

A Critical Approach to the Problem of Nigeria and the Struggle for Nation Building

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Man abounds to have problems. Nigerians have problems but these problems become worse when Nigerians refuse to accept them, and in doing this, resort to self-deception and “Blame Games”. Many have seen, tried to interpret and also proffer solutions to these problems. However, this paper argues that the Nigerian and indeed African problems at the final analysis lie with the people who have the absolute power—the electorates/masses/ruled. But the question is: why have these problems persisted? Is it that the real and fundamental problems have not yet been discovered or that wrong solutions are proffered to them or that the people have refused to heed to the tenets of the solutions? Nonetheless, the paper will however go further to criticize these conceptualized problems or troubles with Nigeria, together with the proffered solutions and then proffer new ways to overcome the persistency.

Keywords: Nigeria, problem, government, restructuring, revolutionary

Critical Analysis of the Problems as Many See Them

Some scholars have strongly held that man is naturally evil; and Nigerians are no exception. So, as a way of displaying this evil, problems emerge. Trending in Nigeria, the major Nigerian problem is that which has ever been “constant” in her affairs and that is “corruption”. The simple definition of it is that it is the “dishonest and illegal behaviour, especially of people in authority”, or “the act or effect of making somebody change from moral to immoral standards of behavior”¹. It is paramount to note here that corruption has its legal and moral bases and implications and these qualify it as an act against God, man and human conscience and common sense of justice. So, any behaviour from an authority that lacks honour or integrity which makes it lack special respect and regards from the people is corruption and must be against God, man and that universal sense of “good”.

However, for some, there is a fundamental Nigerian problem, that which has ever been a stumbling block to “our” nation building, and that is corruption. Even those who claim to have sworn to possibly eradicate it turn out to clearly become its core perpetrators. Caused by nature? Of course no. But just as Socrates-Plato say, it is our own “privation”—Nigerian cause. And so, in the words of Joseph De Maistre that “every country has the government it deserves”, what Nigeria wants is what she has got. The problem of Nigeria seriously perturbs serious minded Nigerians that

whenever two Nigerians meet, their conversation will sooner or later slide into a litany of our national deficiencies. The trouble with Nigeria has become the subject of our small talk in much the same way as the weather is for the English. (Okolo, 1996, p. 11)

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¹ Oxford Advanced Learners’ Dictionary, New 8th Edition.

Coming from a financial perspective, the Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Zainab Ahmed contends that the problem of Nigeria is revenue, not debt, or any other factor possibly held by any person. Speaking with the Management Staff of the Ministry, she says: “I want to restate that our debt is not too high; what we have is a revenue problem”². It is disheartening that the lives of Nigerians have been turned political as her conception and position on the problem of Nigeria is politically motivated to defend the uncontrollable, unreasonable borrowing system of the All Progressive Congress (APC) led federal government which has thrown the country into deeper indebtedness to many European countries some of whom are “third-world-countries” like Nigeria. But what a contradiction hearing from the same Minister who just defended the irrational “borrow-borrow pattern” of her party that “as of December 2018, Nigeria’s debt profile was #24.387tn. It rose by 12.25 percent from #21.752tn in 2017. And the country’s external debt alone rose to \$11.77bn in three years”. In the history of Nigeria, it is on record that the country has never experienced a political tenure of borrowing like the Muhammadu Buhari’s APC led government, yet this debt which enslaves us the more to many European countries is not our problem, but revenue is. Will it even be possible to have a progress where there is good revenue but bad expenditure of the revenue? The final effect does not escape indebtedness. This is the concern of the Kaduna State Governor, an APC big influencer, Malam Nasir El-Rufai as revealed on November 5, 2020 in his Keynote Address at the 22nd Annual Tax Conference of the Chartered Institute of Taxation of Nigeria (CITN) themed “Taxation and Competitiveness: Imperatives for National Development”. Though lamenting on the low compliance to taxation by citizens which dwindles economy and hampers development, he worries about the level of indebtedness of Nigeria today through borrowing and reveals that “the 2017 report from the Debt Management Office says that... total debt percentage of the GDP was placed at 18 percent as at 2019... This indicates that Nigeria is almost reaching its maximum capacity to borrow”³. Nigeria’s borrowing today has raised a questioning finger on the nationhood, national integrity and independency of Nigeria.

