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## **Digital media, Nigeria's value system and 'change begins with me' value reorientation campaign: development communication discourse**

**Toyin Adinlewa<sup>1</sup>, Alero Aderonke, Benson<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1-2</sup> Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Social and Management Sciences, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria

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### **Abstract**

Value re-orientation in Nigeria, through campaigns like *Change Begins with Me*, has the ambition to influence people's attitude towards specific social goals, by canvassing for values that lead to appreciably stronger awareness and responses to the social good being proposed by government. Therefore, this paper prods into the change campaign with a view to raising the perceived issues, discussing it from development communication perspective and how digital media can be deployed to engage citizens, especially youths, which findings have shown constitute about 72% of the Nigerian population; and to promote active participation. The paper is anchored on critical theory of communication, which challenges information model with a communication model that epitomizes participatory democracy—a situation where all stakeholders are engaged in decision making. The paper argues that, without the campaign's targets' serious involvement in the process of national reorientation via digital media's interactivity, it will fail like earlier ones. It recommends, among others, that full participation of community members (especially the youths), provision of incentives to traditional media and managing resistance to change are germane to an impactful campaign.

**Keywords:** digital media, Nigeria's value system, value reorientation, participation, development communication

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### **Introduction**

A society of humans consists of individuals and groups with distinct norms and culture. These norms are made by people and the same norms regulate the conduct of citizens in the society. Culture as man's creation is a way of life that consists of social and civilized virtues and ideals...upon which man is formed (Njoku, 2015) <sup>[10]</sup>. Value is a core derivative of culture. It is an underlying factor in the concept of choice; it is as intrinsic to humans as rationality; it determines what is cherished or refused; it decides what is rejected or accepted (Chinweike & Edet, 2008) <sup>[2]</sup>. Value is deep in concept and debatable in content, hence, schools of thought diverge on the notions of value, forms of value, subjectivity/objectivity of value or what is valuable. Regardless of this discordant nature of value, it is generally admitted as a prominent factor in the dealings of humans. It is one of the factors that is capable of influencing humans into doing certain things while avoid doing others. In line with this, Carl Rogers (as cited in Chinweike & Edet, 2008) <sup>[2]</sup> defined value as the tendency to show preference.

As regards Nigeria, in Vision 2010 blueprint, it is succinctly captured that Nigeria is multi-ethnic, with an aggregate value system that stems from the multiplicity of its people, religions and cultures. Some elements of the value system that underpins Nigeria's culture as highlighted in the blueprint include: respect for elders, honesty and accountability, cooperation, industry, discipline, self-confidence and moral courage. Similarly, Chinweike & Edet (2008) <sup>[2]</sup> stated that "in the 1999 Nigerian Constitution as amended, dignity of labour, integrity, religious tolerance, and self-reliance are some attributes that are considered values in the national ethos."

However, concerns have grown over waning value system in the Nigerian society. A society that is rich and relishes in her cultures, positive and laudable values, is quick becoming a place where all kind of social vices thrives. Nigeria's value system turning point has greatly retarded her growth and progress, leading to an upsurge of social vices everywhere you turn. The old and the young are implicated in this. Cases of corruption with impunity, kidnapping, raping, killing with pleasure, materialism, to name a few, abound. It is in this regard that Njoku (2015, p. 26) <sup>[10]</sup> posited that, "it is beyond doubt that materialism has taken over government, political institutions, invaded traditional and cultural institutions, while the church seems to be more materialistic than the secular society". In line with this thought, Esther (2017) <sup>[4]</sup> declared that the pursuit of material success over and above every other laudable virtue has become deep-rooted among all strata of Nigerian society.

In Nigeria today, it suffices to say that the society is clenching to the nastiest of ideas in a quick progression and seem to be getting very little of the best like the rest of the world even when our economy is adjudged Africa's biggest. In an apparent move to calm the tidal wave of value system crisis, Nigeria's President, Muhammadu Buhari launched a new national orientation campaign called *Change Begins with Me* (CBWM) in September, 2016, a little over one year since he assumed office. Intended to overhaul the Nigerian value system and change how Nigerians conduct themselves in and out of the country, the *CBWM* campaign seeks to intensify the fight against corruption, seen as the bane of the national value system.

The values system crisis has become a developmental matter considering the fact that no country develops without the right value system. In view of this, some scholars have advocated for “cultural re-orientation” considered to be capable of creating a process of positive impact on national development. The strategies of national development would thus depend on the understanding of the culture, the adaptation of its elements for political, educational and economic development, as well as its strengths for social integration and development. According to Ayakoroma (as cited in Omilusi, 2018) <sup>[12]</sup>, if the Federal Government of Nigeria under the leadership of President Muhammadu Buhari makes culture the centre-piece of its national orientation, the country stands to benefit economically, socially, politically and otherwise. But the pertinent question is: What is the caveat?

