

## Nigerian Core Values And Social Networking In Contemporary Times: A Discourse.

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**Abstract:** *One of the best new developments on the web has been that of social networks. As an online service platform that focuses on facilitating the building of social relations among people who share interests, activities and real life connections, analysts of this trend posit that it is beneficial to the society. Such benefits are multifarious ranging from exchange of ideas and information, furtherance of one's career, research openings/opportunities on a wide range of issues, to learning of new cultures and so forth. Notwithstanding the benefits, its abuse and negative impact on core Nigerian values should not be ignored. This work is therefore committed to highlighting notable examples of social networking abuse within the Nigerian milieu. It strongly contends that the abuse of social networking among Nigerian youths is unacceptable as it has caused a gradual coarsening of our cultural values and, further suggests that rather than being xenocentric, Nigerians should sift from this globalizing culture, the best of its advantages and blend same with our core values for good.*

**Keywords:** *Values, Youth, Xenocentrism, Social networking.*

### INTRODUCTION

Contemporary Nigeria has been shaped by a number of historical experiences- colonialism, imperialism/neo-colonialism- spanning centuries. Yet the once colonized people have failed to work out a framework for reviving and reconstructing their unique identity and consciousness in the face of new developments in the twenty-first century. The inability of most Nigerians to complement the core values with the beneficial aspects of foreign values and the global community has been the Nigerian predicament. The abuse of social networking among Nigerian youths calls for concern. They cannot continue to exhibit xenocentric attitudes in this age of globalization for doing so would impede our cultural development. There must be resilience and preservation of our core values as in Japan and

India- the Asian Tigers- where their pristine values have not been subverted by alien values (Eze, 2001).

With estimated census figures ranging from 80 million in 1980, 105.3 million in 1995 to 140,003,542 in 2006, Nigeria as it stands is a multi-ethnic society. In 2009, the United States of America reported an estimated population figure of the country as 154,729,000 (Ecoma, 2010). The major groups within Nigeria are the Hausa-Fulani to the north, the Yoruba-speaking and Edo groups to the west, and the Igbo and Ibibio groups to the south east. Other identifiable groupings include the Kanuri in present day Borno State; the Itsekiri/Urhobo/Ijaw of the Niger Delta; the Efik, Oron and Ekoi groups of the Cross River Basin; the Igala, Tiv, Idoma, Jukun and Nupe to the Middle Belt region and so on (Uya, 1992). An estimate puts these ethnic nationalities at about 374 and well over 450 languages. Given this

ethnic pluralism, some critics speculate difficulties in forging a unique identity as a people. The fact remains that despite the ethnic pluralism, composite Nigerian peoples have more in common at the aggregate level. And like Africans, the traditional Nigerian society exhibited noble pristine values for which the society was known and respected.

Okon Uya asserts, like his other counterparts in the African continent, that the traditional Nigerian, despite the multitude of diverse cultural traditions had a profound historical consciousness informed by his cosmology and world view. This world view emphasized the inseparable links between the past, the present and the future, viewed as a basic continuum. To the traditional Nigerian, history served to emphasize continuity and change, the purpose and order- a moral anchor to the society (Uya, 1992). Core Nigerian values hinged on the value of humanity and brotherhood; the huge importance of greetings; hospitality beyond American imagination; abhorrence of stealing; respect for elders and constituted authority; loyalty to the family and community; truthfulness/honesty; virtues of co-operation; perseverance; self-control and discipline; dedication to duty; patience and tolerance; shame-facedness of the female population; hard work and co-existence (Iyamu, 1992). These cultural traits are peculiar to Africans generally and Nigerians in particular. Rediscovering this cultural weapon among Nigerians can fashion the Nigerian consciousness imbued in the traditional ethos and cosmology. Adherence to this factor will in the main, encourage openness to ideas and usages from other traditions, a commitment to change, and elaboration of new traditions without necessarily destroying the old ones.

## I. CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

For a full appreciation of the import of this discourse, it is necessary to define some of the key

concepts used in the paper. In this regard, we note the following: values, youth, xenocentrism, and social networking.

