

NIGERIAN: AN ENTREPRENEURIAL REALITY AND FOUNDATION FOR NATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT: *Nigeria, as an innovation or creative response, was the criterion of British entrepreneurship. Its objective was to obtain essential raw materials and slave labour urgently required for the resuscitation and survival of the British industrial system and farm plantations in Europe. These British entrepreneurs on national assignment came in contact with numerous desolate, isolated and marginal settlements locked up in wild forests or desert. Creative response was applied to this hopeless situation that had at least two essentials: (1) The said settlements could practically never be understood 'ex ante' as Nigeria, and (2) This creative response shaped the whole course of the said subsequent settlements and their long-run outcome as the nation-state of Nigeria. Nigeria offered Nigerians a strong base in large population, increased landmass, abundant natural resources etc and enviable opportunity to improve themselves through servicing and understudy. The colonial officers. Secondly, a fundamental national unity was rooted in the Nigeria's Independence of 1960. This empowered Nigerians to cluster and face common challenges and opportunities and to network and jointly attain national objective. Instead, our tribal focus defined Nigeria as a warfront with constitutional protection rackets, institutionalizing corruption and incompetence. Unemployment and poverty became the twin faces of the economy. Our intangible wealth constitutes a negative 71 percent for Nigeria unlike Ghana with positive 80percent. The low literacy level is responsible for the low national human capital in Nigeria. This paper strongly recommends free compulsory and universal education at all levels including adult literacy programme for all Nigerians. This worked in all developed nations. The country's manufacturing sector was compelled to depend on the importation of minerals that Nigeria has in abundance consequently, infrastructure at mine sites deteriorated due to neglect. Today it is empowering China with a literacy rate of 87.3 percent.*

KEYWORDS: Entrepreneurial Reality, National Economic Development, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Nigerian comprised large number of small unrelated and disintegrated tribal settlements. They were clannish, rural, primitive and rustic and existed in isolation of one another. This lone settlement or community isolation was their major problem. There was no dynamic competitiveness among them, no capacity to keep abreast of new development or address major obstacles, let alone cluster...to face common challenges and opportunities or network in the form of relationships that link together geographically dispersed settlements to jointly attain certain objective (Economic and social Commission for Western Asia, 2003:13). Each settlement was a close system and buried

itself inside very thick and wild forest or desert environment which was dominated by predators and monstrous beasts or cyclones and dust that threatened to exterminate each of them.

These primitive and virtually defenceless natives faced monumental danger. In addition, diseases abound and ignorance was dominant. Awojobi (1979) states that the primary disease that afflicted these peasants or local natives was ignorance which included mass illiteracy. According to him, mass illiteracy was like a chain binding men and women to their blind past. Ignorance is indeed a dark shade which limits the vision of man and women to their immediate environment. Their environment was actually a dark environment which was dominated by evil spirits and wild beasts. They lived in pain (Allen James, 1982) and were prisoners of their environment restlessly experiencing precarious existence in isolation (Wole Soyinka, 1978:11). They were always held within a tight vice of possibilities and consequently could never really master their environment (Drucker, 1979:23).

This obvious incapacity appeared to foreclose any opportunity on their part to develop economically. This is because a society develops economically as its members increase jointly their capacity for dealing with the environment which is dependent on the extent to which they understand the laws of nature (science), on the extent to which they put that understanding into practice by developing tools (technology), and on the manner in which work is organized (Walter Rodney, 1986:10). The settlements, include among others, the Benin 'Kingdom', 'Kanem-Bornu empire', 'Oyo empire, 'Sokoto Caliphate'.. The words-kingdom, empire and caliphate should be defined and appreciated in the context of their primitive setting. This is because they connote or present them as being solid and powerful militarily, and having sound administrative structures, technological base and economic force as well as having able and focused leadership. The taint of sophistication implied by the words empire, kingdom etc is a false picture. This is reinforced by the fact that settlements were all marginal because they lived on borrowed time. They also existed on sufferance and through the inertia of others. They fixed anything as standard, achieved it too easily with resultant false complacency (Bigg, 1972:304). The marginal is incapable of survival in the long-run (Drucker, 1968:6).

