Curriculum as an Agent of Value Reorientation in Contemporary Nigeria

Dr. Asukwo Okon Uya

Department of Curriculum Studies, Educational Management and Planning, University of Uyo Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

The increasing decline in moral values, civic responsibility, and national unity in Nigeria has raised critical concerns about the role of education in reversing these negative trends. Amid rising incidents of corruption, youth restiveness, intolerance, and social disintegration, the school curriculum is increasingly being recognized as a vital agent for national value reorientation. This paper examines the potential of the Nigerian curriculum to serve as a transformative tool for cultivating ethical behavior, civic consciousness, and responsible citizenship in contemporary society. Anchored on national policy documents and educational theories, the study explores how subjects such as Civic Education, Social Studies, Religious Studies, and Security Education are infused with value-laden content that promotes integrity, tolerance, patriotism, and respect for human rights. The paper also analyzes the roles of the curriculum, teacher modeling, participatory pedagogy, and digital tools in fostering value internalization among learners. Despite these prospects, the study identifies several challenges, including curriculum overload, poor teacher quality, exam-oriented instruction, societal contradictions, and inadequate resources. To address these limitations, the paper recommends a comprehensive strategy involving curriculum review, teacher retraining, integration of service learning, national monitoring frameworks, community engagement, and the use of technology and media in value delivery. Through a multi-stakeholder and whole-school approach, the curriculum can be repositioned to not only produce academically competent graduates but also morally grounded and civically engaged citizens. The paper concludes that for Nigeria to achieve sustainable development, peace, and national unity, value reorientation through curriculum must be treated as a national imperative rather than a supplementary goal.

Keywords: Curriculum, Value Reorientation, Civic Responsibility, National Unity.

INTRODUCTION

The 21st century has witnessed a disturbing decline in societal values globally, but the case in Nigeria is particularly worrisome. Incidents of moral decadence, corruption, examination malpractice, ritual killings, cybercrime, and youth restiveness have become rampant, indicating a major breakdown in the nation's value systems. These challenges are not only symptomatic of institutional failure but also reflect a gap in the moral and civic training of Nigerian citizens, especially the youth. These also challenges have penetrated homes, schools, religious institutions, and government structures, thereby threatening the nation's unity, peace, and socio-economic progress. The Nigerian state, once guided by communal values of honesty, respect, responsibility, and patriotism, is now grappling with a crisis of identity and integrity.

In the face of this national moral decline, education remains the most powerful instrument for value transmission and social transformation. Among the various components of education, the curriculum stands out as the strategic vehicle through which knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values are structured and delivered to learners. A value-driven curriculum is essential for shaping character and cultivating responsible citizenship, addresses the nation's moral and ethical crises, especially from early childhood through tertiary education. As affirmed by Offorma (2020), the curriculum is not merely a body of knowledge but a reflection of societal ideals, serving as a tool to nurture ethical behaviour, civic consciousness, and emotional intelligence.

Curriculum refers to the structured content, experiences, and planned activities organized by educational institutions to achieve desired learning outcomes. It includes formal subjects, hidden curricula (unwritten values and attitudes), and co-curricular experiences. Curriculum, beyond its academic functions, plays a critical role in shaping attitudes, beliefs, and character. It reflects and transmits the cultural values of a society, serving as a blueprint for what a nation expects of its future citizens. A value-oriented curriculum seeks to embed moral, civic, and ethical education into learning experiences, ensuring that students develop a sound moral compass alongside cognitive skills. In countries like Nigeria, where the erosion of values threatens social cohesion and national development, curriculum reform and implementation become essential tools for value reorientation.

Value reorientation is the process of changing or reinforcing societal values, norms, and attitudes toward ethical and morally acceptable behaviour. In Nigeria, it involves promoting national unity, respect for rule of law, accountability, and civic duty. The Nigerian National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014) underscores the importance of education in fostering the development of values such as respect for the dignity of labour, honesty, patriotism, and national unity. This vision is operationalized through value-laden subjects like Civic Education, Social Studies, Religious Studies, and Peace Education. These subjects are intended to promote national unity, discipline, self-reliance, tolerance, and social justice. However, the effectiveness of the curriculum in achieving these goals depends heavily on how well it is designed, implemented, and aligned with Nigeria's cultural and developmental needs. But, despite these curriculum provisions, there remains a significant gap between what is taught and the prevailing attitudes and behaviors among young people.

Several factors contribute to this disconnect, including poor curriculum implementation, lack of trained teachers in value education, the dominance of examination-focused learning, societal contradictions, and the absence of a consistent moral compass within the wider environment. Consequently, many Nigerian youths leave school without internalizing the values necessary for nation-building and ethical leadership (Igbuzor, 2019; Eze & Nwankwo, 2021).

Empirical studies across Nigeria consistently affirm that the school curriculum—particularly Civic and Social Studies—holds significant potential for promoting value reorientation among students. Adegboye and Salami (2020) found that while most teachers viewed Civic Education as an effective tool for instilling values like integrity and tolerance, lack of specialized training and overcrowded classrooms limited its impact. Similarly, the NERDC (2019) national evaluation reported improved civic and anti-corruption awareness among students following curriculum reforms, yet emphasized that only a small percentage of schools implemented co-curricular activities to reinforce these values. Insecurity in regions like the North-East further hindered consistent delivery, showing that effective value education requires more than curriculum revision—it depends on localized implementation, teacher support, and a stable learning environment.

