

RESTRUCTURING SOCIAL ORDER AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *Nigeria from colonial period through post colonial period has settled for federal system of government which allows for division of powers and jurisdictions among the levels of government that made up the federation. Overtime, there have been observable imperfections in the Nigerian federalism which have triggered protests, agitations and patriotic calls for restructuring of the system. On the basis of the foregoing, we commended as follows: that there should be devolution of more powers to the federating units in Nigeria; that fiscal federalism should be practiced to give room for resource control by the federating units and that the principles of federal character as enshrined in our national constitution should be observed in appointment and location of critical infrastructure across all sections of the country. This paper is a departure from this trend, orthodoxy is challenged by showing the nexus and interface between restructuring, social order, and development in Nigeria. Development is said to be a predictor that determines whether a country is progressing or not. A critical assessment of Nigeria's development despite her abundance in human, natural and material resources reveals that the country is yet to achieve the desired expectations as clamored by her citizens. The objective of this study was to identify the challenges to development in Nigeria. In order to obtain data for the research, the work adopted qualitative research method through textual analysis. The findings of this study revealed that despite the country's attempt to advance development, several challenges has posed a great threat to her progress. These setbacks range from imposition of politics on the citizens, lack of adequate human resources or capital to implement development plans/policies, corruption and lack of credible leadership among others. It recommended that accountability and transparency should be the country's guiding philosophy in all her operations. Also once the identified limitations are tackled then development will be realized in the country.*

KEYWORDS: Federalism, Restructuring, Social Order, Development, Revolution, Government.

INTRODUCTION

In recent time, restructuring has assumed a household name in Nigeria. The concept has continued to gain currency especially in the current era of President Muhammad Buhari led administration. Opinions have remained divided on what restructuring exactly means. However, restructuring has been used in many occasions in the country to imply divesting the central government of certain powers it wields and limiting its influence in such areas as fiscal policies, military defence, foreign policy, immigration and national elections. If this definition is anything to go by, restructuring presupposes that there are some imperfections or defects in the Nigerian federalism, which must be given priority attention to bring the version of Nigerian federal system as close as possible to what is obtainable elsewhere. There is no doubt that Nigeria since colonial period has favoured federalism given her heterogeneous character. It is argued that, Nigeria has well over 250 ethnic nationalities with three main ethnic groups

(Hausa/Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba). Matthew, (2017), one of the father of federalism conceived federalism as the method of dividing powers so that general and regional governments are each within a sphere, co-ordinate and independent. This definition has attracted criticisms from scholars who argued that Wheare's notion about federalism is too legalistic and rigid. Given the defects noticeable in Wheare's definition, argued that the nature of federalism is to be sought for not in the shading of legal and constitutional terminology but in the forces - economic, social, political, cultural that have made the outward forms of federalism necessary adding that the essence of federalism lies not in the society itself. Federal government is therefore a device by which all the federal attributes of the society are articulated and protected. To Eghareuba, (2007), the literal interpretation of 'federal' confines its application to cases in which states, while agreeing on a measure of delegation to a common government, yet in the main continue to preserve their original constitution. Federalism is a juristic concept of sorts and that fact is retained in our definition by emphasizing the existence of two kinds of governments and their separate ability to make some decisions independently of each other.

The personal worth of any national government is the attainment of qualitative level of development as it is a crucial aspect of any nation's drive to self-reliance. Lawab, (2011), posited that development is a vital necessity to the growth and sustentation of any vibrant nation. Thus, for development to be ensured, socio-political and economic stability must be guaranteed at all levels of government as this will promote citizens natural attachment to the governing process. In as much as development is vital to any nation's progress, Okereke & Ekpe, (2002), observed that there has been an unequal level of development in the world and this has precipitated numerous scholarly debates and postulations explaining why some countries are more developed than others.

Despite all the development plans by the Nigerian government, a lot of setbacks has been encountered in the developmental process. According to Osakwe, (2010), the nature of Nigeria's development strategy has contributed to the slow pace in achieving poverty and unemployment reduction in the country, as such, the country has not gone through the normal process of structural transformation. This implies that the strategies employed by Nigeria government has not led to the growth of productive capacities and structural transformation which are the pivot for generating any productive employment opportunities and reducing poverty to a minimal level. Thus, the efforts made by various governments has not been worthwhile as unemployment, poverty and inequality is still on the increase.