The advice has always been for the nation to go back to its roots; to its core values system. This is a situation where the citizenry imbibes Nigerian culture which encapsulates genuine love for people and the country, knowledge of Nigerian indigenous languages, promoting Nigerian dress culture, respect for elders and constituted authority, hard work, honesty, fear of God, integrity, humility, craftsmanship, accountability, transparency, being our brothers’ keepers, just to mention few. Unarguably, these are attributes that can be used, maximally, for the development of the nation. In his analysis, Obiozor (as cited in Omilusi, 2018) <sup>[12]</sup> contends that the Change Agenda should now, while redefining our national priorities, emphasize ethics and morals.

Meanwhile, the success of most planned behavioural campaigns, such as the national re-orientation campaign, has been anchored on active participation of the targets of such campaigns. Since people are naturally opposed to change, helping them to communicate, through participation, empowers them to recognise and discuss important issues, finds common grounds for action, and builds a sense of identity and participation. This is where digital media come to mind because technological innovation and digitization are fundamentally reshaping our public, private and professional lives, especially the youths. According to Nayyar (as cited in World Economic Forum, WEF, 2016, p. 6) <sup>[14]</sup>, “the Fourth Industrial Revolution is upon us, and the Media, Entertainment and Information (MEI) Industries are at the core of this transformation; they provide the digital tools, services, applications and content we engage with, increasingly anytime and anywhere”. The digital media can be used to raise general awareness on *CBWM*, catalyse further discussion on the need for adoption of positive values and stimulate action from its audience for development purposes. Much can be done by change campaigners with reference to increased digital media use among the youth to address potentially unfavourable value system and the view of the people on the need for adoption of positive values. In addition, mobilisation for social change cannot be effectively achieved when anchored on a *monologic* mode of information dissemination.

Hence, it is the position of this paper that unless people themselves are the driving force of their social change or own the process of change, which is realisable through digital media’s interactivity, no amount of investment in the traditional media will bring about any lasting improvements in their value system which is considered as a prime factor for the development of the nation today.

Therefore, this paper deconstructs value re-orientation in Nigeria using the campaign of *Change Begins With Me* with the intention to raise and discuss the perceived issues, facilitate Nigerians involvement in the process of national reorientation via digital media’s interactivity, while it attempts a discussion of *CBWM* campaign from the broader sense of development communication instead of resulting to mere sloganeering which might not engender the desired change.

### **Digital Media: A Platform for Community Engagement for Social Change**

Advancement in technology, principally in digital media, increasingly is changing the way people interact on daily basis. People’s mode of communication is also changing fast. People are interacting and relating with each other in sundry ways. More importantly, the very fabric of daily life is reformed significantly. Their receptivity and thinking are changing. According to Nayyar (2016, p.6),

Blurring boundaries between private and public life, and the hunger for timely account of daily events are driving online connection time. Trust in individuals’ relationship with digital media has become an increasingly prominent issue. In some ways, new generations are leading the evolution in changing behaviour, but in others, older generations are “catching up” surprisingly quickly (as cited in World Economic Forum [WEF], 2016, p. 6) <sup>[14]</sup>.

People (especially the youth) are spending more and more time online. Considering the report on internet user behaviour, preferences and concerns in 2015, there are 3 billion internet users, 2 billion active social media users, while more than 1.6 billion people have mobile social accounts (WEF, 2016, p. 6) <sup>[14]</sup>. While laptops and desktops are still most commonly used, mobile devices are gaining fast on them, causing a significant change in people’s engagement with digital media. Growth in mobile encounters is particularly strong in emerging countries (Nigeria included), where consumers are leapfrogging from “no digital use” straight to “mobile use”. Increased online connection time appears to be driven mainly by work or information seeking, followed by social and entertainment needs, based on findings from the five countries surveyed for this report (WEF, 2016, p. 6) <sup>[14]</sup>.

Holistically, Nayyar (in WEF, 2016, p. 6) <sup>[14]</sup>, defines digital media as products and services that come from the media, entertainment and information industry and its subsectors. It consists of digital platforms such as, websites and applications, digitized content- text, audio, video and images and services that can be accessed and consumed through different digital devices. But, in specific, according to Shailashree (2019) <sup>[13]</sup>, digital media are communication technologies that enable or facilitate user-to-user interactivity and interactivity between user and information. Digital media allow for users to establish relationships and experience a sense of belonging, despite temporal and spatial boundaries. According to Norris (as cited in Shailashree, 2019) <sup>[13]</sup>, digital media change continuously due to the fact that it is constantly modified and redefined by the interaction between the creative use of the masses, emerging technology, cultural changes and other factors.