Complementing this, Ibrahim and Yusuf (2018) showed that faith-based schools in Kaduna and Kano effectively integrate values into both formal and informal curricula, leading to higher student awareness of respect and discipline, largely due to flexible and context-sensitive approaches. Eke and Okafor (2017) also found that interactive strategies, like active Social Studies clubs, significantly enhanced students' interpersonal behaviour, while theoretical teaching was less effective. In conflict-affected Borno and Adamawa, Mohammed and Ibrahim (2021) showed that peace education integrated into the curriculum reduced student aggression and promoted empathy, despite the ongoing challenges of insecurity and limited teacher capacity. Together, these studies affirm that value reorientation in Nigerian schools depends not only on curriculum content but also on context, delivery methods, and systemic support.

This reality underscores the urgent need to reposition the curriculum as a deliberate agent of value reorientation. If properly designed and implemented, the curriculum has the potential to reshape societal norms, revive ethical standards, and equip learners with the attitudes required for peaceful coexistence and responsible living. This study therefore explores the central role of curriculum in fostering value reorientation in Nigeria, and how it can be utilized more effectively to address the moral and civic challenges confronting the nation.

The Need for Value Reorientation in Nigeria

Nigeria is experiencing a deepening crisis of values, evident in the widespread erosion of ethical standards across all strata of society. This moral degeneration has become a fundamental barrier to sustainable development, peaceful coexistence, and civic engagement. The failure of traditional social institutions—such as the family, religion, and the media—to uphold and transmit core societal values necessitates a re-evaluation of the role of education, particularly the curriculum, as a deliberate agent for moral reconstruction. A closer examination of specific social indicators reveals the urgency for value reorientation.

i.   Weak Family and Religious Value Transmission: The family, traditionally the first agent of value transmission, has become weakened by poverty, poor parenting, and urban pressures. Religious institutions, once regarded as bastions of moral guidance, are sometimes undermined by doctrinal conflict and the commercialization of faith, now emphasize prosperity over righteousness, leading to moral ambiguity. With these institutions faltering, the school curriculum becomes a critical substitute for value transmission—providing consistent, structured moral education regardless of learners' home backgrounds. Against this backdrop, the school system—and by extension, the curriculum—remains one of the few structured platforms through which national values can be deliberately taught, modeled, and reinforced (Iwuanyanwu, 2021).

ii.   Moral Decay: The Nigerian society has witnessed an upsurge in immoral behaviours, especially among youth, which is indicative of a weakened moral fabric. Incidents of sexual immorality, including early pregnancies and the rise of sex-for-grades scandals in schools, have become rampant. Equally concerning is the prevalence of internet fraud (popularly known as "Yahoo Yahoo"), where young people engage in cybercrimes as a shortcut to wealth. Violence, whether domestic, political, or communal, is on the rise, often glorified in music, movies, and even social media trends. These behaviours are not only signs of moral collapse but also threats to national security and social order.

The normalization of such conduct is a result of both value failure in society and a weak curriculum that does not emphasize character education. As Offorma (2020) argues, the Nigerian curriculum must go beyond content delivery to encompass the deliberate inculcation of ethical reasoning and moral sensitivity.

iii.   Youth Unrest: Youth restiveness is another manifestation of value erosion. Issues such as cultism, drug abuse, armed robbery, kidnapping, and general indiscipline have become prevalent in schools and communities. Many young people today exhibit a lack of respect for elders, authority figures, and national symbols such as the flag, anthem, and constitution. This disregard for hierarchy and nationhood points to a generation that is growing up disconnected from civic duties and societal responsibilities.

This trend is particularly dangerous because it undermines peace and development. As education is a formative process, there is a growing consensus that the curriculum must be restructured to promote civic responsibility, social cohesion, and peace education (Igbuzor, 2019). Through curriculum-driven initiatives, schools can become spaces for mentoring youth, redirecting energy toward nation-building and restoring respect for societal norms.

iv.   National Disintegration: Nigeria's diversity—ethnic, religious, and cultural—should be strength, but it has increasingly become a source of tension due to a growing wave of tribalism, religious extremism, and political intolerance. From secessionist agitations to ethnically biased recruitment practices and religiously motivated violence, the country faces threats of disunity and disintegration. These conflicts are largely sustained by ignorance, stereotyping, and the lack of a nationalistic value system.

The school curriculum, when effectively structured and implemented, can play a critical role in nation-building. Subjects such as Civic Education, Social Studies, and History must be designed to promote intercultural understanding, religious tolerance, and the spirit of unity in diversity. Learners must be taught not only the facts of Nigeria's past and present but also the values that bind its people together as one nation.

v.   Corruption: Corruption is deeply entrenched in Nigerian society, affecting both public and private sectors—including the educational system itself. It manifests in various forms: bribery, embezzlement, nepotism, academic dishonesty, and even the manipulation of school admission or examination results. When

young people observe or participate in these unethical practices from an early age, they grow up believing that success can be achieved without integrity.