The notions of values are conceptions widely held by people in society about what is important for the well-being of its members, as well as its survival and identity. They are the cherished and acceptable standards of behavior; the highest ethical parameters and criteria through which individuals, groups and societies order their goals, determine their choices and judge their conducts (Ihedoro, 2006). In the Nigerian traditional society, the core values have to do with what is desirable, virtuous, and acceptable; what is sacred as against what is impure, profane, wrong and corrupt. They are the selected standards of behavior fundamental to developing a stable and progressive society passed down from one generation to another through oral tradition. The term 'core values' could also be used interchangeably with norms or moral rules rooted in considerations of intrinsic goodness, a blueprint for behaving, that which gives the people an identity. In this regard, the timing becomes very important for it also designates the period of Nigerian history when her cultural values had not been influenced by the culture of our colonizers. It points to that 'age of innocence' where the normative principles spelt out what human beings should and should not do under given circumstances. The social control of traditional Nigerian society was achieved through these moral precepts rather than legal compulsion. It was the tie that bound members of the society together, ultimately providing a sense of unity which Emilé Durkheim describes as "conscience collective".

The development of the science of acceptable conduct in any given society including Nigeria is as old as creation. In every society across the globe, core values are given prime priority as social ingredients for social transformation, peace, unity, stability, growth and development (Ajere and Oyinloye, 2011). They are guides for human

conduct, indicating certain kinds of actions and behaviors which should be accepted, appropriate or inappropriate. Core values foster fundamental human values like honesty, truthfulness, tolerance, courage and hard work, virtues of co-operation and love for others, abhorrence of stealing and so forth (Omoregbe, 1993). Nigerian core values are therefore concerned with the reasoned, experienced, rationalized logical outcome of the moral experience of our forefathers stretching back into the past. It is humanistic, founded on rational reflection. They are highly communitarian in outlook, organized by our forefathers on the basis of the greatest good for the greatest number. The interest of the generality of the people was considered in whatever was done. Thus, the traditional Nigerian man was firstly a member of his family, the community and his society. This accounts for why the traditional Nigerian was his brother's keeper. Every individual's freedom was thus limited to the extent that his actions are anathema to the general good of the society. Given these considerations, Nigerian core values could be viewed in this catalogue of virtues, viz: modesty, integrity, chastity, vivacity, honesty, tolerance, truthfulness, self-discipline, brotherliness, honor, humility, patience, industry, reverence or respect for old age, acceptable modes of dressing, modes of salutation and so on (Akinpelu, 1983).

It is not only inadequate but rather misleading to visualize 'youth' as the period between the ages of 12 and 20. Berger and Berger (1976) pointed out that when asked what youth is, commonsense would first of all suggest a biological answer. So, in strictly biological terms, one might define youth as beginning on the day which the individual has lost his last milk tooth and ending on the day he sprouts his first gray hair. Extensions of these biological definitions are those which assign particular age brackets to youth. There abound a variety of definitions of the terminology 'youth' depending on one's perspective. There is the representation of "youth" in academic literature

where young people are frequently presented as either actively "deviant" or passively "at risk", and sometimes as both simultaneously (Macdonald and Hollands, 1993). Legally oriented notions of youth also abound although more often than not they tend to be contradictory.

Population statistics in Nigeria indicate that the larger proportion of the population is made up of young and energetic people popularly referred to as the "youth". By virtue of their size, they constitute a latent force that, if properly mobilized and utilized, could turn the development trends of the country. As the group comprises diverse individuals with different backgrounds, the reorientation of Nigerian youths to imbibe our core values can effectively impact on the state of Nigeria. There is however no doubt that for most of the young in contemporary Nigeria, life is full of ambiguities and contradictions arising partly from the requirements of a society and culture that is in transition from traditionalism to modernism. Consequently, the cultural values and norms which had evolved and given order and harmony to the traditional society has been greatly weakened and in some cases undermined, without being replaced by acceptable ones. In effect, a society characterized by "anomie"- where the accepted norms conflict with foreign values- is growing up in our surroundings.

Xenocentrism and cultural identity are current issues in the twenty-first century. We all live in the "globalization era" and some experts opine that globalization is a culture whose identity transcends boundaries (Shinohara, 2004). This culture uses English language as the lingua franca. English language ranks first among the languages of homepages on the web. The phenomenal growth of English within the last 300 years or so has made it the dominant language of today's information technology (Phillipson, 1992). For developing nations such as ours, there is a kind of prestige associated with the "global world's" knowledge and acknowledgement of its cultural heritage. This

perception therefore creates a tendency to push the diversity of local cultures to the curb instead of enriching them (Martin, 2005). However, language as a vehicle of communication remains a constituent part of the African culture. The arbitrary relegation of our indigenous languages to the background as second language at this time is suspect.