Addressing the course from the angle of leadership failure, Achebe (1983b, p. 1) argued that “the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership” for “there is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian character... land or climate or water or air or anything else”. The “Nigerian problem” Achebe reiterates, “is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal example which are the hallmarks of true leadership”. For him, “Nigerians are what they are only because their leaders are not what they should be” (1983b, p. 31). Identifying the Nigerian problem with leadership, he emphatically contends “that Nigeria can change today if she discovers leaders who have the will, the ability and the vision”. This corresponds with Maxwell’s position that “everything rises and falls on leadership” for “the strength of any organization is a direct result of the strength of the leaders. Weak leaders equal weak organizations. Strong leaders equal strong organizations” (1995, p. 6). This brings to the limelight, the position of the Nigerian Vice President Prof. Osinbajo on the problem of Nigeria. In his argument, he identifies the problem of Nigeria as improper management of the country’s resources perpetuated by grand corruption especially by leaders rather than restructuring. In his words: “The problem with our country is not a matter of restructuring... It is about managing resources properly and providing for the people properly, that is what it is all about”⁴. Achebe and Osinbajo, to an extent are right because even today, it is no more a surprise

² <https://www.thecable.ng/27/8/2019>.

³ <https://www.vanguardngr.com/5/11/2020>; <http://www.thisdaylive.com/6/11/2020>.

⁴ <https://punchng.com/28/8/2018>; <https://www.vanguardngr.com/10/12/2018>.

that the political unwillingness to serve as supposed has deterred Nigerian future; and following this, Nigeria is now “bedeviled by underdevelopment, corruption, short-termism, diseases, poverty, illiteracy, etc. the usual symptoms of bad governance”. In the past, one Nigerian minister said: “We will buy, hire or steal technology” yet till today, “if you want electricity, you buy your own generator;... water... your own bore-hole;... to travel,... your own airline. One day soon,... you will have to build your own post office to send your letters”! Our government utilities, companies, institutions are left wasting and deteriorating but those officials in charge of them have their own personal ones which never stopped to function appropriately and even sometimes, what we buy to equip ours are cornered to their own private ones. That is indeed a manifestation of lack of quality and good leadership and good political will to lead the people, thus, a credit to Achebe.

To Abdusalami Abubakar, the Nigerian problem is lack of “cohesion” and “unity”⁵. To critically scale this position, in what aspect does he mean these “non-cohesion” and “disunity”? What could be the possible determinant-force for these? These Abubakarian concepts in addressing the problems of Nigeria are centrally parts of human existence and they are never forced, they are willed based on the existential experiences shared among people. A forced group living of people from different backgrounds, cultural beliefs and dispositions, philosophical and religious worldviews as typicalized in the Nigerian people hardly live by them. His position points to the depth of restructuring the greater percentage of the people who are clamoring for, and as a statesman interested in Nigeria today, he is expected to address the problem by considering the move for restructuring as a solution to bring about “cohesion” and “unity”. Arguing in a similar direction and identifying the Nigerian problem with the forceful and egoistic 1914 amalgamation, Offor (2015, p. 23) noted that “it was callous of the British... to have forcefully amalgamated over 250 ethnic nationalities into a fake country of many nations. Hence, Nigeria became a child of British selfish political and economic expansionism”. Concluding this, he believes that the “European invasion of Nigeria was based not for our political, economic and religious freedom and development, but for their own integral growth” and natural resources exploitation. Thus the “British not only amalgamated units with different historic-cultural traditions, and which, therefore are prone to disunity and disintegration but also made desperate efforts to consolidate their design for Nigeria” (Nze, 1994, p. 23). The nucleus of Offor’s and Nze’s arguments is that first, the amalgamation of different nations and other minor nations of different backgrounds, conceptions, cultures, etc. as a country (Nigeria) is a time bomb that waits for explosion, second, as result of the situation behind its emergence, it is prone to problems anchoring on the lack of cohesion and disunity. Still on the same rhythm of argument, Chukwuokolo (2016) held that the problem of Nigeria is its creation on “conquest” where the amalgamation was done with “inequality, bad conscience and without fairness amongst all the component units” leaving the country in a family structure of “a medieval wife in an Islamic society” whereby “the husband is a king while the wife is a serf and chattel”. In his thought, the British neglected Rawl’s position that “justice is the first virtue of social institutions, as truth is of systems of thought”, and upon this unjust structure, we are still living today. With current instances, the appointment of President Buhari where 97% of national sector, agency and parastatals are headed by his own kinsmen, Fulani Brothers precisely, 80% of federal allocations and national aids to Nigeria are utilized within the Northern Region, among other instances, is worth to be cited. Consequently, it has placed the country on political instability, grudges, distrust, and persistent agitations for either secession (which is a sacrilege to mention in Nigeria) or restructuring better still.

