

EXPOSE' OF THE PROBLEMS IN NATION BUILDING

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ABSTRACT

Nation Building is premised on the implementation of process that are geared towards recomposing the nations institutions so that they can reflect the wishes, needs and aspirations of the wider society. This work exposes the efforts of the government in nation building and the associated challenges.

Keywords: Expose', Challenges, Nation Building, Security.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Nation-building refers to the process of constructing or structuring a national identity using the power of the state. This process aims at the unification of the people within the state so that it remains politically stable and viable in the long run. Nation-building can involve the development of behaviors, values, language, institutions, and major infrastructure to elucidate history and culture, concretize and protect the present, foster social harmony and economic growth and insure the future identity and independence of a nation. However, this is premised on the implementation of processes that are geared towards recomposing the nation's institutions so that they can reflect the wishes, needs and aspirations of the wider society [1].

1.1. Why Nation Building is Necessary?

Nation building is important to inculcate a feeling of belonging, accountability and responsible behaviour. The processes include efforts made to ensure that various cultures are respected and equal citizenship for all guaranteed. Nation building enables history to be rewritten. It facilitates the healing of the wounds inflicted by marginalization and further weakens the feelings of "better" citizenship of one population group over the other. Nation building is necessary to build trust, which is associated with stronger economic performance. Greater trust will result in fewer resources being diverted to prevent corruption; greater innovation, as entrepreneurs devote less time and resources to monitoring possible malfeasance and more economic growth, as hiring becomes more about excellence rather than social connection.

With a divided people living within a single political boundary, it becomes difficult to implement a social contract. Societal division impedes the formation of consensus to develop, change or even implement policy. Failure to reach consensus, is the result of asymmetric information on costs and benefits. Each group has imperfect knowledge about the cost that the other group bears in the event that a particular policy change is delayed or about the likelihood that the other group will behave cooperatively. The greater the differences between the two groups, and the greater the uncertainty about the other group, the larger are the gains to stubbornness, or continued disagreement about collective decisions. Nation building plays a role in strengthening national unity, and the progress in this direction, gives the government the legitimacy to implement difficult socioeconomic policies [2].

2.0. CHALLENGES TO NATION BUILDING

2.1. Ethnocentrism

The major manifestation of ethnocentrism is the rivalry between ethnic groups within the nation. Another shade of it is the general discussion of Nigeria's federalism or the agitation for "federating units", founded on the basis of "ethnic nationalities. This has greatly contributed to the development of dysfunctional state manifest in proliferation of more states, and local governments and some policies of discrimination and exclusion. These constitute nothing but the uncritical reproduction of colonial ethnocentric principles in the creation and organization of political and administrative structures. Ethnocentric concept promotes separation, exclusion and discrimination rather than integration and inclusion, or justice. It promotes view points, ideologies and policies that are both fissiparous and disintegrative. It denies and opposes two important considerations necessary for constructive nation building. Ethnocentrism sometimes results in near-disintegration [3].

The first in articulation is that it denies the multicultural nature of the evolution on human societies which is based on the diverse processes of migrations, fusion and integration in favour of an assumed process that is supposedly defined by separation and exclusion. The second is the fact that its views are based on stereotypes, informed by prejudices, which are further utilized for the purposes of a priori judgments, of whole groups of people.

Basically, ethnocentric principles, as of necessity, induce "inter-group" conflicts as well as policies of ethnic cleansing. These conflicts are thus not only criminal in nature, in the manner they are variously executed, but also constitute the greatest disservice to the promotion, and development, of genuine Nigeria cultures at the levels of community, locality, region and nation. According to a leading political scientist, Bolaji Akinyemi one of the major mistakes affecting Nigeria's federalism is the notion that it should be based on the "ethnic nationalities" rather than on the basis of functionalist, democratic and constitutional principles. Such divisions, he noted, have only been promoted to support destructive elite squabbles, leading to endless subdivisions of the polity, for the benefits of certain individuals and cliques, as well as to the increasing detriment of the polity and its peoples. Nigeria is yet to take any definitive stand, or make any progress, on the issues [2].