This moral failure calls for a value-driven curriculum that emphasizes transparency, accountability, and social justice. Teachers must serve as moral role models, and classroom practices should promote fairness, merit, and ethical decision-making. According to Adeyemi and Adeyinka (2022), without a curriculum that intentionally promotes anti-corruption values, educational institutions risk reproducing the very social ills they ought to correct.

v.   Rising Culture of Materialism and Instant Gratification: One of the most glaring social indicators is the growing obsession with wealth acquisition at all costs, especially among youth. The proliferation of fraudulent practices such as internet scams, money rituals, and Ponzi schemes reflects a value system that prioritizes riches over integrity, hard work, and service. This trend is glamorized through social media influencers, music videos, and even some Nollywood content. This materialistic mindset undermines the dignity of labour, distorts the definition of success, and fosters widespread corruption. A values-based curriculum must counter this by promoting delayed gratification, ethical entrepreneurship, and contentment.

vi.   Escalating Youth Violence and Social Deviance: Cultism, gangsterism, and violent student clashes are increasingly common in secondary schools and tertiary institutions. Coupled with drug abuse, sexual violence, and bullying, these behaviours point to a youth population disconnected from moral guidance and emotional regulation. The loss of empathy, discipline, and self-control among youth calls for curricula that integrate emotional intelligence, peace education, conflict resolution, and civic responsibility from early education through tertiary levels.

vii.   Erosion of Respect for Authority and Elders: In traditional African societies, elders were revered as custodians of wisdom. However, in present-day Nigeria, many young people openly disregard elders, teachers, religious leaders, and government institutions. There is growing use of vulgar language, social media trolling, and resistance to lawful instructions. This breakdown in intergenerational respect weakens the moral order and calls for curriculum strategies that promote character education, social norms, and intergenerational respect.

viii.   Normalization of Dishonesty and Cheating: From examination malpractice in schools to bribery in job recruitment, dishonest behavior is often rationalized as a survival strategy. Students see teachers and parents engaging in unethical practices, and internalize dishonesty as acceptable. Implication is that a curriculum that promotes integrity, honesty, and accountability—reinforced through classroom activities, stories, role plays, and reward systems—is essential to correct this perception.

ix.   Decline in Patriotism and National Identity: Many Nigerians, particularly young people, no longer feel a sense of belonging or loyalty to the nation. This is evidenced in increasing calls for secession, refusal to participate in national activities, and migration dreams fueled by the "japa" syndrome. National symbols such as the flag, anthem, and constitution are often disrespected or dismissed as irrelevant. The curriculum must deliberately instill national consciousness, cultural identity, and civic duty through subjects like Civic Education, History, and Citizenship Education, with practical projects that promote national pride.

xi.   Gender-Based Violence and Discrimination: Gender-based violence (GBV), child marriages, and gender discrimination persist across communities, especially in rural areas. Cultural beliefs sometimes justify abuse and inequality, denying girls and women the right to education and personal freedom. A value-reorienting curriculum must promote equality, empathy, human dignity, and non-discrimination, ensuring that learners develop inclusive worldviews and challenge harmful norms.

xii.   Low Civic Engagement and Democratic Apathy: Many Nigerians, particularly youth, show little interest in democratic processes such as voting, community service, and public accountability. This political apathy threatens democratic consolidation and good governance. A curriculum that fosters active citizenship, participatory democracy, and rights-responsibility balance is vital for grooming future leaders and responsible citizens.

These reveal deep moral fractures in Nigerian society. If not urgently addressed, they threaten the nation's unity, peace, and development. The school curriculum remains a structured and strategic platform for reversing these trends. When values are intentionally taught, modeled, and reinforced in schools, learners can internalize them, carry them into adulthood, and gradually influence wider society.

Curriculum as a Transformative Tool for Value Reorientation

A well-designed curriculum does more than impart academic knowledge—it transforms learners by shaping their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviour. To achieve meaningful value reorientation in Nigeria, the curriculum must be designed not only to transmit knowledge but also to foster civic virtues, moral reasoning, and national consciousness, as well as deploy intentional transformative tools that not only communicate societal ideals but also internalize them through engaging, reflective, and experiential learning methods (Adepoju, 2021). When intentionally developed and effectively implemented, the curriculum can serve as a transformative tool that contributes to social regeneration and national development. The following are some of the most effective tools embedded within the curriculum framework:

i. Value-Laden Subjects and Thematic Integration: Subjects like Civic Education, Social Studies, Religious Studies, Moral Instruction, Peace and Conflict Studies, and History are explicitly designed to transmit moral, civic, and national values. These subjects cover themes such as: Integrity and honesty; respect for laws and authority; tolerance and national unity; human rights and social justice; and peace-building and conflict resolution

Beyond stand-alone value-focused subjects, values can also be infused across other subjects—for example:

- Literature can highlight moral lessons from stories and characters.

- Science can promote values like honesty in research and environmental responsibility.

- Mathematics can foster logical reasoning, fairness, and precision.

ii. Project-Based and Service Learning: Service-learning and community-based projects offer students opportunities to apply learned values in real-life contexts. These activities encourage: Empathy and compassion through volunteerism; patriotism through national or environmental campaigns; responsibility through leadership in group projects; and respect and cooperation through teamwork.