The tools of digital media, such as Facebook and Twitter, can be used to track, support, create, and mobilize social networks; these tools have significant potential to enhance community

engagement efforts. Digital media platforms, in recent years, have gone through a significant alteration to ensure more bidirectional or multidirectional communication, and thus these platforms present opportunities for national confab on communal issues where significant decisions can be taken. In specific, they provide new forums to raise issues, facilitate the exchange of ideas, and engage a larger community people for the purpose of ensuring inclusiveness in decision making process.

One of the common allegations against the Nigerian government on value reorientation campaigns the targeted audience are not usually engaged before such setting out with the campaigns. In essence, the government has been adopting a top-down (monologic) approach to deep-rooted socio cultural problems. Therefore, Oluabunwa averred that:

If preaching or sermonizing (information dissemination) alone could change most Nigerians and make them imbibe “the long cherished and time- honoured, time tested values of honesty, integrity, hard-work, punctuality, good neighbourliness, abhorrence of corruption and patriotism” we will not need PMB at all. Nigeria has one of the greatest numbers of churches, mosques and other religious houses in the whole world. Our pastors and imams preach and sermonize every Sunday or Friday, including at mid- week prayers and crusade grounds, yet we cannot see much difference in the moral tones of many Nigerians between 1983 & 2017. So, we need to do more than preaching or sermonizing. (Oluabunwa, 2017, Para 3-4)<sup>[11]</sup>.

In view of Oluabunwa’s suggestion, it suffices to say that Nigerian government need to do more than sloganeering. Since people are naturally opposed to change, helping them to communicate, through participation, empowers them to recognise and discuss important issues, finds common grounds for action, and builds a sense of identity and participation. While it may be difficult to bring Nigerians (especially the youth being over 72%) physically together, it is interesting to know that digital media provide an alternative means. Digital media tools provide a newly emerging instrument for engaging a large and diverse group of Nigerian people, including those that might be hard to reach, such as individuals with disability. Although digital media provide a forum for discussion that has important differences from face-to-face interactions, it facilitates inconveniences associated with conveyance of physical town meetings through its user-to-user interactivity. With digital media, Nigerian government can organize online confab with Nigerians furnished with the opportunity to contribute on rejigging our value system, responses need not be immediate, and time can be taken to review the thread of a discussion. Meanwhile, digital media also provide opportunities to reframe questions as the discussion evolves as obtainable in face-to-face situation.

In addition, digital media can play an important role in building and sustaining networks by facilitating ongoing communication, social exchange, and coordination of activities among Nigerians and their government. Moreover, these media can help build trust by providing avenues in which parties (government and the ruled) can establish transparency and openness (Dozier, Hacker, Silberberg, Ziegahn, n. d.). Meeting agendas, minutes, handouts, and questions (and responses) can all be posted and viewed; thereby helping to sustain engagement and commitment.

### **National Re-Orientation Campaigns in Nigeria: A Historical Trace**

The need for attitudinal re-orientation had long been recognized as one of the best ways to address the social problems confronting the Nigeria as a society. Thus, successive governments since military rule have articulated and pursued some forms of re-orientation programmes. Bolarin (as cited is Omilusi, 2018, p. 5)<sup>[12]</sup>, identifies some dominant values which formed the core values upheld by a larger section of the Nigerian society to include the following; detesting laziness, dignity of labour, respect for parent/elders, hospitality, public spiritedness, respect for authority, hard work, respect for sanctity of life, honesty and truthfulness. Where these values are totally jettisoned and expunged, citizens become very avaricious, corrupt, dishonest, violent etc. and take to crimes, political killings, kidnapping and so many other antisocial behaviours. This has been the case in Nigeria. Nigeria’s value system has waned increasingly, precipitating social vices that possess serious challenge for her development.

Witnessed recently however, were various drives for image transformation or value reorientation in Nigeria which sprang from the different efforts by Nigerians to address the image/value crisis in the Nigerian society. Otherwise called re-branding, the projects contain the routine of jingles, rallies, mobilisation and articles in national and international media. In spite of these many efforts to transform the Nigeria image for the international community, reports in Nigerian dailies and broadcast stations show a drastic increase in the height of criminal activities. Imaekhai (as cited in Omilusi, 2018, p. 5)<sup>[12]</sup> traced the history of Nigerian ethical revolution from January 15, 1966 when major Kaduna Nzeogwu seized power with the agenda to tackle the ills of tribalism, nepotism, corruption and favouritism. Yakubu Gowon from 1966 to 1975 also accused Aguiyi Ironsi of tribalism, favouritism and nepotism. He had as agenda, reconstruction, rehabilitation and reconciliation to maintain the unity of Nigeria after the thirty months of civil war. Yet, even in Gowon’s regime, there was still a high level of corruption.