2.2. Corruption

Nigeria is becoming a nation where corruption is the norm while decency and sound moral principles, are exceptions. Nigeria is a nation of people in a race to the finish line, but it matters not how one gets there or when. The end literally justifies the mode and means of getting there. There is the mad rush to acquiring scandalous wealth, the conscienceless perversion of the truth, unchecked tendencies of skewing the tradition, an emerging trend in the mortgaging of the conscience of the polity and persistent attempts at murdering the hopes and aspirations of our children, What majority of us now impart to our children is a culture of "thievery, lasciviousness, crude exhibitionism, loot-o-crazy" and wickedness. The result is that we are raising a generation of Nigerians that are blind to the difference between what is right and what is wrong. Significantly, the clear demarcation between right and wrong has become obliterated.

Some our politicians have demolished the lines between their personal and public property. They perceive funds in their charge as a personal slush fund which they are entitled to spend as they deem fit. Public funds are freely donated to spurious causes and un-appropriated mandates. Public funds are used to build lavish personal mansions, purchase luxury automobiles, gifts and private jets which their states do not need and their travel demands cannot justify, while the plights of their constituencies are of no consequence to them. They hold the opinion that it is their turn to ‘chop’ and nothing can get in their way, not even their constitutional obligation to serve those that “elected’ them. Extortion and bribery are common trades of many of lecturers in higher institutions of learning and ninety five percent of our students have more experience in hooliganism, kidnapping, trading sex, pledging to cults and participating in sundry criminal activities than in attending to their studies [4, 5].

The result is that each year we are producing a class of University graduates that are dysfunctional illiterates or near-illiterates whose certificates are not worth the paper they are printed on and with more and more professional groups of employees blocking their access into their ranks. Even in the encumbered situation of the incredible decline in educational standards the corrupt political class and the money elite, rather than fix our educational system, exercise the option of sending their children and wards overseas for studies More so, the private university proprietors are busy founding Universities and “magic schools,” that average Nigerian families cannot afford. Hence, the vast majority of Nigerian kids are left to their own devices and fate. Commendation goes to the Nigeria Police workforce for their efforts. Ridiculously, half of the workforce is serving as private bodyguards for politicians, the rich and the elite of Nigeria. The remaining half, man checkpoints on highways and streets of our major towns and cities shaking down helpless citizens, especially, motorists for real and imagined traffic violations.

2.2.1. Effect of Corruption on Nation-Building

Development scholars have observed that corruption has an adverse effect on social and economic development and also in building a nation. The effects include:

- Diversion of development resources for private gain;
- Misallocation of talent;
- Lost tax revenue;
- Negative impact on quality of infrastructure and public services; and
- Slowing of economic growth.

Corruption has literally brought our nation to her knees and this is gradually bringing our collective aspirations under bondage.

2.3. Insecurity

The insecurity of life in Nigeria and the collapse of law and order in some parts of the country have led to a sense of hopelessness about the Nigerian project. Today, the Nigerian state is seriously buffeted by forces of instability. The confluence of cold-blooded terrorism, rampant organized violence and virulent ideological insurgency by irredentist movements appears too much for the usual Nigerian good fate. We have the specter of a violent fundamentalist movement that kills innocent people righteously in the name of religion, not like the fundamentalist who kill once in a while because of flimsy provocation. The new nihilists kill without provocation all the time as long as everyone in Nigeria has not yet embraced its brand of

faith. We have entered into the age when criminals are motivated by fossilized ideology to perpetrate dastardly acts [6].