According to Ibietan & Ekhosueh, (2013), the lack of coordination and harmonization of programs/policies both within the tenure of an administration and those succeeding it has been the impediment to development. In line with the above. This paper is a departure from this trend. By striving to show the interface between restructuring, social order and development, we may well be challenging orthodoxy. The task of this paper therefore, is to show the nexus between restructuring, social order, and development in Nigeria. The work posits that there is a direct interlocking relationship among these variable in a way that each, varying degrees, affects and is affected by others. It is however, argued that, in the final analysis, the social order, more than any other else, determine the kind of restructuring and development a society get. The empirical different, Nigeria, is not exception. It is held in this paper that power social forces manipulate social order to serve deeply entrenched in the existing restructuring, by so doing, ensuring that the prevailing development in the society conforms to the need of perpetuating the status quo.

Restructuring the Nigerian Federalism: The Form and Shape

The debate for restructuring of Nigerian federation has been raging for quite some time now in Nigeria. This heated debate has pitched the southern Nigeria against the northern Nigeria. We could safely argue that the people from southern Nigeria are the protagonists, who sincerely want the status quo in Nigerian federalism to change. On the other hand, the people of northern Nigeria are the antagonists as they consistently entertain some fears on the intentions of the proponents restructuring. This segment of our discourse will expose the viewpoints on both sides of the divide.

The position of the protagonists will suffice here. To, the structure should be changed. There is too much power at the centre. He maintained that the federal government has too much power and too much responsibility, too much money, much to waste. Continuing, he queried whether it has not occurred to us that the federal government has too much power and too much responsibility? He argued that the structure we have is anti-development. To him, restructuring implies devolution of powers to component units of the Nigerian federalism. In the same vein Nwosu, (2016), averred that restructuring means divesting the central government of certain powers and limiting its area of influence to such areas as fiscal policies, military defence, foreign policy, immigration and national elections. He argued that the concept of restructuring does not entail merging of states. Rather, it is a thorough going process that allows each region to control its resources and pay royalties to the federal authority. He believes strongly that restructuring to a large extent will stem the tide of restiveness in many parts of Nigeria as it is capable of resolving the problems of citizenship, religion, resource control and fiscal federalism.

Atiku Abubakar, the former Vice President of Nigeria believed that the current structure of Nigerian federation has been a major impediment to the economic and political development of our country. He insisted that our version of federalism should be made less centralized,, less suffocating and less dictatorial in the administration of the country. On the other hand, the antagonists represented by some voices such as, argued that those who call for restructuring in Nigeria today are doing so with some kind of hate in their minds adding that what is working in their minds is to find a way of denying states from the north opportunity of getting the kind of shares they are receiving from the federation account. He argued that some of the factors that government is using to distribute the revenue are God-made. Furthermore, he insisted that those talking of restructuring are actually hiding their real intentions under the slogan. In the same vein, Matthew, (2017) stated that the North is opposed to restructuring of Nigeria because there is nothing to restructure. He argued that those who clamour for true federalism to enable each constituent to develop at its own pace are unwittingly advocating that Nigerians should live as if they are in different countries, where some citizens would live in a comfort zone, while others would live on the fringe. From the position of people of Northern extraction, it is clear that they are not perturbed about the present structure of Nigerian federalism. In other words, they are very comfortable with the way and manner the highly centralized Nigerian federalism is run. From their arguments, we could notice that they are interested in regular receipt of federal allocation from the Distributive Pool Account.

According to Abah, (2010), for purpose of equity and fairness, there should be physical restructuring of the Nigerian federalism. Nigeria has six geo-political zones. One of the zones (Northwest) has the highest number of states (seven states) while the southeast has the least (five states). All other zones have six states each. We believe strongly that there should be equal number of states across the six geo-political zones in the Nigeria. The cries of

marginalization and neglect are usually hinged on the few number of states created in a given zone (Southeast) in comparison with large number of states in other regions. In addition, the number of local government areas per state should be adjusted to be relatively same so as to avoid over bloated number of local governments in some states especially in Northern Nigeria.

Equally important is the strict enforcement of the federal character principle in appointment of people into key positions in public institutions. Federal character emphasizes the fact that there should be no preponderance of persons from a particular ethnic group in a given government institution. In other words, public institutions must be composed in a manner to reflect the heterogeneous character of Nigerian state. President Muhammadu Buhari has been severally criticized for not strictly observing the federal character principle in most of the appointments he has so far effected since he assumed office. Observations reveal that all the major appointments are skewed in favour of the North while leaving other ethnic nationalities with little or no appointments (Matthew, 2017).