At the same time, in those governments before the tide of change in 2015, sloganeering was not new to Nigerians. Yet, it has not solved any problem. In the agriculture sector, for instance, the country had Operation Feed the Nation, Green Revolution, Back to Land, Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) etc., but hunger, according to Mahmood (as cited in Omilusi, 2018)<sup>[12]</sup>, is still at the top of the challenges holding the nation from realizing its potential. During the government of President Shehu Shagari, ethical revolution held sway. Also, the military regime of Major-General Muhammadu Buhari staged War Against Indiscipline (WAI), while administration of President Ibrahim Babangida launched Mass Mobilisation for Self Reliance, Social Justice, and Economic Recovery (MAMSER). All these were done to recast the Nigerian economic and socio-political problems. There was also the less remarkable “Not in Our Character” campaign of the regime of the maximum ruler, General Sani Abacha (Omilusi, 2018)<sup>[12]</sup>. These measures were meant to curb corrupt tendencies in Nigerians, to appeal to conscience and correct the negative perception of Nigeria as a corrupt and unreliable nation by the global

Community, a stigma that has led to a cynic disposition by the international business community to Nigeria's suitability for business (Omilusi, 2018) <sup>[12]</sup>. At the beginning of the return to civilian rule in 1999, Olusegun Obasanjo, the then President, launched "Heart of Africa" and also formed an elite team tasked with supervising the project implementation, promoting virtues and urging Nigerians to better behaviour (Omilusi, 2018, p. 5) <sup>[12]</sup>. They took the project to the United Kingdom and the United States but neither launch went too well. According to Omilusi (2018, p. 6) <sup>[12]</sup>, Obasanjo massively pumped money into the international media to advertise HOA, positioning himself as the Face of Nigeria; just what the world needs to see to come and invest in Nigeria. The campaign was finally dumped after his tenure expired with no visible outcome. Despite the glaring lessons, Nigeria soon embarked on a similar drive with *Rebranding Nigeria* launched by the late Minister of Information and Culture, Prof. Dora Akunyili. Despite the good slogan of *Good people, Great nation*, the campaign never really took off. Adelakun (as cited in Omilusi, 2018, p. 6) <sup>[12]</sup> claimed that those who conceived it with Akunyili said it was because it never received adequate support by the government but in reality it could not have taken off if Nigerians did not invest in it emotionally.

As part of his contribution, the administration of immediate past President—Goodluck Jonathan— launched *Transformation Agenda* which sought to transform the Nigerian people into a catalyst for growth and national development. Under the transformation drive, government was expected to guide Nigerians to build an industrialized modern state expected to launch the nation into the first 20 economies of the world by the year 2020. As later witnessed, in the view of Omilusi (2018, p. 6) <sup>[12]</sup>, the transformation agenda brought about a situation in which the government defended and protected corruption to no ends. Arguably, under the administration of President Goodluck Jonathan, in the history of Nigeria, corruption was endemic and more or less the official policy of the state.

With the victory of President Muhammadu Buhari, Nigerians are faced with the latest in the sequences of transformation and re-orientation campaigns. Officially launching in September 2016, the current initiative seeks to educate, conscientize and enlighten Nigerians to appreciate the values of accountability, honesty, hard work, good neighbourliness and integrity. President Muhammadu Buhari affirms that the long-cherished and time honoured, time-tested virtues of honesty, integrity, hard work, punctuality, good neighbourliness, abhorrence of corruption and patriotism, have given way in the main to dishonesty, indolence, unbridled corruption and widespread impunity. He submits further:

The resultant effect of this derailment in our value system is being felt in the social, political and economic sphere. It is the reason that some youths will take to cultism and brigandage instead of studying hard or engaging in decent living; it is the reason that some elements will break pipelines and other oil facilities, thus robbing the nation of much-needed resources; it is the reason that money belonging to our commonwealth will be brazenly stolen by the same public officials to whom they were entrusted; it is the reason why motorists drive through red traffic lights, it is the reason that many will engage in thuggery and vote-stealing during elections; it is part of what has driven our economy into deep problem out of which we are now working hard to extricate

ourselves. Every one of us must have a change from our old ways of doing things; we cannot fold our arms and allow things to continue the old way. ([thenewsnigeria.com.ng/2016/09/buhari-change-begins-with-me-campaign-is-for-a-better-nigeria/](http://thenewsnigeria.com.ng/2016/09/buhari-change-begins-with-me-campaign-is-for-a-better-nigeria/))