For example, a Civic Education project could involve students organizing a neighborhood clean-up, visiting orphanages, or hosting a town hall discussion on peaceful coexistence. These experiential tools go beyond theory to practice, leading to deeper internalization of values.

iii. Co-Curricular and Extra-Curricular Activities: Programs such as: Debate and Literary Clubs; Drama and Cultural Societies; Peace Clubs and Human Rights Groups; School Assemblies and Moral Talk Sessions; and Scouting, Red Cross, and Man 'O' War ...provide non-formal platforms for reinforcing values such as discipline, teamwork, service, fairness, resilience, and respect. These activities give learners the chance to practice good citizenship, express moral perspectives, and take responsibility in social contexts.

iv. Use of Instructional Materials and Media: Well-selected textbooks, storybooks, films, audio-visuals, and digital content are powerful in shaping values. For instance: Narratives of national heroes teach sacrifice and patriotism; Biographies of ethical leaders inspire integrity and courage; Moral stories and folktales offer context-relevant ethical lessons. Documentaries on human rights or environmental degradation provoke critical thinking and ethical reflection. When used intentionally, these materials promote emotional connection and moral imagination—key to lasting transformation.

v. Classroom Pedagogical Approaches: The method of teaching is as important as the content. Transformative pedagogy encourages students to think deeply, challenge assumptions, and reflect on their actions. Some recommended strategies include:

- Socratic questioning and guided discussions (developing critical thinking on moral   issues);

- Role play and dramatization (promoting empathy and ethical reasoning).

- Case studies and dilemma analysis (applying values to real-life problems).

- Reflective journaling (enhancing self-awareness and moral growth).

- Collaborative learning (teaching respect, tolerance, and cooperation).

These approaches move learners from rote memorization to personal conviction, which is key in reorienting behaviour.

vi. Assessment of Affective and Moral Outcomes: Value reorientation must be assessed, just like cognitive outcomes. Tools such as:

- Character report cards

- Peer and self-assessment on conduct

- Teacher observations and anecdotal records

- Portfolio assessments

- Classroom behaviour rubrics

…can track growth in moral behavior, social interaction, and civic responsibility. These assessment tools help ensure that values are not just taught but lived and evaluated.

vii. Whole-School Ethos and Role Modeling: A truly transformative curriculum is supported by a value-centered school culture where all stakeholders—teachers, administrators, students, and parents—consistently model and reinforce the desired values. A school that emphasizes punctuality, cleanliness, respect, justice, and fairness in all operations sends a stronger message than what is taught in books.

For example:

- A school policy that upholds discipline without abuse promotes dignity.

- Teachers who treat all students fairly and respectfully model justice.

- Leadership that rewards honesty and penalizes cheating demonstrates integrity.

This holistic environment ensures that the curriculum is not only taught but lived and experienced which hold immense potential for moral regeneration in Nigeria. These tools must be purposefully designed, contextually relevant, and consistently implemented across all levels of education. If effectively used, they will produce a new generation of Nigerians who are not only educated but also ethical, civic-minded, and nation-oriented.

Current Curriculum and Policy Provisions for Value Reorientation in Nigeria

In recognition of Nigeria's deepening moral crisis and the need for responsible citizenry, national education policy frameworks have consistently emphasized the transmission of values, civic responsibility, and ethical development. The Federal Government, through its curriculum agencies and education ministries, has embedded several value-oriented components into the structure of the national curriculum across all levels of education. However, the disconnect between policy intention and implementation practice remains a critical limitation. This section reviews key policy and curriculum provisions relevant to value reorientation.

i. National Policy on Education (NPE, 2014): The National Policy on Education (6th edition, 2014) serves as Nigeria's foundational educational blueprint. It clearly states that one of the goals of education is the development of the individual into a "morally sound, patriotic, and effective citizen." Specifically, the NPE aims to:

- Promote national consciousness and unity.

- Instill the right types of values and attitudes for individual and societal survival.

- Develop the intellectual and moral capacities needed for self-reliance and social justice.

The policy also mandates that curricula at all levels integrate moral and civic education, religious tolerance, peace education, human rights education, and environmental ethics. These are not peripheral but core objectives embedded in the national vision for education. However, while the policy presents a strong philosophical foundation for value education, the operationalization—especially in public schools—remains a major concern due to limited monitoring, funding, and teacher capacity.

ii. Basic Education Curriculum (BEC): The Basic Education Curriculum (BEC), developed by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), covers primary to junior secondary education (i.e., 9 years of universal basic education). It includes subjects that specifically address value reorientation:

- Civic Education: Introduced as a stand-alone subject in 2012, it emphasizes respect for national symbols, human rights, democratic principles, good governance, integrity, and social justice.

- Social Studies: Deals with cultural values, societal norms, family and communal responsibilities, and tolerance in pluralistic societies.

- Religious and Moral Education (Christian Religious Studies and Islamic Religious Studies): Promote spiritual values, ethical teachings, and moral conduct based on faith traditions.

- Security Education and Peace Studies: Introduced to build student awareness of personal safety, peace-building, and conflict prevention.
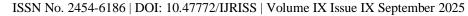
These subjects are structured to address Nigeria's peculiar value crises—such as tribalism, intolerance, indiscipline, and civic apathy—by nurturing a generation of learners equipped with the attitudes and behaviors necessary for nation-building.

iii. Senior Secondary Education Curriculum: At the senior secondary level, the curriculum further emphasizes values aligned with national priorities:

- Civic Education remains compulsory and includes modules on leadership qualities, national integration, anti-corruption education, democratic governance, and electoral responsibility.

- Government and History subjects cover political ethics, nationalism, constitutional rights, and civic engagement.

- Entrepreneurship Education, integrated into vocational subjects, seeks to promote the values of self-reliance, dignity of labor, and honesty in enterprise.

These curricular inclusions are aligned with national aspirations for a value-based, development-oriented youth population. In fact, topics such as cultism, examination malpractice, drug abuse, and moral decadence are explicitly treated in these subjects to raise awareness and critical thinking among adolescents.

iv. Curriculum Provisions in Teacher Education: Recognizing that teachers are critical agents in value transmission, the Minimum Standards for Teacher Education by the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) and the National Universities Commission (NUC) also include:

- Courses on Education and Values, Citizenship Education, Peace and Conflict Resolution, and Ethics in Teaching.