⁵ <https://www.vanguardngr.com/6/11/2017/>.

Okolo (1994, pp. 9, 11-12, 17), contributing his own quotation to the discourse of the Nigerian and indeed African problem, said that his own identification of the “problem with Nigeria” and Africa indeed goes beyond the “failure of leadership” and beyond “inability of its leaders to rise... to the challenge of personal example” to the root-cause of this leadership failure which I have called “consumer or squandermania consciousness” or mentality. Emphasizing on it, he writes: “It is that disposition in a people by which they conceive and judge things mostly in terms of their consumable value. On the whole, the [people] become dominated largely by acquisitive rather than productive instinct” (Okolo, 1994, p. 9). For him, this mentality is not inborn but “it is a cultural habit or mental disposition” which infuses in a people the mentality “to have more rather than be more, quantity of life rather than its quality, immediate rather than remote gain”, and to worsen the whole issue, the consumers seem to forget that what they consume is a product of someone’s sweat and intellectual struggle. They equally seem to forget the power of their own intellect to create, innovate and produce, and finally seem to forget the negative effects of this life-style reckless consumerism in their own economy, religion, politics, culture, personality, security, commerce, industrialization, etc. It is all about the “‘pleasure-principle’ or the primacy of pleasure or material gain in the life-commitment of individuals or a people”, a sort of dependent life on the product of sweat of other people instead of being independent and producer of what they consume. To put this problem to a stop, education, he advises, must be valued, restructured through curriculum to picture the Nigerian-African reality and then, the re-orientation of the Nigerian mentality will now be focused through a realistic and proper education process. “Like philosophy”, he says, “education banishes ignorance and liberally criticizes people’s values, life-options and redirects social goals and pursuits... (It) frees individuals from the prejudices and irrational assumptions of everyday life and enlarges their experience” (Okolo, 1993, p. 22). Expatiating more, “this ‘integral education’... makes the educated fully sensitive of hierarchy of values, discern the difference between to *be* more and to *have* more; *permanent* and *transient* or *peripheral* honours and values; *true* and *false* goals in life, etc.” (Okolo, 1996, pp. 19-20).

To some other writers like Nwankwo (1976, pp. 80-81), the problem of Nigeria today is that this creation, (Nigeria emergence) is yet to “develop to full strength and maturity. Its authenticity fails to stir loyalty since its creation is yet too recent to have inundated the consciousness of the Nigerian people”. So for him, the lack of “loyalty” which could be likened to “patriotism” due to the fact that the creation is still in its childhood, leading to the lack of “strength and maturity”, is the Nigerian problem. This perhaps could, in a way, be likened to Crowder’s opinion about the Nigerian unity when he asserts that

in the case of Nigeria however, union was so sudden, and included such widely differing groups of peoples that not only the British who created it, but the inhabitants themselves have, often doubted whether it could survive as a political entity. (Crowder, 1966 cited in Ezeanya, 2010, p. 28)

Could this imply a sort of justification to the American President Donald J. Trump who asserts that Africa, Nigeria in this case, needs another 100 years or re-colonization⁶? Could it be likened to even many Nigerians who hold that the Nigerian independence was given in a platter of gold instead of earning it hence the position that the Nigerian independency would have been delayed later than 1960? However, there is a thoughtful shift here when Crowder recognizes the sudden amalgamation and also the cultural divergent peoples who have been forced together as a political entity whom he referred to as “inhabitants” which implicates the idea of “externality” instead of “internality” on the peoples’ citizenship. So, the question is: now that she has

⁶ <https://www.qz.com> 15/11/2016.

celebrated her 60th birthday, is her existence or emergence still too recent? If no, why has not the “loyalty” been developed? If yes, when will she mature to develop the lacking “loyalty”? Perhaps, having matured to develop that indispensable quality but have wittingly refused to, Nze (1994, pp. 35-36) posited that her problem is squarely lack of patriotism. In his words, the problem is nothing but “lack of patriotism” which he sees as “the feeling of love for and readiness to defend one’s country” and “the price one pays for all the benefits that accrue to one from one’s country”. For him, patriotism should be conceived as “the most important factor in nation building and in its sustenance” for it “underscores the quest for and the development of empires, city-states and great nations”. In another place, patriotism for him “includes attachment to a country’s land and people, admiration for its customs and traditions, pride in its history, and devotion to its welfare”. But if patriotism measures on one’s admiration to one’s customs and traditions and history which will eventually lead to one’s devotion to one’s people and land, what/where is Nigerians’ custom, tradition and history where their admiration-attachment to Nigerians and Nigeria would base? This is important because if Nigeria cannot find these, then there will be no genuine patriotism for “a common language and cultural unity had become an essential part of republican articulation of nationality”. Thus, a “common culture therefore, becomes a strong defining feature of national identity; for without this common outlook, the oneness of the nation or its existence as a unit serving collective interests, would be jeopardized” (Nze, 1994, p. 3). Many people have, in the spirit of patriotism, sacrificed their lives for Nigeria, but unfortunately there was no or very discouraging little response and in encouragement for such, from the entity called Nigeria. This single act has raised the question of patriotism and its supportive ground from government in Nigeria; and many have asked “is Nigeria worth dying for”? However, the fundamental question to Nze is: can genuine patriotism be found among strangers? And if it could be, which patriotism will be more genuine in them: the one to their “forced-nation” or the one to their “culture-defined tribe”? For instance, A, B, C, D, and E are different peoples, and all of a sudden, a higher force overcome them and force them to become a people of a nationality, can patriotism be in their midst? What are the bases for it? To which extent will it be genuine? This is important because