Indicated by many public affairs analysts, critics and supporters of *Change Begins With Me* campaign, the present government will not be the first to embark on a campaign to change public attitude to life, governance and public service. Therefore, whatever name it may be called, whether ethical revolution or value re-orientation, it is worthy to note that Nigerian governments are expert in producing mantras whose conceptual foundations, according to Akinlotan (2016, p. 64) <sup>[1]</sup>, are sometimes amateurish and often war against facts and reality. Hence, from Babangida's Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) through Abacha's Vision 2010 to Jonathan's Transformation Agenda, the nation has only moved one step forward and two steps backward. *CBWM* campaign would not be an exception except if the government is not willing to subject it to critical review with the aim of arriving at better and sustainable ways of value reorientation anchored on inclusive communication (made possible now with digital media), serious advocacy and government readiness to deal with resistance in any form, while corruption is tackled headlong from the corridor of power.

#### **Deconstructing Value Reorientation Campaign: The Actualities and Gaps**

Apparently, each successive government in Nigeria since independence promised to wipe out corruption and other social vices and improve on our ethical values but this has been insurmountable. In 2015 again, the President Muhammadu Buhari-led administration rode to power on a change mandate to chart a new course, inject a sense of urgency and purpose into the business of governance. Political analysts and publicists, such as Alaba Yusuf, are of the opinion that Nigerians chose the All Progressives Congress (APC) candidate above former President Goodluck Jonathan due to the view that he has the experience to tackle corruption, Boko Haram insurgency, growing insecurity in the East and the conflict in the Niger Delta region as a former military Head of State. In addition, it was believed that corruption would better be fought under his watch considering his pedigree in fighting indiscipline.

Thirty-two years after his much debated War Against Discipline crusade, in 2016, Buhari told Nigerians that via *CBWM* they can be more united, as one for the purpose to make Nigeria great once more, by flushing out indiscipline, corruption and other ills that make us not the giant, but almost the laughing stock of Africa. Buhari, at the launch of the *CBWM* campaign, was naturally enthusiastic about it and thus promised to return Nigeria to the path of discipline and truthfulness (Omilusi, 2018) <sup>[12]</sup>. To Buhari, as noted by Omilusi (2018) <sup>[12]</sup>, a disciplined and truthful people would record far less of the vices that have crippled the country regardless of economic of the country. Hence, the campaign employs persuasive means to achieve behavioural change in all aspects of society. It stresses the duty and responsibility of citizens in the attempt to finding a lasting solution to the decadence of present-day Nigerian society and instate the positive change that the people crave for when they cast their votes for change government.

The task of a new Nigeria then, places a big obligation on the shoulder of President Muhammadu Buhari-led administration who inherited a crumbling economy precipitated by incessant mismanagement, where normal standards, characteristics of good governance and high moral grounds were obliterated while anti-social patterns of behaviour became very pervasive (Omilusi, 2018) <sup>[12]</sup>, propelling Nigerians, irrespective of ethnic and religious divides to invest their trust by voting President Buhari to power with his change mantra. The trust was borne out of their sincere yearning to see a changed Nigeria where unemployment, corruption, insecurity, violence and other forms of social vices which pervaded the polity hitherto will be fought to a standstill. Actually, this has always been one of the reasons for removal of successive leaders, at all levels of government, when the opportunity presented itself.

However, the change of leadership and administration in 2015 through electioneering anchored on the promise “to kill corruption before corruption kills Nigeria” appeared to be a turning point in the political history of the country. Seemingly, the fight against corruption is the sixth issue in All Progressive Congress’ manifesto, which has truly occupied the attention of the government since its inauguration. There is no doubt that corruption is pervasive in Nigeria and neither is there any iota of doubt that the present government, more than any other past administrations, has shown appreciable commitment to fighting corruption. But what Nigerians are cynical and seriously bothered about is an anti-corruption war that has not produced any visible conviction, except trials and convictions on the pages of newspapers. It has been observed that the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) are becoming the actual victims of the fight. The avarice of the politicians has continued to frustrate the efforts made by the two bodies to stamp out corruption from our body politics.

As rightly observed, Akinlotan (2016) <sup>[11]</sup> on the on-going *CBWM* campaign of the Buhari administration, declares that:

President Buhari merely restated the symptoms of Nigeria’s diseased past and present. But the nation ought to have got a glimmer of understanding of what he thinks is really the problem with the national attitude. Had he been able to fairly accurately state the conceptual foundation of the issues that war against the needed new national ethos, Nigerians might be fairly confident that the solution they dream about would not remain the fantasy past governments had embraced and choked on for nearly 60 turbulent years (Akinlotan, 2016, p. 64) <sup>[11]</sup>.