For the chaos currently being witnessed in Nigeria to be a thing of the past, the main principles of true federalism should be strictly applied. To Mercy, (2012), the calls for restructuring of the country were only interested in reaping from where they did not sow.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Definition of Social Order

In simple terms, social order refers to socio-economic and political environment of a society. It expresses the way things, in general, usually happens or is happening in the society at a particular historical juncture. It describes the intricate web and character of every social formation (otherwise called social system) including the nature of mode of production (MOP), superstructure, social consciousness and social relations whether antagonistic or non-antagonistic. Wikipedia, (2012), the phenomenon of social order must be discussed within the context of social formation. This is so because every social formation Primitive Communalism, Asiatic/Ancient/Antiquity, Feudalism, Bourgeois/Capitalist and Socialist/Communism is characterized by a distinct social order. Let it be noted that every social order breeds social consciousness which is peculiar to and indispensable for the existence of that social order. Internalization of social consciousness is ensured by imbibing social ideas and socio-psychological attitudes which are necessary for the existence and continuation of the existing or established system or social order. Stripped of complexities, the study identifies two dimensions or form of social consciousness, namely: revolutionary and non-revolutionary (Ekpenyong, 2014).

Revolutionary consciousness assumes militant and oppositionary. In contrast non revolutionary consciousness is essentially non-militant and conservation in character. Historically, most social formations hardly enthrone social order that promote revolutionary social consciousness, given their inherent conservation disposition (Ekong, 2010).

The terms social order can be used in two senses in the first sense it refers to a particular set or system of linked social structures, institutions, relations, customs, values, and practices, which conserve, maintain and enforce certain patterns of relating and behaving. Examples are the ancient, the feudal, and the capitalist social order. In the social sense social order is contrasted to social chaos or disorder and refers to a stable state of society in which the existing social

order is accepted and maintained by its members. The problem of order or Hobbesian problem, which is central to much of sociology, political science and political philosophy, is the question how and why it is that social orders exist at all (Hobbes, 1957).

Definition of Development

The ambiguous nature of development has made it difficult to advance a precise meaning. In fact there are numerous perspectives as to what the concept of development is all about. There is the perspective that sees it from the economic perspectives, while others sees it as a concept that is multidimensional, meaning that development is beyond the economic domain. According to Meier, (1988), development is the act of raising to the highest value the Gross National Product through the process of accumulating capital and industrialization. Development can also be viewed as the capacity of a nation to increase its static economy to a level where it can generate and sustain an annual increase in its Gross National Product (GNP). Additionally, he further stated that development is not limited to just the process of acquiring industries, but encompasses such processes as modernization, productivity, social and economic equalization, modern technical know-how, improved institutions, and attitudes as well as rationally coordinated policy apparatus (Meier, 1988). In the same light, Oghator & Okobo (2000) pointed out that development goes beyond the increase in per-capita income or economic growth, but also includes sustainable improvements in the living standard of the people, which is guaranteed through the provision of gainful employment, coupled with the presence and availability of social and economic infrastructures.

On the other hand, Seers, (1979), defined development by posing certain questions such as; what has been happening to poverty, unemployment and inequality. To him, if all three indices (poverty, unemployment and inequality) are at a relatively high rate, there is absence of development, and vice versa. It follows therefore that for a country to be classified as developed, there are parameters to look out for which are: the state of poverty, unemployment and inequality. For Todaro, (1985), buttressing on the multi-dimensional nature of the concept of development opines that it is the re-organization and re-orientation of the entire economic and social system. Ajagun,, (2003), corroborates that development is a state of advancement which makes life more meaningful in its various aspects, including the economic, administrative, political, social, cultural and religious aspects. This implies that development is not about a particular aspect but it is encompassing, better still multi-dimensional depending on the point of contention.

According to Onah, (2005), development is not static but is a continuous improvement in the capacity of the individual and society to control and manipulate the forces of nature for the enhancement of the living standard of the people in a society. This definition introduces another dimension to the meaning of development, it analyses the human aspect of development, that is, the individuals who resides in a given state. Ahmed, (2007), also noted that development is concerned with the general upliftment in the material, social and psychological conditions of a given human society.

Factors Influencing Development in Nigeria

Studies have shown that there are numerous factors that challenges development in Nigeria Itali, (2012), Shodipo & Oviasogie, (2013). For Makinde, (2005), he maintains that the imposition of policies on citizens of a nation, lack of adequate human resources or capital to implement these plans/policies, corruption and lack of credible leadership are the major

challenges to Nigeria's development. Most national development problems in Nigeria arise as a result of poor implementation of policies and subsequently lack of adequate and reliable human resources. Makinde, (2005), further maintained that most policies of developing nations are imposed on the masses. The policies are made by the government without considering the target population, as such the masses are not given the opportunity to contribute in the formulation of policies that concern their wellbeing. In addition, there are no human resources or capital to implement these plans as a result of the low quality of human development in the country. Records from United Nations Development Programme 2014 report reveals that Nigeria ranked number 152 out of 187 countries in Human development, which is average quality of life and standard of living. The report puts Nigeria's Human Development Index at 0.38 1 which is below the prescribed level. Thus, in such instances, there is absence of continuity in policies when the tenures of specific governments come to an end. He also pointed that, although corruption is a global issue but Nigeria as a country is caught in the web of corruption. Often times, funds which are set aside for implementing policies are usually syphoned to the detriment of the entire nation. In addition, lack of credible leadership which can recognize and articulate the specific needs of the people also pose a challenge to development.