- Expectations for teachers to model integrity, fairness, and professionalism in their conduct.

However, there are concerns that teacher training colleges often underemphasize these moral components, focusing more on pedagogical content than affective development.

Gaps and Challenges to Effective Value Reorientation through Curriculum

Despite these robust policy and curricular provisions, several systemic and practical challenges hinder their effectiveness:

i. Curriculum Overload: The current national curriculum, especially at the basic and secondary education levels, is heavily content-laden. Subjects designed to instill values—such as Civic Education, Social Studies, Religious Studies, and Peace Education—are often crammed into already congested timetables without sufficient time for in-depth discussion or moral reasoning.

- Teachers rush through topics to meet syllabus coverage rather than engaging learners in reflective or experiential learning.

-The lack of thematic integration across subjects results in values being treated in isolation, reducing coherence and depth (Nwankwo & Okoye, 2022).

This overload discourages deeper learning and weakens the development of internal moral conviction, which is critical to value reorientation.Value-based subjects are crammed without depth.

ii. Marginalization of Civic and Moral Subjects: Subjects like Civic Education, Social Studies, and Religious Education are sometimes treated as non-examinable or given less priority compared to Mathematics, English, or the sciences. This undermines their influence on learners.

iii. Poor Teacher Quality and Inadequate Training in Value Education: Teachers are central to any educational reform, especially those that target attitudinal change. However, many Nigerian teachers are either untrained or under-trained in the delivery of value education.

- Teacher education programs tend to prioritize cognitive knowledge over affective and ethical dimensions of learning.

- Very few teachers are equipped with pedagogical skills such as discussion facilitation, dilemma analysis, and moral reasoning techniques, which are necessary for value transmission.

- Some teachers themselves lack moral integrity or engage in unethical behaviors such as exam malpractice or bribery, making them ineffective role models.

Without high-quality, ethically grounded educators, even the well-designed curriculum cannot effectively reorient students' values.

iv. Examination-Oriented Education System: Nigeria's education system is highly examination-driven, with teachers and students placing greater emphasis on subjects that are perceived as "high-stakes" for academic progression—especially Mathematics, English, and the sciences. Consequently:

- Subjects like Civic Education, Religious Studies, and Social Studies are often undervalued or sidelined, even though they are meant to foster character development.

- The assessment of values is limited to rote memorization and multiple-choice tests, rather than observation of behavior, reflective writing, or community engagement.

- Learners are socialized to chase grades rather than internalize virtues.

This academic pragmatism undermines the core intent of value education, which requires critical thinking, dialogue, and ethical practice—not just examination success.

v. Weak Curriculum Monitoring and Evaluation: There is little or no mechanism to track whether the values intended in the curriculum are being internalized by learners, making the curriculum more theoretical than transformative. Incubating examination-oriented system and by focusing on grades, not character.

vi. Societal Contradictions and Negative Influences: The school environment does not operate in isolation from the larger society. Learners are exposed to conflicting messages outside the classroom—from their homes, media, peer groups, religious institutions, and political actors.

- Corruption in public life, internet fraud, ritualism for wealth, and political violence are rampant and often go unpunished, eroding the legitimacy of school-taught values.

- Media platforms glamorize materialism, sexual promiscuity, and lawlessness, which contradict the values of discipline, modesty, and patriotism taught in schools.

- Some parents prioritize academic scores over ethical conduct, and may even collude in cheating or teacher bribery.

These societal contradictions create moral confusion and dissonance, making it difficult for learners to practice values they cannot see reflected in the real world.

vi. Inadequate Resources and Infrastructure: Effective teaching of values requires adequate materials, creative instructional strategies, and enabling environments. Unfortunately, many Nigerian schools, especially public ones, suffer from chronic underfunding and lack:

- Relevant and updated textbooks that integrate value-driven narratives and activities.

- Audio-visual and ICT tools that can reinforce moral lessons through real-life stories, documentaries, or simulations.

- Training manuals for teachers on how to implement value education across subjects.

- Functional school libraries, safe classrooms, and co-curricular platforms (like peace clubs or student parliaments) that can support experiential moral learning.

In such under-resourced settings, value education becomes abstract and mechanical, failing to impact learners at the emotional or behavioural level.

While Nigeria's curriculum and education policy documents are conceptually aligned with the goals of value reorientation, the reality of implementation falls short. Value-rich subjects are structurally present but functionally weak due to systemic neglect, inadequate teacher training, and the overshadowing dominance of examination-centered instruction.

To reposition curriculum as an effective tool for national moral regeneration, policy implementation must be strengthened through better funding, continuous teacher capacity building, curriculum delivery innovations, and alignment between societal practices and educational values. Without practical implementation and monitoring, even the well-written curriculum cannot achieve its transformative intent.

Recommendations for Strengthening Value Reorientation through Curriculum in Nigeria

To effectively reposition the curriculum as a transformative tool for national moral regeneration, the following strategic recommendations are proposed. These actions target curriculum planners, teacher education institutions, school leaders, policymakers, and civil society stakeholders in the education sector.

i. Review Curriculum Frameworks to Explicitly Address National Values across Subjects. The Nigerian curriculum should be systematically reviewed and restructured to embed explicit value-based learning objectives across all subject areas.