Everyone in Nigeria today lives in fear; not fear of the unknown; but the fear of the known, the fear that sooner than later a bomb will go off somewhere, likely in a church, a supermarket or a car park and the victim could be either himself or herself or someone he or she knows. Many young people on national service to their fatherland have been killed in the coldest of blood. That is the state of the federation. The fear of the known makes life in Nigeria too miserable and incapacitated for the civic life to flourish. One can argue that fear has always been the stimulus of our civilization. It is fear of the unknown that drives us to creativity and innovation that sustains the human civilization. The request of the religious sect for the President of the Republic to convert to their faith is a condition inimical to nation building process. It is indeed a call for the dissolution of Nigeria, not through secession or plebiscite, but through an act of terror. Sadly, we continually avow our determination to keep Nigeria together at all cost, yet to rise to this more insidious negation of human rights has remained spiral.

The challenge of the religious set is not be the only terrorists act in the country today. We can point to attacks by militants as a certain kind of act of terrorism. But there is something different about the challenge of the religious set. It is not just the indiscriminate killing of Nigerians and non-Nigerians. It is not just that the terrorists seem focused to attack places of worship in a multi-religious country. What is repugnant about the religious set is that its form of terror undermines the very foundation of a nation-state. Its activities are dangerous because they pose an unequivocal negation of the idea of the state. It does not recognize that a state is a civic space where people matter as citizens or residents. For the set, being a citizen is not enough to share in the bounties of the commonwealth. They are of the opinion that one needs to be a fully paid up member of its own band of faith to have the right to participate in the civic life of the country, until everyone signs up to its creed and worse still, even those who have signed up to the creed still get bombed to death. This is nihilism at its worst [7, 8].

Insecurity in Nigeria goes beyond the religious set nihilistic insurgency against the Nigerian states. In the south east of Nigeria kidnapping and armed robbery has become a cottage industry and its rampancy is in worrisome dimension. Kidnapping appears to defy military solutions. Many Igbos residing outside the region don't visit home again unless they are insured with battalion of Mobile Policemen. None the less, as the cities are gradually been taken over by soldiers, we now have the peace and safety of a beleaguered city. Impunity is not just for religious fundamentalists. Ethnic fundamentalists enjoy amnesty in the Nigerian state and they dish out the most pervasive violence in Nigeria, even long before independence, when Igbos became targets of mass violence in Jos. All across Nigeria, communities have attacked one another because of some claims of ethnic superiority or primacy related to claims of tradition in disregard to law. Today, Jos has become a ceaseless cauldron because of the tangling on who is a settler and who is a native. If we had dealt decisively with the first ethnic violence against the Igbos in Jos, we may have avoided the present crisis.

Travelling by air harbors its unique hazards. Do you know whether the aircraft is fit to fly; how do you know that it has enough fuel to get to its destination. The question is not if but when it will happen. And when it does, it does not seem like an accident. Anyone who is not bombed to death and is not kidnapped could still confront avoidable death on dilapidated roads. If there is a

survey today on the biggest worry of Nigerians, overwhelming majority of Nigeria will answer that their greatest worry is being alive. Never has the simple fact of being alive in Nigeria become so uncertain. We have been reduced to the basest condition of life: just being alive. Terrorists or militants or ethnic fundamentalists are neither humanists nor spiritualists. They don't affirm the right of life of Nigerians as human beings, which is the bedrock of a democracy. They don't recognize the right to life of Nigerians as 'citizen' which is the essence of a constitutional democracy. Therefore they will continue to be at odd with the state. It is vain hope that we can somehow reconcile with any of them in any principled way. We will achieve agreement on the basis of acceptance of diversity of religious values, views and practices; what the late American foremost liberal philosopher of the twenty-first century, John Rawls. Called an 'overlapping-consensus'. For a modern state, the doctrine of terrorism is not reasonable and cannot be accommodated. The same goes for the militants and the kidnapers in the southeast. Terrorism, militancy and insecurity pose great challenge to the survival of the idea of the modern state. The only option is to defer it through forceful expression of the centrality of the state as a civic society where citizens are free to form whatever religious opinion they choose [9].