In addition, the improper assessment of policies implemented also serves as a challenge to development (Itah, 2012). Most policy makers fail to access the goal-achievement gap factor, implying that policy makers often times fail to access the level of achievements of certain implemented public policies. The reason for this is because most leaders present policies which are too cumbersome and difficult to achieve within the short period spent in office. As such, most plans for national development are usually abandoned at the end of such tenures and subsequent governments also fail to continue on the plans which were left uncompleted. This therefore explains reasons for numerous abandoned projects found in these developing nations. Development has also been hindered by the numerous cases of poor management of public funds and also lack of accountability and transparency among others.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study revealed that the federal system of government operational in Nigeria is full of imperfections when compared with what obtains in other countries that practice true federalism. The Nigerian federalism is marked by over centralization of powers and resources at the federal authority to the detriment of the federating states (units). The constituent units could be best described as subordinate units which could be controlled and directed by the central government according to their whims and caprices. The defective structure of Nigerian federalism has been implicated for stifling competition and discouraging diversification of the Nigerian economy as every component part of the federation has refused to engage in productive venture to boost her revenue base. Every federating unit waits patiently to draw from the federation account. We therefore, posit that Nigeria should restructure in order to practice true federalism which will engender economic growth and prosperity as well as stem the tide of agitations, protests, chaos etc that could lead to dissolution of the country.

This state of affairs is not accidental but rather a product of the social order to serve predominantly the interest of the dominant groups in the Nigeria society. Distance between development and the people will continue to widen just as the instrumental value of development for sustainable democracy continues to diminish, as long as the status quo remain

unchanged. Our position serves to provide a clue in answering a many unresolved questions regarding the relationship between restricting, social order and development in Nigeria. Have the political leadership and intellectuals fulfilled their historical role of re-charting the course of history positively? Answers to these leading questions will depend on how answers are given to the following concomitant questions, namely: How egalitarian is the system and the development it offers? What is the content of the development programmes? Who should pay, and who really pays, the bill of development? How is the incidence of sacrifice distributed? Of development who gets what, how, when and where? What is the direction of public policy (ies) in development? Let it be stated unequivocally, that two sets of actors owe the society the duty of re-charting the faulty course: the intellectuals and the political leaders. More than any other group(s), they, acting jointly or separately, has a historical function of promoting the society's progress, not joining forces to retard it. They must either fulfill this objective role or betray it.

CONCLUSION

The paper concludes that for development to be realized there is need to take care of the challenges mentioned every other thing that may hinder the achievement of development in the country. Also a nation must be driven by a philosophy of internalized, pragmatic collective values that is highly supportive of hard work and enterprise and a development state that is managed by a highly skilled technocratic, bureaucracy and a close cooperation between major economic groupings such as agriculture, business and labour, and not values that reflect goals and aspirations formulated by the governing class for the society at large. Like every other things in the world, restricting Nigeria has its own advantages and these advantages and we should not only focus on the advantages but also take precautions by considering the things we stand to lose when we restructure. The trust of current Nigerian government policy against restricting and development is to ensure or enable the poor and more valuable sections of the society to achieve sustained livelihood.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the foregoing, we make bold to recommend as follows:

- There should be devolution of more powers to the federating units as their activities have overwhelming impact on the Nigerian populace.
- Nigerian federalism should be practised on the basis of fiscal federalism whereby constituent units should have control over resources found in their various localities while paying royalties to the federal authority. It is believed that it will encourage economic diversification and increase economic prosperity of Nigeria.
- For purpose of equity and fairness, there should be further physical restructuring of the Nigerian federation so that each geo-political zone will have relatively equal number of state governments and local government areas. This is to guard against one section of the country holding the country to ransom.
- Government should put in more efforts in involving the masses in the formulation and implementation of policies. Policy makers are advised to adopt the bottom-up approach.

This can be achieved through massive publicity of what they intend to do, what they are doing and what they will not do in regards to policy objectives.

- There is also the need for government to take the anti-corruption', campaign more seriously. That is to say, specific machineries such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission be allowed to function more independently without any interference. In addition stiffer measures should be melted on any erring individual.
- There is need for the emergence of new crop of leaders that are visionary centred, selfless, patriotic, accountable and transparent in all their dealings. In addition, Efforts should also be made by the Nigerian government to promote consistency in policies, as this will reduce the number of abandoned projects in the polity.
- Accountability and transparency should be the country's guiding philosophy in all her operations.

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