where a nation happens to be forged from quasi independent and divergent nations with different historical-cultural ancestry, as in Nigeria, the development of a national character and nation-building become a challenge... that the success or failure of the task of nation building has a lot of implications for the future existence of the country. (Nze, 1994, p. 4)

The “implication” from this kind of amalgamation which Nze (1994, p. 20) called “a German gift” is the tribal patriotism we see in Nigeria for “the interest and opinion of Nigerians were neither consulted nor taken into consideration”. That is to say that in Nigeria, joy is derived from tribalism under nationalism where we perpetuate dominance over others, hence, the unity of Nigeria is embedded in tribal dominance and no one can teach/proclaim otherwise, for doing that amounts to un-patriotism and national disintegration. So, in tribalism found the patriotism and nationalism of and in Nigeria. Taking away tribalism, there will be no patriotism and nationalism of and in Nigeria and subsequently, there will be no more Nigeria. So, I wonder why we claim one and patriotic in Nigeria! “If the truth must be told, Nigeria is not one and can never be one, unless political power remains in the North and bureaucratic officialdom to the Yoruba in perpetuity” (Offor, 2015, p. 3) but which is not federalism we claim to be practicing. In describing the type of Nigerian unity, Nze (1994, p. 16) noted that

there was no referendum; the people were never given the opportunity to indicate whether or not they wanted to be unified. The amalgamation was (totally) rather a heterogeneous device fashioned by the merchants of civilization who were fired with anxiety to serve colonial economic and administrative interests.

Suffice it to say that “an amalgamation borne of this type of thought module instantly becomes disunity, a separation”. But it surprises me then when Nze thinks that patriotism embedded in communalism can solve the Nigerian problem knowing full well that even the “unity” that implicated Nigeria is itself a “disunity and separation”! Still in his words, “it is difficult naturally, for a unity which at the same time is a corroding diversity to operate. It is like a poisonous sword that throws apart our togetherness, we are together but separated” (Nze, 1994, p. 18). Going further, he concludes on the Nigerian amalgamation insisting that “the granite fact is, however, that these different land areas and people... united did not and does not mean that they are unified into one people” (Nze, 1994, p. 38). If so, where possibly then can this patriotism emerge from, stand on and to which extent, be genuine?

Be that as it may, it stirs weariness when Nze recognizes that “where the component parts of the nation are divergent and of different cultural backgrounds, loyalty to the immediate subgroup or tribe may interfere or even appropriate the loyalty due to the larger nation”, yet he still preaches loyalty, patriotism. The possible patriotism one could see in Nigerians is “tribal patriotism” and nothing more. Even criticizing our tribal patriotism, Nze (1994, p. 11) wrote that “we are not even sincere tribalists” for “a close look at these practices will reveal that they are mere subterfuges for a deadly passionless and aberrant selfishness and individualism”. This indeed has encouraged other Nigerian fundamental problems; namely: Tribal and Compensational Appointments, discontinuity in governance, political god-fatherism, and selfish government where governance is all about the interest of the government officials and the rich. The people are thus disposed to their whims and caprices and if some “courageous” among the people can no longer bear it, they face them and seek to also belong and thus, government will now become a do or die affair.