Entrepreneurial contact with natives

The contact with Britain reversed the said "inertia of others" (other blind, and enclosed and independent settlements). Hence, the claim by the international business community that the international corporations are important catalyst of development and growth as they bring essential capital, technology, managerial skills, employment, marketing capacity, goods and services in African economics...But critics in the host countries where transnational firms operate and even advocates of dependency theory see it different. They maintain that foreign capital is a source of underdevelopment, as these firms encroach on the sovereignty of African states, foment distortions in their economies and divert resources from domestic growth (Naomi Chazam *et al.*, 1999: 307 – 308). Whatever happens, the inertial was transformed into vibrant relationship with the British.

The focus of this paper is to take a critical examination of the role of the colonial masters, particularly Britain in the making of Nigeria and the opportunities open to Nigerians in the

development of Nigeria since 1960, the year of Independence, a foundation premise for national unity and joint economic pursuit.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework is based on the dependency theory in which the role of dependence will continue to improve through a close understanding of the master until it attains surefootedness in quality of personnel in all fields of activity and the systems theory which ensures that all tribes, states or subunits jointly engage in dynamic and healthily competition to produce a whole-Nigeria that would be greater than the sum of all tribes, states or subunits.

COLONIAL MASTERS AND THE COLONY OF NIGERIA

The Western European Power in the 19th century designed the boundary of Nigeria and assigned it to Britain. The name – Nigeria – was suggested by Flora Shaw in 1898 (Structec, 1992: 7). The British Royal Niger Company merchants, administrators, military personnel, etc stormed the primitive environment of Nigeria. This push was sudden and/or violent on the part of the natives but predetermined and executed well by the British. The timid natives lured them to build their residential quarters in the wild forests that were dominated by the dreadful evil spirits and wild beasts. This gesture was not done in good faith. The hidden agenda was to expose the strangers to the wrath of the evil spirits and wild beasts that would instantly and ruthlessly deal with them and totally eliminate them from their native soil. The irony was that the evil spirits and the wild beasts were forced out on the natives. The natives, in astonishment, watched them move into the death-trap. The strangers dominated and redesigned the “death-trap to serve as both their residential places and place of religious worship to the Living God, the Almighty Father who created Heaven and Earth. The goal or objective of this risky and uncertain mission was to obtain an advantage of raw materials and slave labour by ruthless method for their industries and farm plantations abroad.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND NIGERIA

Rare courage, admirable patriotism, and technical and administrative efficiency firmly equipped the British to dare and overcome the risks, uncertainties and challenges that copiously lined their travel routes from Britain to the remote recess of the hinter-lands of the native Nigerians. The successful adventure convincingly proved that both Britain as a country and Britons, her people, were entrepreneurs jointly and individually.

An entrepreneur (a loan word from French) is a person (or group of persons) who undertakes and operates a new enterprise or venture and assumes some accountability for the inherent risks in the context of the creation of – for profit enterprises, entrepreneur is often synonymous with founder. Most commonly, the term entrepreneur applies to someone who establishes a new entity to offer a new or existing product or service into a new or existing market, whether for a profit or not-for-profit outcome. Business entrepreneurs often have strong beliefs about a market opportunity and

are willing to accept a high level of personal, professional, or financial risk to pursue that opportunity. Business entrepreneurs are often highly regarded in United States (of America) culture as critical components of its capitalistic society (Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopaedia adapted on-line).

Entrepreneur – Loan Word from French

The French word, Entrepreneur, in its ordinary usage referred to “men engaged in leading military expeditions” which involved risk and uncertainty. The fundamental entrepreneurial functions were government road, bridge, harbor and fortified contractors as well as architects. Napoleon Bonaparte, a French army general, became the strutting conqueror of Europe and extended the word, entrepreneur beyond the shores of France. He personified and dramatized it in all the conquered states by trying to ride the waves in the event of a revolution and displaying ruthless efficiency in containing it. Napoleon Bonaparte became the ambassador of the term, entrepreneur in concept and practice, outside France. He projected FRANCE as the mother country of the other sovereignties with each expected to build a large palace for his own use in Paris ... and render homage (Aronson, 1975: 20 – 89).

The key words of the above definition define the capacities of an entrepreneur as

1. Enterprise undertaker and operator
2. Risk bearer
3. Founder of a “new entity” “new venture” or “new way”
4. Strong believer about market opportunity
5. Critical components of capitalistic society.