2.4. Ethical Deficit

Nigeria and Nigerians have turned their backs on acceptable levels of moral and ethical conduct and our collective soul is in indeterminate state. The new generation of young Nigerians kills, maims, rapes, kidnaps and defrauds with impunity, believing for the most part that these are legitimate economic and social pursuits. This state of affairs did not creep up on us. Our generation and those before us lay the foundation and we have continued to entrench these perversities.

Parents have ceded their natural duties to guide and mold their children to become good citizens to foster parents and other mal-adjusted children. In deference to peer pressures, parents will not inquire how their children come about money to buy expensive cellular-phones, designer clothing and shoes. Children, who are full-time students without any jobs, pay their own school fees and even pay rent for their parents and parents are not troubled by that practice. We shall not fail to mention the sorry state of the federal and state civil service where workers will only come to work on paydays, "operation show your face" day, or to attend parties and/or meetings. The rank and file display world-class unprofessionalism including gross tardiness, unethical work culture, poor human relations and crass incompetence. Bureaucratic bottlenecks have been created in the course of carrying out paid jobs in order to extort money from customers that are meant to be served. The workplace has been turned into a marketplace, a bedroom, worship centre, a beauty hot tub, and even a nursery school. Our Diaspora elite never see anything good about their country Nigeria. They know how to criticize and complain but do not bring solutions to the table. They recoil at the chance to come home and help fix the mess that they always complain about [10].

Traditional leaders, elders and titled men and women in our towns and villages, custodians of the building blocks of society have ceded their moral authority to bagmen and seedy characters. Being an "elder" or a traditional title-holder in our villages used to mean something and commanded respect and deference, now it amounts to naught, because money talks. Our local chiefs and elders lie, cheat, mortgage their conscience with bribes from criminals and corrupt politicians; they clothe seedy characters with respectability by showering them with honorary

titles and statuses. Nigeria is at the throes of anarchy given the badly skewed sense of socio-cultural awareness, a perverted sense of moral discipline and ethical conduct, a self-serving political class, growing and emasculated youth population, apathetic parents, and a broken down economic and social order. Total disintegration of the nation is imminent unless we take a bold step to stem this tide of the erosion of our moral values and reinvigorate our code of ethical conduct.

2.5. The Case of Governance

Nations grow in experience, physical development and enlightenment but our country seems to regress towards the state of nature; a conscienceless, morally bankrupt island of abandoned citizens [9, 10, 11].

The reasons are not farfetched. Many reasons have been advanced. Some of them are:

- i. **Weak Institutions:** The problem is that whereas many emerging economic like our countries have developed state capacity to defeat terrorism ours not so blessed. Our institutional capacity to defeat terrorism is weak because the underlying idea of citizenship is weak or absent in our state institutions. Take the case of criminal impunity that is the heart of insecurity in Nigeria. The trouble with Nigeria is that there is one law for the weak and another law for the strong. There is one law for the man who kills another in the name of God and another law for the man who kills another in the quest for money. In Nigeria we have always pampered the person who kills in the name of God and damn the person who kills in the name of secular creeds. By blessing those who killed in the name of God we have weakened the capacity to defeat terrorism. This is the central failure of law in Nigeria and it relates to insufficient commitment to the idea of citizenship.
- ii. **Corruption in Governance:** The manifestations are:
 - Trade Restriction. The restriction on importation of foreign automobiles is examples of how government officials and politicians can make quick money via rent seeking/corruption.
 - Government subsidies. When government allocates scarce resources to individuals and firms using legal criteria other than the ability or willingness to pay, corruption is likely to be the result. Corruption can thrive under industrial policies that allow poorly-targeted subsidies to be appropriated by firms for which they are not intended.
 - Price controls. The purpose is to lower the price of some goods below market value. For social and political reason, these are also a source corruption.
 - Low wages in civil service. When public wages are low, public servants may be compelled to use their official positions to collect bribes as a way of making ends meet, particularly when the chances of being caught are low.
 - **Sociological Factors.** Multi-ethnic societies may be more likely to fall prey to corruption as a result of failure to manage ethnic conflict in a way that is fair to everyone.

