in Borno State and 14 in Adamawa. There were no such incidences recorded in Yobe (CFR, 2019). By March 2020, more than 210,000 people have been internally displaced. More than 35,000 refugees have crossed communal borders to Maradi in the Niger Republic by the beginning of March 2020. What are our moral institutions doing over this?

#### *Value reorientation and Banditry in Nigeria*

Re-orientation of value is taken to mean restructuring and redirecting of citizens in the right place and at the right time. Value reorientation according to Njoku (2015), is the positioning of Nigerians, where we ought to be in the future. Njoku stated that value reorientation should be through ideological appeals, planning, training, productivity, and efficiency in achievements through cooperate culture. The re-orientation of values is a function of not only the family but also educational institutions, government, and other civil society groups. That is the reason Durkeim (1933) describes "value as a principle or standard considered worthwhile or desirable by the people of a community or society for purpose of fostering orderly living, mutual growth, and positive development." Family plays a vital role in child-upbringing. The type of value inculcated into a child goes a long way modeling the child in wider society. Some parents who model themselves as touts should not be surprised to see their children, especially at their youthful age exhibiting deviant behaviour.

A society where respect, honour accorded to parents, elders, men and women of honour, Love, and protection of the family are switched for dishonesty, theft, drug abuse, prostitution, disrespect for elders in the society is a call for banditry when opportunity surfaces. Therefore, the operational definition of "values-reorientation" in this paper is seen as "the act of intentionally struggling to change the direction which attitudes and beliefs of our value institutions in Nigeria are currently preoccupied with, or the act of altering behavior, attitude and beliefs of Nigerian youths in a new direction within our society and the world at large.

The level of drug addicts in Nigeria is increasing day by day and is becoming an order of the day among some Nigerian youths. Unless the society as a whole rejects drug addiction without any justification, those who try to defend drug abuse unconsciously support and fuel banditry. Where political, cultural institutions and even churches have abandoned their roles as correctional institutions to the preference of undue wealth acquisition as a result of a high level of materialism in the society would open room for banditry in the country. Where tribalism and other ethnic sentiments have taken over the moral values in the land, people are left with little or no choice than to engage in banditry. When basic moral values such as; Honesty, contentedness and responsiveness are undermined, the next option is no doubt social vices which among them is banditry. That is why Adamu (2009), clearly stated that "we need moral values to move this nation

forward". The bad values in Nigeria have left some Nigerians with the priority of self-interest instead of the interest of the masses. The illness has also created a spirit of laziness, unproductive citizens, and by extension banditry in the land. Iwe (1991 cited in Obasola, 2015) who surmises that "over-concern with one's self-importance and pre-occupation with self-aggrandizement naturally lead to total indiscipline or moral decadence from the self to the society".

#### *Theoretical perspective*

So many theories can explain why banditry is committed such as; cultural conflict theory, social structural theory, differential opportunity, Marxist theory, economic condition, Social Disorganisation, and institutional theory etc. but for the purpose of this paper, institutional theory was used to explain the phenomenon under study.

#### *Institutional theory*

The framework of analysis adopted for this study is the institutional theory. Guy Peters (2000) defines an institution as "a formal or informal, structural, societal or political phenomenon that transcends the individual level that is based on more or less common values, has a certain degree of stability and influences behavior. The institutional theory focuses on the deeper and more resilient aspects of social structure. It considers the process by which the structures, including schemas, rules, norms, and routines become established as authoritative guidelines for social behavior. The institutional theorists believed that institutions not only offer and constrain behavioural alternatives but also, up to a certain extent model individual preferences (Izueke, 2010). This means that an institution directly or indirectly determines the motives guiding individual behavior.

In Nigeria, there are several institutions responsible for inculcating moral values in society such as the National Orientation Agency (NOA) in September 1993, and CLTC in 2000; families, educational institutions, religious institutions, community groups, civil society groups, etc. but these institutions have not been performing as expected. In an ideal society, the education institution is the ultimate and crucial agent of socialisation, a lifetime institution that prepares individuals to be mindful of their surroundings. According to Jones (1998), institutions such as the family and schools have the function to socialise individuals to conform to values. Jones (1998) further argues that each type of society would be characterized by a particular form of collective consciousness. That is the set of beliefs which is common to the whole society and acts as a powerful force in shaping the way it behaves.

However, what is observed in some educational institutions in Nigeria is the opposite ranging from primary school to tertiary institutions. Schools are formal places where moral values are learned. The necessary abilities and attitudes which are of helpful value to society are far from practice therefore, breeding deleterious knowledge to the detriment of society.

Many teachers have characterised themselves with questionable character, moral standards, as well as commitment to jobs are undermined to the detriment of the pupils and students. It is like a vicious cycle. In this way, education has both influenced and affected the moral value system in Nigeria. Our education system which supposed to do justice to this menace has contributed to the failure of our value system. Ikpe (2002) revealed that moral education was abandoned in schools when the government took over all schools. Ogude (2017) added that our education breeds even negative knowledge to the disadvantage of society.

Also, religious institutions which supposed to guide, correct and direct people to the moral standard has failed to perform within expectation. Most of our clergies have abandoned their roles in society to the preference of undue political recognition. Corruption from our leaders in different sectors has also brought down the moral values expected of society because it is a social danger and a radicalizer capable of sweeping out morality.