Going further however, Nze in another place says that his “diagnosis of the Nigerian problem is that Nigeria suffers from disintegrative insomnia which is the fall-out of the amalgamation of the pre-colonial nations with strong dissimilarities”. If this is the case, what will be the cradle for Nigerian genuine patriotism because it is not a question of not having patriotic spirit in Nigerians, but a question of how genuine it is. As far as Nigeria is concerned, patriotism in Nigeria has ever been all about “you have to follow us” to show “our oneness” as a people. “Follow us” and “be patriotic” enough so that we will be an “indivisible unit” that will “never be negotiable”. In other words, that is the patriotism of *na we get am* [it (the government, country) is ours] and *bring make we chop* [bring (it—the national cake, treasury) let us share, eat it]. Trying to say what Nigeria really is, Nze writes:

Nigeria as it is today is essentially an anarchic society where the cult of narrow mindedness, ethnicism and brute individualism have ousted all unifying national forces... Nigeria today threatens to be a mere geographical entity where patriotism has been completely isolated. Ethnopolitics has permeated our politics... our government is ethnogovernment... admission to the Universities is ethnically worked out; Our military is ethnomilitary; Our social and economic administrations are ethnically compromised. (1994, pp. 10-11)

“Nigeria” can neither be genuine, have genuine patriots, nor be healed from “tribal patriotism” which is based on “follow us”-for-“we”-are-one, because it is made out of insincerity, sinfulness, selfishness and inconsideration of the colonized by the colonialists. The oneness is based on “following” and “defending” pledge and “this situation was caused by the former rulers and administrators” and “during the ill-fated second Republic, old wounds were deepened. Consequently, relationship between various groups grew stale”. This implicates the fact that in Nigeria’s patriotism are found “bitterness, hatred, discrimination and corruption” and

so, “Nigerians do no longer want to see or accommodate fellow Nigerians” yet Nigeria is an indivisible and indissoluble nation bound in freedom and the worst is that “there is no visible change of attitude by Nigerians to their country”. By and large, “the fact is that Nigeria is now a historical reality existing outside the minds of Nigerians and those who created it”. So, “Nigerians have become indifferent to governance because they don’t perceive it as acting in their interest” and so “the citizens of this country are docile and are in a permanent state of mobilization”. Notwithstanding all these identified problems, we still have to ask series of questions as to why Nigeria has refused to be better.

But we know from theory, practice and structural operations of and in Nigeria that the federalism is only on papers, not in operations. Nigeria practices the fake and autocratic pattern, the very opposite of modern federalism like that of America (unfortunately, we always refer to America as a model to our type of federalism) where the component States are independent but collaborative with the centre, federating unit as obtainable in other modern societies. Unfortunately, the Nigerian’s type is where the component States and their Governors cannot tell their State Commissioners of police or the number of Army personnel and security agencies what to do unless the Leviathan at the centre orders them to; the Governors of the component States are handicapped to decide how to govern their States and cannot stop any order from the Leviathan in their States whether it favours them or pictures the reality in their States even at the current time or not; the States are fed by the center because the resources extracted from them are decided and utilized by the centre, where the only active arm of government is the executive arm generally—ideally and practically—headed by the Leviathan at the centre—the Ground Commander of the Armed Forces of the Federation. The simplest description of such federalism is feeding-bottle federalism or a structuralized federation but (in) unitary operations. In Nigeria, in your judicial duty, or in your legislative chamber and on your parliamentary duty, you will be tied up, bundled and thrown to rot in the cell let alone when the Leviathan remembers you as an ordinary citizen, or in the conception and words of the “uniformed men” bloody civilian, you simply represent anything “gone”. It is this structure of “democratic-absolutism” which has portrayed Nigerian government structure as a “militarized-unitary-democracy” where one man scuttles parliamentary decisions, just as President Buhari has dumped in the dustbin, an agreement the whole country spent trillions on and conveyed in 2014 to reach at, regardless of the emphasis made about the necessity of implementing such confab/convention agreement by the ousted (out-rigged) president—Goodluck Jonathan before leaving office. This structure, judging by common sense demands restructuring and seeing that it is not forthcoming; the country has been thrown into secession or better still restructuring agitations for which the section who thinks that political leadership is their natural right has always rejected and said it is disintegration in disguise⁷. In the same view, it baffles me when talking about patriotism, we say “our founding fathers”. The term “founding” implicates the idea of “instituting, creating” something. From this implication, who then are the founding fathers of Nigeria? These are never anybody defined as a Nigerian, they are the Imperialists, the egoistic and gluttony colonizers. Of course it is pertinent to recall that even a woman was among them, Flora (Florence) Shaw, Sir Fredrick Lord Lugard’s concubine who would later become his wife and on whose laps Sir Lugard was at the pleasure of her natural apple, when he agreed to her suggestion of the name “Nigeria” with which the amalgamated peoples of different nationalities would be known and identified.