Corruption is found in the award of contracts, promotion of staff, dispensation of justice, and misuse of public offices, positions, and privileges, embezzlement of public fund, public books, publications, documents, valuable security, and accounts. Corruption is a symptom of numerous difficulties within the nation. Corruption is systematic in nature and affects the whole life of an organization or society.

iii. Infrastructural Deficit, Wastefulness and Leakages: This sector includes Power, transportation, housing, information Communication. These are very critical sectors to national development. Nigerians have been grappling with several years of infrastructure decay.

There are too many wastefulness and leakages in the system that has not allowed government noble efforts at tackling the challenge of development to manifest. Notwithstanding the billions spent on the power sector, the economy remains dangerously dependent on generating sets that are imported. The government has said it will hit 10,000 megawatts before December this year. But for now, the situation is, perhaps, the worst in recent years. Nigeria cannot be transformed on mere 4,300 megawatts of electricity. For instance, South Africa, a nation of about 40 million people allegedly generates 40,000 MW of electricity while Nigeria, the giant of Africa generates and celebrates a little over 4,000 MW.

Transportation is one area in which the government has earned some kudos and knocks. The government has made some investment in railway, roads and inland waterways airports and sea ports. In roads rehabilitation, more is still expected from the government even though it has tried much, particularly, the once notorious Benin-Sagamu expressway. The achievement of the government in the rehabilitation of airports across the country is all well too known. Nonetheless, more still has to be done. The West-East Road has become a subject of controversy. We cannot overcome our development challenges without first solving the energy problem that the nation has had to live with for more than 52 years. We have heard and seen all manners of probes; from the privatization probe to the power probe and more recently, the fuel subsidy probe. The question on the lips of many Nigerians is: How come none of the identified embezzlers and fraudulent people has been successfully prosecuted?

iv. Mismanagement and Rising Cost of Governance: One common malaise of the government public expenditure has been that recurrent expenses are more than capital expenditure. The argument has been that if the government is desirous of making appreciable impact in infrastructure development, it should be able to free the budget from the vice like grip of recurrent expenditure and so make more funds available for that purpose.

v. Bad Leadership: It is axiomatic that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. The surest avenue to bad governance is the concentration of power in any arm of government. It is equally true however, that a weak and powerless executive is the handmaiden of bad governance. Our Constitution provides for a strong executive with controlled powers. Sections 4,5 and 6 of the Constitution ensure clear division of power amongst the three organs of government. There is no doubt however that the executive wields overbearing powers enjoys a huge majority in the legislative assembly. For instance, both the legislature and the judiciary in many states of the Federation have been rendered impotent by overbearing executive power. This does not augur well for the development of the country.

vi. Incompetent Workforce: Every employment in private and public sector in Nigeria today is based on a letter of sponsorship from one Senator or Governor or Minister. Poor Nigerian working family that spent life savings to educate their children have little hope of them getting a good job because the people in power distort the recruitment process from merit to privilege. This is the new aristocracy in a republic. Recruiters in the public service will not ask for aptitude. They ask for letter of credence from a Senator, Governor or Minister. What will the much

deprived graduate without such reference letter do if he is never considered for employment many years after leaving school than to seriously consider resort to violence and criminal enterprise? Citizenship must have equal opportunity for meaningful employment and livelihood to be citizens indeed. As usual the Nigerian constitution recognizes this fact by directing that the management of national resources must be such as to provide equal opportunity for a meaningful life for every Nigeria. It forbids the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few.

CONCLUSION

Nation-building anywhere else has never essentially been an exercise in the preservation and administration of any “primordial” and “ethnic” groups. It was always a struggle for independent, and sovereign, nation-states anchored in the universal principle of popular sovereignty. Similarly nation-building was nowhere ever simply designed to recreate the pre-colonial past, from whichever point of view this is perceived, or to basically preserve the colonial status quo in whatever guise but rather to change it in favour of the development of new constitutional opportunities that guarantee, and promote, peace, justice equity and prosperity for all citizens.

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