The rewards of entrepreneurship also flow as follows:

1. Profit or not-for-profit
2. Maximization of opportunity.

(a) Founder of new entity, new venture or new way:

Schumpeter (1947: 151) is in total agreement with the concept of ‘new way’ that is, innovation which is the criterion of entrepreneurship The defining characteristic is simply the doing of new things or the doing of things that are already being done in a new way. This new way was a creative response applied to a situation that has at least three, aspects:

1. It can practically never be understood “ex ante”;
2. Creative response shapes the whole course of subsequent events and their long-run outcome;
3. Creative response ... has ... something to do:
 - (a) With quality of personnel available in the society;
 - (b) ... with quality of personnel available to a particular field of activity;
 - (c) With individual decisions, actions and patterns of behavior.

Critical look at these three essentials

- 1) It can practically never be understood “ex ante”.
In the situation of “Nigeria”, Nigeria (it) “can practically never be understood in the form of a nation combining near-autonomous units into a whole, called Nigeria, “ex ante”, that is, before the Western European Power designed its boundary as Nigeria.

- 2) Creative response shapes the whole course of subsequent events and their long-run outcome. The Western European Power or Britain, first shaped the small and autonomous units or entities that existed in isolation and facing precarious existence and thereafter fashioned their transformation into a long-run outcome known and called Nigeria. Therefore, those settlements were the unrelated subsequent events. Like blocks, they were moulded to fit into a pattern of relationship. This shaping or moulding process saved the small settlements from doom, steady decline and probable extinction. This pattern of relationship improved their scope of opportunity and viable contacts within Nigeria. The Letters Patent and the Nigerian Protectorate Order-in-Council of 1914 amalgamated these shaped entities into Northern and Southern Protectorates to form Nigeria.
- 3) Creative response ... has ... something to do:
 - (a) With quality of personnel available in the society;
The quality of personnel available in the society called Nigeria was sufficient and capable of providing the needed or required raw materials and slave labour required for manual work in farm plantations and industries in Brain.
 - (b) With quality of personnel available to a particular field of activity;
The quality of personnel is defined by the skill required to produce the agricultural products. The quality of such personnel is available in the rudimentary Agricultural field.
 - (c) With individual decisions, actions and patterns of behavior.
The decisions were repeating themselves, the actions were repetitive and the patterns of behavior in the process of producing the raw materials are stereotyped ... routine.

1(b) Critical Components of Capitalist Society

Capitalist is defined as a person who controls much capital while capital is wealth, money or property that may be used for the production of more wealth or money with which a business etc is started (Oxford English Dictionary page 125). This implies that an entrepreneur is a businessman who controls capital used in starting a business with the aim of making profit.

2(a) Reward of Profit

Francis A. Walker maintains that the Entrepreneur is the engine of industrial progress and the chief agent of production while John R. Commons affirms that there is one type of profit which arises from the ability and risk-taking of the entrepreneur which was temporary and contingent on changes in the economy. Schumpeter posits that the temporary phase renews itself in cycles into a continuous trend (International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences). Therefore creative response of any promise should not out-live its usefulness (Drucker, 1967).

2(b) Maximization of Opportunities

Maximization of opportunities is a meaningful indeed a precise definition of the entrepreneurial job The pertinent question is not how to do things right (which is efficiency) but how to find the right things to do (which is effectiveness) and concentrate resources and efforts on them (Drucker, 1968: 5). Resources and efforts actually constitute the two sets of generalizations that apply to most businesses most of the time. They maintain that results are obtained by exploiting opportunities while resources, to produce results, must be allocated to opportunities.

From the above, the Western European Powers or the British colonial authority was a business entrepreneur who founded a new venture, Nigeria, for a profit in terms of obtaining raw materials and slave labour for the improvement or survival of her industrial system and farm plantations. Nigeria is an enterprise undertaken and operated by the British entrepreneur. Nigeria ... was welded together in the interest and for the benefit of a European Power (Forsyth, 1975: 1).

NIGERIA, AN OPPORTUNITY FOR NATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Nigeria, as devised was an opportunity to Nigerians to accommodate themselves and establish or build a new understanding and working relations on the strengths that bound them together. This devise called Nigeria would have encouraged them as natives of the black race enjoying common citizenship as Nigerians and suppliers of raw materials to the strangers, to forge a new sense of foundation national unity as a bargaining premise with the strangers. The saving help of this world-be foundation national unity, which was rooted in the Independence of Nigeria, trickled away on the reactive responses of Nigerians to their new situation. Their lives were a function of conditioning and conditions. This was because they had by conscious decision or by default chosen to empower (Covey, 1990:71) the basic differences between the North and the South, the doubts and fears and the centrifugal tendencies to control and undermine any national consciousness or patriotism (Forsyth, 1975: 24). Nigerians became totally reactive. This blinded them to their past. They were reactive in their response to new Nigeria and relapsed into foundation tribal unity based on the presumption of a single foremost ancestor called Oduduwa (Yoruba) or forefathers or ancestral fathers related to one another (Hausa) or misguided/chaotic individualism (Igbo). These major tribes, Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo, are the key players.