⁷ <https://www.sunnewsonline.com/17/3/2018/>; <https://allafrica.com/29/9/2017/>; <https://www.sunnewsonline.com/13/3/2018/>; <https://punchng.com/23/8/2016/>.

Nevertheless, some authors believe that Nigeria is living in modernity with an antiquity structure. One clear fact in Nigeria is that she has always had talking-and-crying-mouths and voices, but unfortunately, she never had listening-and-complying ears and hands. As a result, she has ever lived in weariness and distress as to why she has all it takes to be better, yet, she never is. "Why should Nigeria, the oil-rich giant of Africa, be unable to meet such a basic demand of her people"? This is so because Nigeria has chosen the path of darkness; she has never stopped experiencing both human and natural evil which darkness characterizes and as a consequence, may land to Soyinka's "wasted generation" (Nze, 1994, p. 13). In Nigeria's plenty is also her real scarcity, and as a result, "we have always failed and will always fail to make it to the world league" if we do not tell ourselves the truth and stand on merit and not mediocrity and compromise. It is clear that through this, Nigeria has been killed by Nigerians. Thus, "it is sufficient to say that whenever merit is set aside by prejudice of whatever origin, individual citizens as well as the nation itself are victimized". As

dangerous as the denial of merit in the nation's system of choosing and rewarding its hierarchy of public servants can be, the real explosive potential of social injustice in Nigeria does not reside in the narrow jostling among the elite but in the gargantuan disparity of privilege they have created between their tiny class and the vast multitudes of ordinary Nigerians. (Achebe, 1983a, p. 41)

However, on a critical ground, I hope Achebe was talking of "good and reasonable government leadership" because Nigeria has ever had diverse, careless and tribal leadership. But saying that Nigerian problem is leadership is like counting two before one because "leadership" does not bring about itself into government. At the same time, Achebe contradicts himself when he writes: "The key, as I see it, lies in the manner in which the leadership of the country is selected" (2012, p. 244). And, in another place, he reiterates it thus: "And clearly, Nigeria's principal problem was identifying and putting in place that elusive leader". Who display this wrong manner in selecting "leaders" if not the "electorates"? Who make this wrong "identification" and "putting in place" of these corrupt and unwilling "leaders" if not the electorates? Thus, it is clear that there is a problem before Achebe's identification of Nigeria's problem with "leadership failure" and this problem is "electorates". "Irrationality and emotions" in selecting and voting people into power also play their parts dangerously on the whole system. It is true that the amalgamation of peoples of different backgrounds, culture, perceptions, religions that saw for the emergence of the geography known as Nigeria as a nation was entirely imposed, sectional-focused and wrongly oriented and based on conquest and unity-in-disunity, simply meaning "force", but the point remains that we cannot keep blaming the "selfish-outsider-amalgamators". It is high time we come together and form a table-setting and give a self-identity of ourselves by possessing the attitude of genuine self-positive-change, name ourselves and justify our togetherness as a nation. But unfortunately, the problem to this is the inability of the government to understand it and allow it to happen. Disappointedly, restructuring was a top agendum in the manifesto of the present administration of All Progressives Congress (APC), but today we hear self-contradictions from the same mouth that promised it. It is indeed disappointing and this is why I insist that the electorates' problem predates and must be tackled before the leadership which is a product of the masses'/electorates' actions. As a fundamental Nigerian problem, it bothers on the question of nation building and development. Though we claim democracy but practice militarism in Nigeria, but the point remains that in democracy, no authority/leadership brings itself into constitution. It either comes into constitution through legitimate voting with recognition to electoral sincerity and free and fair election, or by deception, tricks and maneuvers through the electoral body; hence, any authority/leadership is still constituted

by the people. Apparently, before constituting these leaders whose leadership has epitomized failure and government nuisance, we have always lived as a people, and so, we have known to a great extent, the temperaments of one another; they are neither gods nor fall down from heavens above. We quite know that these people to be constituted as leaders have questionable characters. But why do we go ahead and constitute them? Two reasons are behind such: first, the syndrome of “he is my brother”, “he is our own person, from our tribe/region”; second, these impoverished and hungry masses/electorates have seen the “oil” in their palms, and so, could not hold their “throat” hence they have seen where to at least “eat”. These two reasons border on the question of “value conception”. Today, we no longer, from our value conception, ask necessary, moral questions as to the supposition of a process, how these wealth and riches with which we are led astray even come about; all we care about is how we can get a share of it, whether it is a curse or a blessing does not concern us. We have left the reality and are pursuing shadows (Ugwu & Ozoemena, 2019b, pp. 146-158). Our conception of values today has been blindfolded by the global “trending” which has shifted measures and system of determining what values mean and imply in our local and traditional scheme of conceiving values, whether it has ripped or not, harvest it, everything can go. Subsequent upon that, we forget the ontological reactionary repercussions of such grievous shift from the “normal” to the adopted “new-normal”.