- The Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, should revise curriculum documents to reflect core national values such as patriotism, discipline, honesty, tolerance, unity in diversity, and responsibility.

- Value education should be contextualized in each subject. For instance: Literature can foster empathy and justice; Agricultural Science can integrate sustainability and community service; and ICT can promote digital ethics and responsible online behavior.

The expected outcome is that this integration will encourage value learning in both academic and non-academic contexts, reinforcing the notion that ethics is not confined to a few subjects but is a cross-disciplinary concern.

ii. Reinforce Civic and Moral Education from Primary through Tertiary Levels. There is an urgent need to prioritize and strengthen Civic and Moral Education as a foundational aspect of Nigeria's education system.

- Civic Education should remain compulsory and examinable at all educational levels, with clearly defined learning outcomes aligned with national development goals.

- At the early childhood and primary level, storytelling, songs, and games can be used to teach basic values like honesty, sharing, respect, and obedience.

- At secondary and tertiary levels, the content should evolve to include topics such as: Democratic values and rights, anti-corruption awareness, peace-building and conflict resolution, and responsible citizenship and community service.

- Tertiary institutions should offer General Studies courses (GST) on ethics, civic responsibility, leadership, and national development.

The expected outcome is that learners will experience a sequential and developmental exposure to value education that grows in complexity and relevance as they progress academically.

iii. Train Teachers on Value Transmission Methodologies. Teachers must be adequately prepared to effectively teach, model, and evaluate values within and beyond the classroom.

- All colleges of education, faculties of education, and in-service teacher training programs should include modules on: Ethics and the teaching profession, Moral reasoning and dilemma pedagogy, and Classroom culture and value reinforcement strategies.

- Training should incorporate practical strategies such as: Socratic dialogue and value clarification, Real-life simulations and ethical debates, and Reflective journaling and moral case studies.

- Teachers should also receive training on how to respond to ethical issues among students (e.g., bullying, dishonesty, peer pressure).

The expected outcome is that a well-trained teaching workforce capable of facilitating values education with intentionality, empathy, and consistency.

iv. Promote Ethical School Culture through Leadership, Peer Modeling, and Reward Systems. Schools must become incubators of ethical behaviour, not just centers for academic instruction.

Principals and administrators should promote an environment of fairness, transparency, justice, and respect through school policies and daily interactions.

- Establish peer mentoring systems where morally upright students act as "value ambassadors" to support others in cultivating positive behavior.

- Develop value-based recognition and reward systems that highlight traits such as honesty, responsibility, helpfulness, leadership, and respect for diversity.

- Encourage inclusive discipline practices, where wrongdoing is corrected with understanding, dialogue, and the goal of character restoration—not punishment alone.

The expected outcome is that a positive, ethical school climate that shapes student behaviour through consistent modeling and reinforcement of values.

v. Create National Monitoring Systems to Track Value-Based Curriculum Delivery and Learner Outcomes. Effective implementation requires regular monitoring, evaluation, and accountability systems at national, state, and local government levels.

- The Federal Ministry of Education, with agencies like UBEC, TRCN, and NERDC, should develop a National Values Education Monitoring Framework (NVEMF) with benchmarks, tools, and reporting formats.

- Tracking should assess: The quality and consistency of values-based content delivery, teacher competence and classroom practices, learners' behavioral outcomes (e.g., through surveys, interviews, or observations), and the impact of co-curricular programs on students' moral development.

- State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEBs) should conduct periodic moral audits and provide support for schools lagging in values education implementation.

The expected outcome is that a data-driven system that ensures accountability, continuous improvement, and targeted interventions to promote value reorientation nationwide.

vi. Foster Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement.

- Involve parents, religious leaders, NGOs, and traditional institutions in school-based value activities.

- Establish community forums and value dialogues between schools and communities.

- Encourage multi-stakeholder partnerships in planning and funding civic and moral education projects.

vii. Establish School-Based Value Committees and Student-Led Initiatives: Establish Value Promotion Committees within schools, comprising students, teachers, and parents. The tasks may include organizing weekly moral themes, facilitating peer mediation programs, and recognizing value-based behaviour. And encourage student-led projects like Integrity Clubs, Peace Ambassadors, or Democracy Monitors. The rationale is that these initiatives democratize value education, giving students ownership and leadership in promoting ethical conduct.

viii. Project Community-Driven Curriculum Localization: Customize national curriculum content to include local cultural values and community-specific moral challenges. For example, in regions with high inter-ethnic tensions, emphasize peace-building and tolerance. In areas with environmental issues, focus on eco-ethics and sustainability values. Schools can host community storytelling sessions involving elders to pass on positive indigenous values. The rationale is that learners engage better when content reflects their local realities, making value education more relatable and actionable.

ix. Leverage Technology and Media

- Use educational technology (EdTech) to deliver values content through engaging formats like digital storytelling, gamification, and social media campaigns.

- Promote value-centered school radio or podcast programs where students discuss ethical issues.

x. Institutionalize National Days of Civic Responsibility in Schools

- Introduce monthly or termly events such as: Integrity Week; Peace and Unity Month, and Civic Responsibility Day.

- Use these as platforms to showcase school-wide engagement in value-based initiatives.

xi. Institutionalize Character and Citizenship Education as a Standalone Discipline: While values are expected to be infused across subjects, there is a need to formally recognize Character and Citizenship Education as a distinct and assessable subject at all levels of the educational system.