The colonial contact had a violent impact on the innocently primitive natives. Nevertheless, it provided Nigeria and Nigerians wonderful opportunity to understudy and develop high quality personnel in all fields of activity. Harbison (1968) maintains that human beings are the active agents, who accumulate wealth, exploit material resources, build social, economic and political organizations, and carry forward national development. The attitude of Nigerians in harnessing the foundation national unity rooted in the Nigerian Independence of 1960 towards the economic development in particular becomes critical in examination and focus.

Nigeria provided solid framework for cooperation and coordination of productive potentials and natural endowments, introduced new lines of relationships, operational and social contacts, vital linkages and meaningful hierarchies in which skilled and resourceful Nigerians should fit into to give Nigeria concreteness to attain the degree of dynamic and healthy competitiveness deemed or expected to be within their reach. Instead, Nigerians decided to empower, by decision or by default, the factors that thwart the prospect of any joint efforts. Such factors include tribalism, religion and corruption. They adapted themselves to their old pattern of life and belief. Adaptation to economic changes was considered important on condition that it should be done rapidly, intelligently and rationally. But Drucker (1979: 23) enlightens us to the effect that managing, as a productive process, is more important. According to him, managing goes way beyond passive reaction and

adaptation. It implies responsibility for attempting to shape the economic environment, for planning, initiating and carrying through changes in the economic environment, and for constantly pushing back the limitations of economic circumstances on the enterprise's freedom of action. It also implies responsibility for making things happen (Convey, 1990: 71).

This is why Philip Emegwali, the famed super computer pioneer in his key note address in University of Alberta Edmonton, Canada on September 23, 2006 asked the question – “Where is Africa Going Wrong? In his considered view, Africa including Nigeria was missing the mark as well as the thrust in the application of her potentials for progress and poverty alleviation, by relying in her ability to pick minerals from the ground or seek debt relief and foreign assistance. He blamed Africa for investing more on things than on information and more on the military than on education ...” Even with this huge investment on things and the military, Koma people, in Adamawa State of Nigeria were still, in 1986, living in the blind past, enjoying nudity by going about naked. The puzzle is to imagine the proportion of Nigerians that would have been in their position if there was no contact with the colonial masters. Furthermore, the strategy of a “century skipping” to catch up with the developed economies is a mere wishful thinking and at best, would black out the realities of existence essential for development in all aspects of life. Nigerians must prepare themselves to face the realities on ground.

FACTORS MILITATING AGAINST NATIONAL UNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. Nigeria – a war front

The major tribes in Nigeria, Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo are not willing to combine and coordinate their human, physical and financial resources to jointly advance the cause of Nigeria. Rather, they see Nigeria as a battle field for tribal and personal gains.

The military (as well as the politicians) tended to treat the State (Nigeria) as a conquered proceeds of state as spoils of war to be shared among the members of the military, the conquering forces of occupation (The Oputa Report 2004: 25). The above justifies Enekwe's (1989) considered view that Nigeria is “Rich Land: Poor People”. Nigerians will wail if they know how much of the nation's crude petroleum these three military Heads of State of Nigeria allocated to themselves and their business fronts before they stepped aside (Alabo – George 2012:3). North-East of Nigeria controls 80percent of crude oil and gas produced by indigenous oil companies. It conquered the oil blocks through Generals Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, Sani Abacha and Abdusalami Ababalika. (Alabo-George 2012:13)

2. Corruption

This is a diversion of public fund into personal packets. The alleged culprits face the law but the wrath of the law is blunted by constitutional and tribal protection rackets. The constitution protection rackets are the Federal character principle in Chapter II Section 14, (3) and section 318 the Immunity Clause. These favour employment and membership of Federal establishments on the basis of tribal and state representation and not on merit and empowers the Executive arm of government to divert public fund to personal use under cover of constitutional protection while in office.