The family is the foundation of value orientation. Through parents, moral values that stimulate children and determine their behaviour are learned. Families choose movies and relationships their children watch and keep. It stands as the first training ground for children. However, many parents have lost their roles as parents, due to negligence, economic crises, and illiteracy leaving their children to be groomed in the street surrounded by touts, arm robbers, drug addicts, and other societal miscreants. These children grow with it and become bandits since love, care, basic education, and moral values are lacking.

Poor economic activities in the country are another area worth mentioning as factors contributing to devaluing in morals. According to Johnson (1997), corruption changes institutions, economies, and societies within which it occurs. Saanu (2013) revealed that many Nigerians cannot meet the basic needs of life because they have no jobs. Okafor (2011) also stated that with corruption, youth unemployment in Nigeria is with attendant social, economic, political and psychological consequences. When Nigerian moral institutions are weak, rooms for corruption are opened, there is a tendency that banditry would take place since survival is inevitable.

#### *Obvious Consequences of Banditry in Nigeria*

Banditry if not tackled with stringent measures has the tendency of taking the economy to the grave. In the budget level, much has also been observed by different administrations as evidence provided below would explain more;

Table 1. Internal Security Expenditure (Nbillions)

Expenditure item	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Recurrent	280.0	362.5	292.7	273.1	410.2
Capital	65.7	58.10	12.1	48.3	36.0
Total	345.7	420.6	304.8	321.4	446.2

Source: CBN Annual Report, (2015) cited in Onime (2018).

The money which would have been channeled to other economic institutions capable of creating jobs for the unemployed youths have been used on internal security in the country. Armed banditry impacts on victims differently, and even residents of where the bandits reside. When traders are attacked, their monies are taken, this undoubtedly discourages commercial activities in the state, and leave some with trauma. When banditry becomes the order of the day, there is every tendency that it will disrupt social activities such as religious gathering, political gathering, festivals, and even school attendance. According to Muggah and Batchelor (2002),

Armed banditry can severely affect the supply of cash crops, as public and commercial transportation to markets is often interrupted, and consequently, farmers are forced to abandon commercial harvests. Where this happen repeatedly on a large scale, social investment often declines with broad ripple effects on both foreign investor confidence and overseas development assistance.

The supply and delivery of essential social services by non-governmental and governmental organizations have also been affected by this banditry as the operational staff is sometimes attacked on the delivery of services. In support of the above statement, Stewart (2004) on 'economic development' for twenty five countries between 1960 –1995 found that economic growth was always affected, exports were negative, the agricultural sector was badly hit, there was a fall in production, there was a shift from international to domestic markets, imports went up dominated by military expenditure and essential consumption of goods, usually leading to a shortage of foreign exchange for economic inputs. The value such as productivity (hard work), responsiveness, transparency, and creativity should be re-energized.

### III. METHODOLOGY

The paper adopted a descriptive research design that allows researchers to present issues verbally and summarize the information generated in research based on documented pieces of evidence on a prevailing issue. It is theoretical with an in-depth explanatory and illustrative description that gives meaning, knowledge, and opinions. We utilised the secondary sourced materials from journals, newspapers, and magazines as well as internet sources of material through systematic qualitative content analysis.

### IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Having discussed value reorientation and its nexus with banditry in Nigeria, we, therefore suggest that these salient areas need to pick up:

- I. Family as an agent of change should make an utmost sacrifice by inculcating moral values to their children. The first training ground of a child matters a lot in a child's growth and development. It is believed that parents are the architect of the conduct of a child's development. As a parent, especially

mothers who are nearer to their children, you model proper behaviour in the manner you talk to and treat your child. This will build up a child throughout his/her lifetime. Good character is better instilled from the formative years of a child. A child with a good value system and a productive mindset, would always device legal means of survival, otherwise today's quandaries will forever remain in this country.

- II. Secondly, the educational institutions should be on saving the shrunken school system as change-agents. This can be done by strict adherence to school norms, values, and punishment of offenders appropriately. Also, emphasis on entrepreneurship should be made pride of place in our educational institutions.
- III. Thirdly, the religious leaders should preach more on moral values than over-emphasis on material wealth. A good value system opens room for sustainable wealth creation. Values that are vague or even uncharted can go a long way creating emotional tension due to the conflict that may arise between the belief and the action that is put in place.
- IV. The National orientation agency should make an utmost priority to frequently carry out sensitisation on moral values. This can kick off through the traditional leaders, youth groups, women group, and social media.
- V. The Nigeria government should channel the proceeds from resources rightly and shun any form of corruption by creating an enabling environment for the citizenry. This would go a long way preventing the popular saying "a hungry man is an angry man".

## V. CONCLUSION

In general, a country brimming with banditry can neither attract investments nor move its economy to a greater height. This study tried to suggest how value reorientation can be used as a panacea to incessant banditry in Nigeria especially, in the Northern part of Nigeria. Researches have shown that weak moral institutions are capable of bringing up deviant individuals and slow economic growth. Importantly, moral values are a tool for the survival of every society in that, total disregard of moral principles can lead to the lassitude we are suffering in the country. In this regard, moral instruction must be given attention in all our formal and informal institutions of learning.

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