These can include debates, essay competitions, marches, community service, and inter-school forums. The rationale is that such observances create collective awareness and provide repeated exposure to key values in a celebratory, reflective atmosphere. Also:

- Develop a specialized curriculum for Character and Citizenship Education with graded content and learner outcomes from primary to tertiary levels.

- Ensure qualified educators are trained to deliver this subject, using both cognitive (knowledge) and affective (attitude) domains.

- Assess students not only through written exams but also via observational behavior tools, performance tasks, and reflective activities.

The impact is that this will elevate the status of moral education, ensure dedicated instructional time, and provide measurable outcomes.

xii. Establish Value Education Resource Centers (VERCs): Teachers and schools often lack access to engaging and up-to-date materials for delivering moral education.

- Create state-level resource centers stocked with: Case studies, documentaries, real-life moral dilemmas, community heroes' stories; teaching guides on value integration and learner-centered methodologies; and digital tools and e-resources for interactive values learning.

- These centers can also serve as training hubs for teachers and youth mentors.

The impact is that well-resourced centers will support professional growth, curriculum innovation, and the widespread availability of culturally relevant value materials.

xiii. Embed Service-Learning in the National Curriculum: Real-life service fosters empathy, responsibility, and social accountability—key ingredients of value reorientation.

- Mandate community service projects as part of graduation requirements in junior and senior secondary schools.

- Projects can range from environmental sanitation, school improvement initiatives, peer tutoring, civic engagement, and health campaigns.

- Encourage reflection exercises like journals, presentations, or posters that help learners internalize the values experienced during service.

The impact is that service-learning promotes actionable values—students do not just learn about good citizenship, they live it.

xiv. Mainstream Peace and Conflict Resolution Education: Nigeria's fragile unity, ethnic and religious divides, and insecurity underscore the need for schools to teach nonviolent communication, mediation, and peace-building skills.

- Integrate Peace Education units into Social Studies, Civic Education, and Literature.

- Train peer mediators and establish Peace Clubs in schools to handle interpersonal conflicts and promote inclusion.

- Celebrate International Peace Day with inter-school forums and creative expressions focused on unity and tolerance.

The impact is that learners will grow into peaceful, dialogue-driven citizens, reducing susceptibility to violence, extremism, and hate speech.

xv. Enforce Ethical Governance in Education Institutions: Students cannot learn values in corrupt or unjust school environments. Ethical leadership and accountability in education institutions are foundational.

- Mandate that school heads and administrators sign and adhere to a Code of Ethical Conduct.

- Develop transparent mechanisms for reporting and addressing corruption, favoritism, and teacher misconduct within schools.

- Encourage student representation in school governance to model democratic participation and transparency.

 The impact is that schools become living laboratories of justice, fairness, and democracy, making values real and believable for students.

xvi. Leverage Faith-Based Education Systems for Value Amplification: Nigeria has a large network of faith-based schools that already emphasize moral instruction. These can be key drivers of national value reorientation.

- Collaborate with faith-based school systems to standardize core civic values (e.g., honesty, tolerance, service) across denominations.

- Share best practices from Islamic and Christian schools in value integration and faith-motivated service.

- Encourage interfaith collaboration on youth forums, ethical debates, and community-building projects.

The impact is that faith-based institutions become platforms for ethical leadership, promoting shared national values in culturally sensitive ways.

xvii. Promote Inclusive Value Education for Vulnerable Groups: Children with disabilities, out-of-school children, and students in underserved areas must not be excluded from moral education opportunities.

- Develop inclusive moral education materials in Braille, sign language, and simplified formats.

- Train special educators on adaptive moral instruction that fits diverse learner needs.

- Use mobile classrooms or radio schools to reach displaced and nomadic children, especially in conflict zones.

The impact is that no child is left behind in the national mission for ethical renewal and civic engagement.

xviii. Institutionalize a National Award for Values-Based Education Excellence: Public recognition of value-driven schools, teachers, and students can reinforce the social prestige of ethical behaviour.

- Establish an annual "National Character and Citizenship Award" sponsored by the Ministry of Education and private partners.

- Recognize schools that show measurable improvements in ethical conduct, student discipline, civic participation, and community service.

- Include categories for student leadership in ethics, teachers of moral distinction, and schools with inclusive value programs.

The impact is that this promotes a competitive spirit around good character, making moral excellence something to aspire to.

Reorienting Nigerian education to focus on values is no longer optional—it is essential for national renewal, democratic consolidation, and social harmony. The curriculum must not only prepare learners for examinations and employment but also equip them with the moral compass and civic conscience to build a better Nigeria. The curriculum must be more than a document—it must be a tool of national character transformation. With targeted implementation, Nigeria can rebuild a society where integrity, empathy, tolerance, and patriotism are not exceptions, but expectations. The success of these recommendations depends on strong political will, multi-sectoral collaboration, adequate funding, and continuous monitoring and above all, a sustained commitment to raising a generation of ethically grounded citizens.