Xenocentrism connotes a preference for that which is foreign. It suggests the idea that foreign cultures and their elements are superior to the local; a conviction that the exotic has a special charm which the familiar can never achieve (Sumner, 1992). Xenocentrism therefore causes a crisis of cultural identity among members of a culture because in their efforts to become better human beings, there is the pressure to imitate foreign world views and lifestyles thus abandoning those of their own culture. Writers implicitly believe that Nigeria possesses a rich heritage of cultures which if properly understood and developed with the right strategies, has the potential to guide Nigerians toward advancement and prosperity. As long as xenocentrism remains dominant in the minds of our youth, this potential will continue to be wasted in the face of new developments in the twenty-first century. Notably, while citizens of other nations, particularly Asian countries are ethnocentric, most Nigerians exhibit xenocentric attitudes which can mar our progress as a nation. Nigerians should rather seek to revive, preserve and protect their culture from external infiltration and domination, and safeguard the people's ways of life and traditions when necessary, against misinterpretation (Ushie, 2006). Only then can Nigerians look back with a strong determination to regain their cultural heritage. Nigerians need to learn from the experiences of the Asians in their encounter with the same global culture. The Asians, specifically the Japanese, had to sift from this incoming culture, the best of its science and technology and blended with their own indigenous forms. In the process, the Japanese left

relatively intact, their ancestral and cultural values, spirit and pride. Despite its imported development paradigms, Japan has remained itself culturally. Through this parameter, Nigerian cultural heritage can be optimally mobilized for the nation's advancement (Mazrui, 2006).

Social networking is a Westernized technological development prevalent in the twenty-first century. It is an individual-centered service consisting of a representation of each user, often a profile, his or her social links, and a variety of additional services. Most social network services are web-based and provide means for users to interact over the internet such as e-mail, Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, 2go, YouTube, LinkedIn, and so forth. Sometimes, online instant messaging services are considered as social networking. Social networking sites allow users to share ideas, activities, events and interests within their individual networks. It allows you to connect with friends and family, share photos, videos, music and other personal information with either a select group of friends or a wider group of people, depending on the settings one selects. Some social networks have implications on the society. Youths abuse this social media platform by engaging in unwholesome activities on the internet. They explore the world of the internet negatively; indulging in all sorts of pornographic and obscene acts. Ideally, interacting and chatting with friends, colleagues and family online with the aid of social networks like 2go, Facebook, Twitter and MySpace is not bad. What is bad is the abuse of these networks which runs contrary to moral ethics and conformity to the social well being. Social networking sites have been wrongly used by most Nigerians. A national cross-sectional online survey of 1,588 youths who have used the internet at least once in six months was undertaken by "Growing Up with Media Survey". The survey revealed that immoral requests about sex and sexually related issues like online harassment, mean comments and

spreading of rumors loomed large in the information dissemination on the internet.

However, social networking has numerous advantages among which are worldwide connectivity, which can assist in seeking new jobs, finding assistance, receiving support, career opportunities, commonality of interest, real-time information sharing, free advertising, and increased news cycle speed. It also has disadvantages such as cyber-bullying and crimes against children, risks of fraud or identity theft, time wasting, and corporate invasion of privacy. In evaluating the merits and demerits of social networking, it becomes apparent that the abuse of this trend by its users is the problem rather than the process of social networking.

## II. CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA AND SOCIAL NETWORKING ACTIVITIES: AN OVERVIEW

The revolution of information communication technology has created opportunities for media users in Nigeria. Of the over 120million Nigerian population, youths have a greater propensity towards the use of social networking platforms because of their literacy level. Nigerian youths like their counterparts in other countries are increasingly embracing the digitally savvy lifestyle. Many of them have taken advantage of opportunities offered by the internet to communicate and socialize. According to the Internet World Statistics Usage and Population Statistics (2013), Nigeria ranks as Africa's biggest internet market. Nigerian Facebook users increased from 99,720 in 2008, to 569,180 in 2009, and 1,718,000 in 2010/2011 (Facebook Statistics, 2010).