Conceivably, that is why the campaign is perceived in many quarters as a postscript; a calculated diversion from the socio-economic crises that pervade the country; a mere response to serious pressures from civil and political society; a conscious attempt at rebranding the seemingly resented regime rather than the nation (Omilusi, 2018) <sup>[12]</sup> or more likely, as Agbese (2016) put it “the government was forced to reach for this straw to mollify public feelings for its inexplicable tardiness in marketing its cardinal objective”. Now that many Nigerian citizens are charging the government with a betrayal of fundamental obligation, this new effort at national mobilization may be an arduous task for the government (Omilusi, 2018) <sup>[12]</sup>. According to Alamu (as cited in Omilusi, 2018) <sup>[12]</sup>,

The renewal and rejuvenation of national consciousness cannot

begin at the deck of the pyramid of fraud. The dominated cannot be made to bear the burden and dereliction of the dominant. Hunger and burning resentment do not conduce to rational and respectful citizens. If President Muhammadu Buhari expected the Nigerian populace to show gratitude and admiration for the new “*Change Begins With Me*” campaign, he must have been appalled and dismayed by the fury and ferocity of the return to sender response (Omilusi, 2018, p) <sup>[12]</sup>.

The basic flaw of these efforts at forging national orientation is the mismatch of the objective and subjective factors of change. According to Igbuzor (2015), objective conditions exist when situations are evidently abnormal with huge contradictions which can only be resolved by change, while the subjective conditions are the organizational preparations required to bring about change. It is obvious that the objective conditions for change have existed for so long in Nigeria. But the challenge has been the absence of the subjective conditions which are the requisite institutional structures and communication platform to mobilize for social change. In view of this, Komolafe (as cited in Omilusi, 2018) <sup>[12]</sup>, declared that you don’t change a society by merely moralising or sloganeering, you have to do something about the social structure, which must be initiated by policies and effectively driven by communication. For Agbese (as cited in Omilusi, 2018) <sup>[12]</sup> therefore, what the country needs is regimentation, not empty sloganeering. Regimentation may not necessarily be in the military way, such as what was witnessed during the era of WAI, but leaders can drive regimentation by demonstrating their discipline, their incorruptibility, their obedience to the rule of law, their respect for the rights of others, including and especially the poor. Lack of all these, no doubt, has exacerbated the level of injustice in the country, precipitating self-determination agitations from various militant ethnic groups. Without disputing Agbese’s view however, the role of communication must also be considered. Inclusive communication is central to the task for nation building in many ways. For instance, it enables initiators to consult with a wide range of Nigerians in order to take into account their feelings, perspectives and knowledge when identifying and formulating the policy and campaign of change. It is agreed and quite obvious that Nigerians are politically angry, economically hungry and socially unfriendly as the result of the economic and security state of the country. However, the role of communication to chart a new course, turn hostility to friendliness, harness the strength, intellect, and engender support for a better Nigeria is *sin qua non*. Evidently, since 1975 till date, Nigerian government has launched various slogans such as: *To Keep Nigeria One is a Task that Must be Done, Great People, Great Nation etc.* Today, the issues that generated those slogans are predominantly more than ever confronting the country. For instance, the separatist impulse is still very much palpable. Ethnic and regional champions are fundamentally questioning the structure of the federation agitating serious demand for restructuring. Injustice and underdevelopment are endemic, leading to insecurity in the country. So, the simple lesson of history is this: mere slogans are not enough to keep a nation working. Material conditions, according to Komolafe (as cited in Omilusi, 2018) <sup>[12]</sup>, need to be created and structural tasks have to be performed to achieve the desirable goal of change through inclusive communication that transcends the realm of sloganeering.

### **Theoretical Construct**

This paper is anchored on Stanley Deetz' critical communication theory. Deetz's theory seeks to balance corporate and human interests. He based his work on the premise that corporations are political as well as economic institutions and that communication theory can be used to diagnose distorted corporate decision making, while workplaces can be made more productive and democratic through communication reforms (Griffin, 2006). Deetz views multinational corporations as the dominant force in society, with absolute control which sharply diminished the quality of life for most citizens. Deetz scrutinizes the structure of the corporate world critically with the view to challenge the primacy of corporate prosperity. Meanwhile, Deetz challenges Shannon and Weaver's theory that communication is the transmission of information, a view that perpetuates corporate dominance.

In Deetz's view, all corporate communication is an outcome of political processes that are usually undemocratic and harmful to democracy. But codetermination, on the other hand, epitomizes participatory democracy, a situation where all stakeholders are engaged in decision making process. This, one can say, is the stand of Deetz that decision making processes should be democratic and not dictatorial as seen earlier. Deetz's theory of communication is critical, but not just negative. Deetz is convinced that meaningful democratic participation creates better citizens – who can make better social choices – and provides important economic benefits. One of the goals of his theory is to reclaim the possibility of open negotiations of power. He calls it *stakeholder democracy*; the process by which all stakeholders in an organization negotiate power and openly reaches collaborative decisions. This means not only involvement but also having a voice in decision.