Implementation Framework for Curriculum-Driven Value Reorientation

S/N	Phase	Objective	Key Activities	Stakeholders	Timeline
1.	**Curriculum Review & Redesign**	Align curriculum content with core national values	- Audit existing subjects (e.g., Civic Ed, Social Studies) - Integrate themes like integrity, tolerance, justice, patriotism	NERDC, MOE, Curriculum Experts, Subject Specialists	3–6 months
2.	**Teacher Training & Capacity Building**	Equip teachers with tools for value-based instruction	- Conduct workshops - Develop value pedagogy guidebooks - Integrate real-life moral dilemmas into training	TSC, TRCN, Teacher Colleges, NGOs	6 months
3.	**School-Based Implementation**	Infuse values into teaching and learning across subjects	- Develop lesson plans with value themes - Encourage classroom debates, role-play, storytelling - Launch Value Clubs	Principals, Teachers, PTA, School Boards	Ongoing (1–2 years)
4.	**Monitoring & Assessment**	Track progress and improve implementation	- Use observation tools - Collect feedback from students/parents - Incorporate value-based assessments	QA Departments, Inspectors, Local Ed Authorities	Every term
5.	**Community & Media Engagement**	Reinforce school values in the wider society	- Organize community dialogues - Partner with radio/TV for civic education - Reward schools promoting values	Community leaders, Religious Bodies, Media Orgs	Continuous

CONCLUSION

The quest for national transformation in Nigeria must begin with the reorientation of values at every level of society—beginning with the educational system. In recent decades, the country has witnessed a steady erosion of moral standards, evident in rising incidents of corruption, youth restiveness, disrespect for authority, cultism, religious intolerance, and national disunity. These social problems are not merely political or economic failures; they are deeply rooted in the absence of consistent, value-based education and modeling from early childhood to adulthood.

This study has underscored the critical role of curriculum as a transformative tool for value reorientation in Nigeria's socio-educational landscape. It established that when carefully designed and deliberately implemented, the curriculum can instill core values such as integrity, civic responsibility, tolerance, and

national unity among learners. Empirical insights from qualitative case studies and survey data revealed that subjects like Civic Education, Social Studies, and Religious Studies possess embedded value-laden content, yet their impact is often undermined by gaps in teacher preparedness, inadequate monitoring, and weak integration strategies. Furthermore, the implementation framework proposed in this study offers a practical roadmap for policymakers, educators, and community stakeholders to collectively reposition the curriculum toward national moral recovery. Ultimately, for Nigeria to overcome its moral and ethical challenges, a value-driven curriculum must be placed at the heart of educational reform and national development strategies.

The value reorientation is not a peripheral task—it is a core national priority. It must be pursued deliberately through education if Nigeria is to rise above its present moral crisis and realize the vision of a just, peaceful, and prosperous nation. The curriculum reimagined as a tool for character formation and nation-building, remains one of the most viable means of securing this future.

REFERENCES

1. Adegboye, A. O., & Salami, I. O. (2020). Teachers' perspectives on value transmission through Civic Education in South-Western Nigeria. Nigerian Journal of Curriculum Studies, 27(1), 123–138.
2. Adepoju, T. L. (2021). Teacher capacity in value education delivery in Nigerian secondary schools. African Journal of Educational Research and Development, 11(3), 102–117.
3. Adepoju, T. L. (2021). Transforming civic education delivery in secondary schools through experiential methods. Nigerian Journal of Educational Strategies, 11(1), 52–67.
4. Adeyemi, M. B., & Adeyinka, A. A. (2022). Value education and youth character formation in Nigeria: Curriculum perspectives. Nigerian Journal of Curriculum Studies, 29(1), 55–64.
5. Ajayi, K., & Ogunyemi, B. (2021). Education and ethical reorientation in Nigeria: Bridging the policy-practice gap. African Journal of Educational Studies, 9(1), 30–47.
6. Eke, O. O., & Okafor, U. P. (2017). Effectiveness of Social Studies Curriculum in promoting moral values among junior secondary students in Rivers State. Journal of Educational Research and Policy, 9(2), 55–68.
7. Eze, M. O., & Nwankwo, C. A. (2021). Repositioning Civic Education Curriculum for value reorientation in Nigeria. African Journal of Curriculum Studies, 11(3), 88–99.
8. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014). National policy on education (6th ed.). Lagos: NERDC Press.
9. Ibrahim, M. U., & Yusuf, S. A. (2018). Moral Instruction and value education in faith-based schools: A case study of selected schools in Kaduna and Kano. Journal of Educational Thought and Practice, 14(2), 88–105.
10. Igbokwe, B. C. (2023). Moral and Civic Education in 21st Century Nigeria: Curriculum strategies and innovations. Journal of Values and Citizenship Studies, 4(2), 89–105.
11. Igbuzor, O. (2019). Value re-orientation and the crisis of development in Nigeria. Abuja: Centre for Leadership and Social Change.
12. Iwuanyanwu, B. C. (2021). Moral education and the quest for value reorientation in Nigeria. Journal of African Educational Research and Development, 13(3), 58–66.
13. Mohammed, L. A., & Ibrahim, B. S. (2021). Peace education and value reorientation in Nigerian Basic Schools: A Study of Borno and Adamawa States. African Journal of Peace and Development Studies, 6(1), 22–40.
14. National Education Research and Development Council (NERDC), (2019). Evaluation Report on the Revised Basic and Senior Secondary Education Curriculum (2014–2019). Policy Implementation Review Document
15. Nwankwo, R. I., & Okoye, U. A. (2022). Challenges of teaching civic education in Nigerian secondary schools. Journal of Curriculum Innovation, 14(2), 55–69.
16. Offorma, G. C. (2020). Curriculum for value reorientation in Africa. Journal of Curriculum and Instruction, 13(2), 1–10.
17. UNESCO. (2017). Education for sustainable development goals: Learning objectives. Paris: UNESCO Publishing.