In October 2012, Nigeria had 6.5million Facebook users, overtaking South Africa to become the second largest user in Africa (Techloy, 2012). These figures must have probably doubled in recent times. There is a strong indication that Nigeria's information

communication technology is developing at a very fast rate. This globalizing trend has brought with it, new forms of challenges to youths- the vulnerable group. Such challenges range from corruption of public morals, pornography, to cyber crimes/fraud among others. We will be highlighting selected cases of social networking abuse within the Nigerian milieu. The average young person spends 12 hours daily, engaging in some form of social networking as pinging, chatting and so forth. Research has shown that access to pornography in Nigeria has increased especially among the youths as parents/guardians have no control over such media contents (Uduma, 2013) whereas in the traditional Nigerian society, such uncontrolled patterns were frowned at. It was discouraged by elders as it could pollute the society and weaken the moral fabric. The abuse of social networking seems to be edging out Nigerian core values and putting it on the precipice.

The abuse of social networking by youths in the society has led to a most disturbing trend- the blind imitation of some Western cultural values. Today, African and Nigerian youths dress in the most appalling way. Rather than view clothing as having a strong relationship with culture and morals, it has become a mark of identity and modernization. Some women dress indecently contrary to the ethics of traditional Nigerian society. At the extreme are those with breast implants and silicon buttocks. All forms of eccentric lifestyles are copied under the guise of Western fashion. Users indiscriminately copy from models that look like extraterrestrial beings. In a bid to blend with the trend, some university students copy. Observers feel that in no time, youths may go nude in the guise of fashion. A sociologist asserts that a man who walks down a street wearing nothing on the upper half of his body is violating a folkway; a man who walks down a street wearing nothing on the lower half of his body is violating one of our most important

mores, the requirement that people cover their private parts in public (Schaefer, 2005). Blind imitation of foreign cultural trends without recourse to our cultural values has been the bane of the society. Some dress codes in contemporary Nigerian society are opposed to the ideals of the mainstream culture. It is true that Westernization has brought a great deal of good to us in terms of scientific and technological breakthroughs, enlightenment, as well as globalization. There is absolutely nothing wrong in imbibing the finer aspects of other cultures but to blindly embrace such while relegating ours to the background is what should be avoided.

The core Nigerian value of respect for age has been thrown aside by some youths through their abuse of social networking. In the traditional Nigerian society, community values like respect for age and authority were adored and enthroned. Elders were highly respected as custodians of the community's intangible treasure, highly esteemed as teachers and directors of the young generation. Today, youths are being disoriented. They no longer listen to elders in the society as they have unlimited access to the internet, imitating foreign values blindly without caution. It is necessary to have a cultural renaissance in Nigeria where the youths will channel the ideals of the traditional society into the wider world.

There are scenarios in which the internet has been bastardized through wrong usage. Using Facebook as an example, the case of a female post graduate student of Nasarawa State University, Nigeria, stands out as one of such scenarios. She was murdered in July 2012 in a hotel in Lagos by her online friends whom she met through Facebook interactions. The culprits lured her from Nasarawa State to Lagos Stat. According to Echezona Nwabufor (33 years), and Ezekiel Eloka (23 years),

*"We met her on Facebook on our Blackberry. We invited her to come to Lagos to buy goods at cheap prices. When she got to Lagos, we took her*

*to a hotel in Festac. We thought she had a lot of money...we gave her Reflon tablet in her Ribena drink. After this...we attacked her...when we didn't get any money from her, we...strangled her..."* (Esene, 2013).

Her death was condemned by the generality of the Nigerian populace and the government. On the apprehension of these suspects at Nnewi, Anambra State, Nigeria, Governor Peter Obi (as he then was) while answering questions from the press stated that the bad usage of the social media was a clear indication of the erosion of values in our society. He asserted that what Nigeria needed was value re-orientation and ethical rebirth. Most youths engage in social networking activities more than other categories of persons in the society and this easy access to the internet has been greatly abused. This is at the root of corruption and social ills in the country.

Most persons feel that almost all sectors of the society are affected. The legislature is accused of wasting public funds, the judiciary and the executive exacerbating the same ill. Other forms of public morals have been corrupted in the process. The abuse of social networking activities attracted comments from President Obama on the need to use it rightly. He challenges everyone to go back to their traditional values in these words:

*"Our challenges may be new. The instrument with which we meet them may be new, but those values upon which our success depends are hard work and honesty, courage and fair play, tolerance and curiosity, loyalty and patriotism, these things are old. These things are true. They have been the quick force of progress throughout our history, what is demanded then is a return to these truths"* (Obama, 2009).

The fact remains that social networking activities are not demonic activities as the actions of some of our youths would have us believe. Social

networking is beneficial to those who use it properly; it delivers communication and collaboration, allowing people to gain productive advantages, share interests, develop and sustain social relationships and much more. When deliberate efforts are made to use social networks as a medium for inculcating socially sanctioned values, then our society will move a step further.