Although this theory was propounded to critique communication at the level of corporate organisations, which Deetz saw as undemocratic and unproductive, the theory can equally be applied to constructively criticise communication practices of government institutions. From the views of Deetz, therefore, it is clear why most programmes developed to foster social change by the government failed in achieving the set objectives— they inform instead of facilitate communication that ensures inclusiveness. Thus, it is a contention of this paper that, unless people are involved and engaged through effective communication in the process of re-orientation of the Nigerian value system, the campaign and all government efforts may go the way of previous well-intentioned programmes of past administrations. Stakeholder democracy advocated by Deetz for decision making ensures communication *with the people, by the people and for the people*—a process that brings about belongingness.

### **Change Begins With Me Campaign: A Development Communication Discourse**

It is essential to note that the values system crisis in Nigeria has been identified as the bane of the nation's woes. Consequently, it has been recognised as a developmental matter given the fact that no country develops without the right value system. In view of this, some communication scholars have advocated for "cultural re-orientation" considered to be capable of creating a process of re-engineering a national value system panacea for national development. In support of this, some scholars have argued that

no amount of monies injected into the economy can make meaningful impact in people's life if attitude to the nation, public properties, public fund, etc. is not positive and devoid of corruption. On the contrary, others have opined that improvement in people's life through an improved economy will automatically cumulate into change of negative attitude. They argued that cynicism towards once nation is the cause for negative attitude. Whatever the side of the argument one may align, it is certain that Nigeria value system has been badly eroded. However, it is not within the purview of this paper to argue on what might be responsible for the total collapse of Nigeria value system but it sets out to discuss how the effort for value reorientation can be approached meaningfully.

Generally, one expectation from change in any human society is that it brings development, advancement and improvement in all ramifications of human's life. Hence, before any genuine change of attitude can take place, there must be an inner drive to want to change by the concerned people; this ensures their willingness to fully engage with matters that affect them. It is difficult or nearly impossible to manipulate or coerce people into attitudinal change for any reason, especially when such reason is directly the opposite of the underlining values. Also, change cannot be legislated; consequently, the drive, desire and zeal for change must come from within people themselves so as to amass their popular support. Since change involves development— new ways of doing things, the question is: will people have the confidence and the trust in change initiative? Will they want to change their old ways? Will they acquire the values required for overall change? How can barriers of illiteracy on why the change be overcome? Communication media and techniques can be effective tools to advise people about new ideas and values, to encourage adoption of those ideas and improve (Lagerwey, 1990) [8]. Communication approaches are also invaluable for improved coordination and teamwork to manage change of attitude, and to gain people's support.

Inclusive communication is central to this task in many ways. For instance, it enables change initiators, when identifying and formulating campaign programmes, to consult with a wide range of people, taking into account their needs, disposition and traditional knowledge. Communication will make the beneficiaries become the principal players to make campaign programmes successful. So, helping people at all levels to communicate empowers them to recognise important issues and find common grounds for action, builds a sense of identity and participation in order to implement their decisions. In other word, the people themselves must be the driving force of their own change. This stimulates the sense of inclusion.

However, communication activities for development purposes can be looked at from two perspectives, in terms of the channels used. The narrower use of the concept of mass communication (the mass media) in promoting development is referred to as *development journalism*. It is adopting a top-down approach to development to development planning and execution. Communication for development or development communication, on the other hand, is broader in scope, integrates communication channels in development planning and execution processes. In other words, it employs not only the mass media, but also interpersonal channels, group or public means of communication and the traditional channels of communication as a matter of necessity. It hinges on the notion of *inclusiveness*—

leaving no media behind in the communication process. Change begins with me is better appreciated from the later than the former.

The concept comprises two words: development and communication. To better appreciate this concept, it is pertinent to briefly conceptualise development in view of this discussion. Development, as defined by Moemeka (2012, p. 7) <sup>[9]</sup>, “is a positive change (for the better) from conditions (social, economic, political, culture and human) that are no longer considered good enough for the goals and aspirations of a society to those that are most likely to meet those goals and aspirations.” Roger (as cited in Moemeka, 2012) <sup>[9]</sup>, sees development as:

A widely participatory process of social change in a society intended to bring about both social and material advancement including greater equality, freedom, and other valued qualities for the majority of the people through gaining greater control over their environment.