3. Entrepreneurs emerging from the population

Nigeria's Land Mass is substantially rendered as a non-resource because of the acute shortage of trained indigenous entrepreneurs to exploit positively their land potentials. Nigeria has a land area of 923, 768.00 square kilometers with a population of about 130 million people (Ndili, 2004: 9). If the total population is educated productively, they will economically and intensively engage in productive utilization of the total land mass of Nigeria.

4. Niger Delta Militancy on Oil Companies

The World Bank Report (1995) shows that the GNP percent in the host communities or in the Niger Delta is below the national average of US\$280 despite the high population growth rate combined with the high habitable land constraints. Similarly, health indicators are low and they as well, lag behind the country's average. There are disproportionately high fatality rates from water borne disease, malnutrition and per sanitation among others only about 20percent-24percent of rural communities and less than 60percent of urban communities in the Niger Delta have access to safe drinking water. Transportation is often difficult and expensive less than 20percent of Niger Delta is accessible by good roads, even in the dry season. The report of the Ledum Miteeled Technical committee on the Niger Delta estimated that the country lost about N8.84trillion or \$61.6billio theft and sabotage in the volatile region between 2006 and 2008. For nearly four years the Niger Delta militants held the nation to ransom, destroying vital oil installations and kidnapping expatriate oil workers, most of whom had to flee the region. The frequent attacks on oil installations resulted in shut downs and the unwholesome activities of oil bunkering cartels (Newswatch man of the year 2009;2010:11 vol. 51 No 1January, 4). Business had collapsed in the region and thousands of people became jobless as a result of militancy. The deployment of the Joint Military Task Force (JFT) to restore order and create a conducive atmosphere for business could not tame the militants. The inability of Nigeria to meet the quota in the OPEC further battered Nigeria's image in the international community. But on June 25, 2009 President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua tried a new approach, he granted amnesty to the militants with effect August 5 and gave them 60 days within which to surrender their arms and renounce militancy. The approach turned out to be the magic wand that would put concern to militancy and create the enabling environment for the emergence of a new Niger Delta (NEWS WATCH, 2010:11-12)

CONCLUSION

Nigerians are tribalistic and consequently lack a national focus. Ignorance, including mass illiteracy is dominant. There is a resulting low national human capital and obvious undercapacity to deal jointly and productively with the large mass land of Nigeria. With a population estimated at about 130 million, Nigerian is the largest country in African and one-sixth of the black population in the world. It is the 8th largest oil producer and has the 6th largest deposit of natural gas in the world Currently, barely 40 percent of its arable land is under cultivation (Soludo, 2006: 10). This is why Enekwe (1989) describes Nigeria as a "Rich Land, Poor People". The World Bank Estimate shows that Nigeria's wealth is based mostly on natural resources and not much on produced or intangible wealth (human and social capital and institutions). Whereas the intangible

wealth constitutes about 80 percent of the national wealth of Mauritius, South Africa and Ghana, it contributes a negative 71 percent in Nigeria With an inefficient investment, it means that Nigerians are depleting and consuming her natural resources without saving or investing it well enough to produce capacities in the future (reported in Soludo, 2006:22). Also, the domestic policy errors on the part of our Military Heads of State ruined Nigeria's growth economic opportunities. For example Nigeria and Indonesia experienced oil boom in 1973 and thereafter, took different policy choices. Today, manufactures as percentage of total exports is about 40 percent in Indonesia, it is less than one percent in Nigeria where Nigeria was in 1970. Samuelson (1970: 3) highlights the fact that every national issue or interest mentioned requires economic understanding to make any progress in dealing with it. Most of our Heads of State were not university graduates and were badly limited. Some of them went to University after the expiration of their respective tenures in office as Heads of State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

China by 1949 had only 20 percent literate population. But by 2005, the literacy rate had risen to 87.3 percent. This is responsible for China's emergence as the potential largest economy. This has come to many people as a 'surprise'. This calls for a total national investment on education, information, ideas and knowledge through the implementation of Section 18 subsections 3(a), (b) and (c) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal republic of Nigeria (without the restrictive phrase) as and when practicable provide.

- (a) Free compulsory and universal primary education
- (b) Free compulsory and universal secondary education
- (c) Free compulsory and universal university education
- (d) Free Adult literacy programme

The literate Nigerians will see the futility of pulling against one another and instead, all turn and push shoulder to shoulder in the same direction and substitute friendly cooperation and mutual helpfulness for antagonism and strife to promote Nigeria as an emerging manufacturing developing nation in the 21st Century (Taylor, 1912).

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