Another case of social networking abuse by youths through Facebook concerns an undergraduate student of Kogi State University who was lured from Enugu to Warri. On arrival in Warri, Bamidele was abducted and his abductors demanded a ransom of five million naira from his parents. Given these instances of social networking abuse and others which may not be contained in this paper, it is apparent that the victims never informed their parents of the strange deal. This neglect on the part of our youths is traceable to moral bankruptcy. If Nigerian core values that hitherto bound the society together were imbibed, these victims and culprits would not have been involved in such a mess. In that era of innocence, the individual belonged first to the family and the community, where nothing was transacted without informing the elders. Elders/parents were seen as oracles of the community as they taught and directed the young by giving them some form of protection than an amulet did. Respect for age and authority started within one's immediate family for even if there was nothing else to admire in the elders, they had the right to courtesy and politeness. The Yoruba recognized these indigenous values in the character training of young ones, thus the term "Obileye" which means 'parents deserve dignity and respect' (Falade, 2011). If the victims were cautious and informed their parents, the danger may have been averted. A typical example of the moral impact of the words of elders in traditional African society is summed up in this poem: "in our little village, when elders are around, boys must not look at girls and girls

must not look at boys because the elders say that is not good" (Markwei, 1979).

The all-embracing role of elders in character molding of the young can never be overemphasized. The alarming rate of cases of abuse of social networking activities by youths in Nigeria is a clear indication that the traditional ideals of the Nigerian society have given way to the blind imitation of some foreign values. The traditional Nigerian milieu evinced more critical and reflective philosophical mood than what is obtainable now. In that age, people understood that their value system was instrumental to a harmonious living in the universe and so they were very careful not to go against it. This social control mechanism inherent in the core values of the society guided the conduct of members and checked societal ills. The present trend among our youths is a source of concern as the traditional Nigerian ideals of good neighborliness, sanctity in outlook, reverence for elders, shame-facedness of the sexes, and the general tendency to hardwork and dignity are all fading away and in their place are a petrified morality of looseness, corruption and other ills. The adaptation of Westernized values must be done with caution. There must be a sifting mechanism to blend the best of local and foreign values to achieve progress.

Most energetic Nigerians are currently hooked on to social networks. Majority of the users are young adults, including students. They have found in the networks, veritable means of expressing themselves wrongly. This has impacted negatively on the humanistic and social developments of youths in the society. While admitting the positive effects of social networking, some students made this open confession about its abuse:

*"One major disadvantage of social networks is cyberbullying. This is a major problem because people take advantage... that no one can stop the bullying... It is very expensive. Youths spend their pocket money which they should have used to pay for something more profitable, to buy data*

*bundles... It is time consuming and comes upon youths as an addiction once they start... It brings lower grades to students,... can cause future health problems... capable of corrupting good morals. Some youths use it to engage in fraudulent activities..."* (Interview with Ukachukwu et al, 2014).

Furthermore, most school graduates can hardly express themselves in written English language as slangs and abbreviations are commonly used on the internet. An English language teacher remarked that what is troubling to those who value written records is the use of slangs and overall disregard for grammar and punctuation among internet users. The abuse of social networking activities has affected social communication in the society. Among the working class, the wrong use of social networks is affecting productivity in offices as valuable man hours are spent chatting on Facebook and other social networks. This is "cyberslacking"- a term used to describe the use of the internet and mobile technology during work hours for personal purposes. The demerits of "cyberslacking" include threat to network security, and strains in organizational bandwidth which can make employees vulnerable to fraud and sexual harassment. The most disturbing aspect of the use of social networks is that there is no regulatory body as well as no control measure in most social networks to restrict the uploading of offensive details.

Some Nigerians argue that apart from few cases of positive influences, social networks have more negative effects than what they were intended to achieve by their founders. In places like China, Syria and Iran, the use of Facebook was banned from the websphere by their respective governments because of its negative impact on the society. People have suffered psychological and emotional abuse through the wrong use of social networks. Some Facebook users have been harassed with nude pictures. A woman is reported

to have suffered this abuse when her lover caught her with a colleague and decided to embarrass her. A quarrel ensued which broke up the relationship and the jealous lover posted nude pictures of the woman on Facebook. Instances abound where offensive remarks are made about some persons in the society without reservation. Companies face a scenario where disgruntled employees defame the company's name on Facebook and on other social networks. Often times, the private information of a user is stolen from social networking sites and utilized by an impersonator- identity theft. The availability of one's personal information can make one prey to possible stalkers. The misuse of photographs and personal information as well as 'tagging' of photographs with other identities are dangerous trends in social networking among youths in our society.