Similar to this definition is the one given by Inayatullah (1975). He defines development as:

Changes towards patterns of society that allows better realisation of human values; that allows a society greater control over its environments, and over its own political destiny; and that enables its individuals to gain increased control over themselves (Inayatullah, 1975, p. 101)

From this foregoing, to define development as an improvement in people’s well-being does not adequately capture the term. Development also carries a connotation of lasting change. In this respect, it deals with culture, norms and values. A sustainable development must take this into consideration. This suggests that development consists of more than improvements in the well-being of citizens, even broadly defined; it also conveys something about the capacity of economic, political and social systems to provide the circumstances for that well-being on a sustainable, long-term basis. Also, these definitions stress the need to involve individuals being targeted. In other words, any social change requires that the people are deeply involved – as a change *of* the people, *by* the people and *for* the people. For the purpose of this discourse therefore, development is seen as adoption of virtues (honesty, integrity, hard-work, punctuality, good neighbourliness, abhorrence of corruption, patriotic spirit, respect and honour for parents, elders, men and women of honour, love, etc.) that are considered good enough for the goals and aspirations of a society from those that are not likely to meet those goals and aspirations (frivolity, dishonesty, idleness, unrestrained corruption, inhumanity, impunity, etc.).

Given the above therefore, it is apparent that development is all about change, that, change usually precedes development. Hence, the analysis of *Change Begins With Me* gives a clue that it should be approached from the angle of communication for development. The science which uses communication to educate, change and motivate people’s attitudes and values leading to developmental goals is development communication; it should be viewed from its broader sense for any meaningful attitudinal change to occur. It should deploy dialogue to include participatory, explorative, analytical and cross-cutting features. However, from the available materials, it is clear that the *Change Begins With Me* campaign employs *monologic* approach, which refers to the usual but often unproductive approach to attitudinal issues. It is hard to believe that change can only come in the form of a rescue package by government. It is no longer about the

executive and legislature with intellectual capacity to make decisions to bring about social and economic transformation. It is about each and every single Nigerian doing the right thing by making a change in an area that disadvantages the nation.

For this to happen, people must be carried along through inclusive and participatory communication- a dialogic approach to development. One of the factors that will affect the positive effect of value re-orientation campaign is the deep-seated cynicism from Nigerians from government past failure in delivering promises made during electioneering campaign. So, the government must be very sincere in handling this critical project. Such statement as ‘Before you ask where is the change they promised us, you must first ask how far have I changed my ways?’, according to Oluabunwa (2017) <sup>[11]</sup>, may be interpreted to mean the APC-led administration is passing the buck of their promised change to Nigerians. In fact, this depicts a top-down approach to the renewal and rejuvenation of national consciousness, which studies have found to be prone to failure, owing basically to its lack of inclusiveness.

### Conclusion

Communication for Development is not merely concerned with providing information on the requirements or demands of any advancement in people’s socio-economic and political life, it also borders on creating opportunities for discourse—a situation where the people are engaged to know about the nature and demand of better life. Development communication plays the more important role of creating an atmosphere for understanding how these new ideas fit into the people’s social situations and experiences. Its ultimate goal is to mobilize people, catalyse local development activities, local development planning and implementation, and local communication to smoothen the path to development. Communication here should not stop with conventional mass media in a top-down manner. If value re-orientation in Nigeria must succeed, then it must include strong components of social organization, interpersonal as well as traditional media. In addition, those in charge of planning value reorientation campaign in Nigeria should be those who understand the Nigeria’s social structure and how change can take place in it, not merely how the campaign messages can be disseminated. So, interactivity and people’s discussion and participation at the grassroots level is panacea to achieve this goal of *CBWM* campaign and also strategizing alternative routes for value change. Advancement in technology can be used to this effect. The tools of digital media, such as Facebook and Twitter, can be used to track, support, create, and mobilize social networks; these tools have significant potential to enhance community engagement efforts. In addition, digital media can play an important role in building and sustaining networks by facilitating ongoing communication, social exchange, and coordination of activities. Moreover, these media can help build trust by providing venues in which partners can demonstrate transparency and openness

### Recommendations

To make the *Change Begins With Me* campaign successful and break away from monotonous and superficial bourgeois solution to deep-rooted problem of value crisis, the present administration of president Muhammadu Buhari through the Ministry of

Information and Culture and its agencies such as National Orientation Agency should:

- Understand Nigerians, their problems and provide practical solutions to their problems to counterpart the campaign.
- Lead by example by acting rightly in all government dealings.
- Ensure full participation of community members with the aid of digital media.
- Engage local authorities through town hall meetings.
- Give incentives to local media, particularly community newspapers, local television and radio stations etc. to give the campaign wider publicity and local variation.
- Partner with states for the purpose of localizing the campaign for effectiveness.
- Develop a model of managing resistance to change among the government and the governed.
- Avoid artificial urban-oriented message system as this usually creates vacuum – a gap between the communicator and the audience. All the tiers of government should be engaged and empowered to give the campaign a boost.

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