However, it is generally believed that the 95 per cent purpose of social networks is to impact positively on the lives of people but some Nigerians tend to ignore this reality. They have settled for the negative impact through the perpetration of crimes, blackmail, pornography, gossips, rumors, and so on. Social networks have equally become avenues for sharing nude images by youths. Rather than search for jobs, career development and self-employment guides, most of our youths are hungry for crimes, the latest gossip and derogatory comments. The problem is not the social network for if used responsibly, it could be an effective tool for promoting the core values of Nigeria. The problem resides in the category of Nigerians that are morally and socially bankrupt; those not properly oriented in the moral values of our society. It has been argued in some quarters that a young child growing in Nigeria today lacks adequate orientation in the traditional moral values and respect for elders. Rather than pay attention to their studies, more time is devoted to social networking activities even while driving, eating, in meetings, at places of worship and in public places.



While social networking activities can be harnessed as a force for good, some youths prefer to abuse its use. The emerging blog culture is negative. Referring to people as “goons”, “clueless”, “shoeless”, “thieves”, “rouges”, and “nitwits” cannot galvanize social change as a culture of hurtful language used on social networks is destructive. It is true that social networking activities are opening up the Nigerian social space in new ways, but it is also true that core Nigerian values- restraint and respect- are vanishing in the society. The responsibility of reversing this ugly trend among those who abuse the use of social networking falls on the Nigerian community. A return back to our traditional mechanism for social control should be reinvented to meet up the current challenges facing the society.

Following social networking activities, most youths have lost the sense of dignity and brotherliness evident in our cultural values. Young people now forget the sacredness of human life which is a core Nigerian value. In a situation where people are being maimed, injured or killed, rather than coming to the rescue, young people only care about taking pictures or recording the incident with their phones and then upload the images on social networks. The June 2012 Dana Air Crash in Iju-Ishaga, Lagos and others that may not be contained here, are practical examples. Commenting on the gross abuse of social networks by youths in the country, a pastor, parent and psychologist stated:

*“...as much as I am happy that its coming has reduced the stress of running home to watch the news, keeping in touch with friends at the press of a pin... I also think that it is not good for our children. Some children have been initiated into evil cults, engaged in pornography, bad gangs; some have learned to do evil things from the internet like making bombs... teenagers now sextext each other, some go as far as sexposing their bodies...to friends.... Children no longer give time to homework because they could get answers at the touch of the iPhone. They have lost value for*

*parental love and guidance because they are always on the net or phones, chatting or reading rubbish...”* (Adebayo, P. cited in Choji, R., 2014).

It seems the youths have now taken their lives online, learning criminality. As nobody monitors what they do online, they go the extra mile to visit unhealthy sites. It is evident from the above confession of a parent that the society is decaying morally. It rests on parents/elders to monitor and check the excesses of youths in this regard.

The list is however inexhaustive but suffice it to say that while social networks could be used for a wide range of positive developments in the society, there is the need to redefine the strategy for use in order to checkmate the abuses evident in contemporary Nigerian society.

### III. CONCLUSION

From the foregoing, social networks are online media platforms that take communication beyond the limitations of the traditional media such as the radio, television and the print media. Social networks commonly used in Nigeria- Facebook, 2go, BlackBerry Messenger, Twitter, Nimbuzz, Eskimo, Netlog amongst others all offer users unrestricted access to the internet and have been grossly abused by most youths in the country. However, youths remain the most prominent users of this technology. They constitute an asset to the Nigerian society in view of their productive capacities. Considering their relevance to societal growth and development, they must be re-oriented back to the roots- the societal values- in order to maximize their potentials in the face of the new culture. Although the positive impact of the new development on youths cannot be denied, its shortcomings, some of which have been highlighted in this paper, deserve serious attention. There is a dire need to institute value re-orientation as a regulatory mechanism for youths. Through such an ethical orientation, the positive aspects of social networking and those of our core values

could be harnessed for optimal performance. Only then will social networking be used rationally, reasonably and responsibly for the good of all. Nigerian youths are advised to shun every negative tendency that social networks provide in order not to become ready tools for social disintegration in the nation.

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