However, it is in only military regime that we can say that Achebe’s posited problem is the most fundamental because the electorates/followers, or in the Nigerian military sense and words, “bloody civilians”, have no say on how their authority (government) emerges, and any question on it, never went unpunished. That is why some have ever posited that the worst civilian is better than the best civilian government, all because of that “human freedom”. But what would become of a situation like the one of Nigeria and indeed most African nations where democracy has never allowed freedom—of expression, private property ownership, press/media, life even, among other unalienable human existential rights? But I must note that Achebe took this position and wrote his work—*The Trouble with Nigeria* during the military era when the electorates had no say on how a regime came into recognition and institution. The fundamental features of militarism are seizure of constitution, absolute compliance with decrees proclaimed by the of the military, voicelessness of the electorates/masses, etc. unlike democracy where it is solely the people (electorates/masses) who constitute the people whose thought, actions and words are the leadership referred to. When we say the “electorate”, we mean the voters, and most importantly the personnel in charge of electoral process. They are “supposedly” never partisans but politically neutral, and thus, counted as part of the masses, to whom political powers belong. It is commanding to mention that their own wrong is more grievous for it is the perversion of the people’s wills and ontologically a stumbling block to the successfulness of one’s destiny and fulfillment of existential struggles. That is the next concern which Nigerians seemingly forget when they say: “your permanent voters’ card is your power”. Indeed, the powerfulness of voters’ card is secondary; the primary powers are the electoral personnel who will organize the process, count the votes cast and finally declare results/winners. Ideally these people do not know in entirety the ontological burden and statues of their social position vis-à-vis election and allowing the prevalence of the exercise of the people’s inalienable right and existential quiddity, freedom of choice (volition) and as a way to decide on how their life and future would look like. That position is bound in ontological responsibility, moral consciousness and humanism in all ramifications. Apparently, as a fundamental problem, if these corrupt and failed gluttons, greedy politicians do not succeed in corrupting and having their way through the people/masses, they painstakingly do so through these electoral personnel. Thus, the leadership problem is a child of the electorates’/masses’ (followership’s) problem. Even Achebe himself pointed it out (but failed to

recognize it as primary) when he says that “it is the duty of enlightened citizens to lead the way in their (good leaders’) discovery and to create an atmosphere conducive to their emergence” (1983a, p. 23). Again, Achebe (1983a, p. 23) said: “I am saying that Nigeria can change today if she discovers leaders who have the will, the ability and the vision”. There is nobody as “Nigeria” but the thoughts, speeches and actions of the people in the geographical entity. It is these people who will “discover” these willful, able and visionary leaders whose leadership they will later enjoy, by voting them in. Again, it is true that it is the duty of the “enlightened” ones to bring about this fundamental desired revolution, but sometimes, it becomes so unfortunate that it is now these enlightened ones who will even carry out the confusion and material and financial conviction on the electorates to vote for the very corrupt, morally questionable and illiterate people whom they know they will control and benefit excessively from their government. Enlightenment/literacy is indeed the number one factor to seriously pursue if a country really decides to liberate itself, because being educated without morality and consciousness of the conscience is a doom to the society just like it is the Nigerian case. The educated/enlightened have disappointed (Ugwu & Ozoemena, 2019a).

University professors—Vice Chancellors and Deputy Vice Chancellors, etc.—are appointed (planted) by these politicians (precisely the president) and they help to “rig” them in. Now when the “chicken change” of millions of Naira offered to them as rewarding-bribe finishes, and the rigged-in politicians start to dehumanize them again and “show them pepper” (maltreatment), they will now resort to strike under Academic Staff of University Union (ASUU) institution. And I pity the Nigerian students more. And I would like to ask: what is the difference between an educated professor and the palm wine tapper on the street in the village in terms of expressions of intellectual enlightenment? Disappointedly, there is none. An enlightened friend told me that if he sees one of those buying voters’ cards that he would sell his to at least see money to eat. Defending this, he says that Nigeria has ever been in disarray, and so, anyone who is voted (rigged) in does not necessarily matter for he has always survived all. Surprised at this, I saw in him either the effect of dead conscience or conscious-disregard to the voice of his conscience vis-à-vis the supposed morality behind elections and governance. This calls up for a rethink on the insightfulness in the advice of Bishop Thomas John Paprocki when he, on a speech that centers on the “Intrinsic Evils in Democratic Platform” cautions that you as a voter need to think and pray very carefully about your vote, because a vote for a candidate who promotes actions or behaviors that are intrinsically evil and gravely sinful makes you morally complicit and places the eternal salvation of your own soul in serious jeopardy⁸. He sees democracy as a laudable system of government and any infringement on democratic principles is a “serious sin” that never extricates ontological punishment and everybody has to be concerned about this. He cautions that failure to ensure this is grave and reiterating how necessary this is, he says:

My job is not to tell you for whom you should vote. But I do have a duty to speak out on moral issues... I would be abdicating this duty if I remained silent out of fear of sounding “political” and didn’t say anything about the morality of these issues.

What we can decipher from Paprocki’s contention is that politics without morality is very dangerous and risks not only the person perpetuating such, but also stands as a proof of insensitivity to humanity.

In the same view, it is also an act of betrayal to “intellectuality” to see, for instance, a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN) supporting illegal actions just because he eats from the government perpetuating the illegality; or to see a Professor backing non-humane and awkward decisions because the government making such

⁸ <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/27/9/2012>.

decisions pays him. Those who have the upper hand, including the so enlightened ones, enjoy from the people's intimidation and sufferings. All these accumulate to lies, insincerity and false image presentation of the nation. Sometimes I commend fearless Nigerian legends like Fela, Achebe, and the contemporaries—Mbaka (even though highly politically questionable now), John Okwoeze, etc. who have addressed Nigerian problems (corrupt practices) even when Nigeria was still manageable. Achebe (1983a, p. 58) recorded how on May 15, 1983, the *Weekly Star* carries an article titled "The Nigerian and Corruption" and there, we are told that "keeping an average Nigerian from being corrupt is like keeping a goat from eating yam". But is this universally and naturally possible? However in Philosophy Department of University Nigeria Nsukka (UNN) on October 16, 2017 during a defense headed by Prof. Mrs. Dorothy N. Ucheaga, this excerpt was philosophically criticized but I would say here that "average" here, in regardless to the fact that not every goat eats yam, means nothing with age but more than three quarter of Nigerians—are corrupt. It is not a hidden fact and philosophical analytical judgments cannot make it invalid vis-à-vis the Nigerian case. Corruption as an aspect of evil which is natural appears early manifestly in Nigerians because the system is in its entirety corruption-friendly. In Nigeria, we make "wrong" look "right", defend it, live by it and finally enjoy it with every comfort. In no demur, Achebe reiterates it: "Nigerians are corrupt because the system under which they live today makes corruption easy and profitable; they will cease to be corrupt when corruption is made difficult and inconvenient" (1983a, p. 58). This call to making corruption difficult and inconvenient is a call for system restructuring. The present system makes it so easy that when a child steps ahead in growth, the system will now balance it and the individual becomes easily "fixed" in the queue. The *National Concord* paper of May 16, 1983 carried as a banner headline: "Fraud at P and T" where Nigerians were told by the then Federal Minister of Communications and also the former Federal Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Mr. Audu Ogbe that "the Federal Government is losing #50 million every month as salaries" to "ghost workers" (1983a, p. 59). The ghost workers saga has no near existential history in the Nigerian system. Unfortunately, then was when "a cultural facility" called "the Barbican Center" which cost £150 was built in London by Queen Elizabeth II but what Nigerians stole was more than this amount. What a pity! That was no surprise for in *Daily Times* of May 16, 1983 "mud and sand" had been imported in Lagos by a Nigerian (1983a, pp. 60-61). At this, I wonder what those of these legends who have died would say if they will return to Nigeria and see her condition today. I hear in other people's history that today is better than yesterday, but the very opposite is the case in Nigeria, even as I am writing now, yesterday was better than today and I know that today will be better than tomorrow. It is indeed very unfortunate. This is never hidden in the prices of food stuff like cup of garri or price, fuel pump price, a magi cube, an exercise book, a bag of cement, a tin of tomatoes, transport fares, electricity bills, Naira value against Dollars, sincerity in Nigerians, conscience, peace and understanding among the people, etc., even accessibility to some basic existential needs like water, shelter, cloths, etc. Even nature is against Nigerians. The experience hits the worst when you cannot still buy even in the midst of the high cost, and anything that its price goes in Nigeria never comes down. For instance, a paint of red garri is still #800 today in 90% Nigerian States never shall it come down to #250-300 as was in recent past years; instead it gets more costlier. Nigerians are too opportunistic in nature.

The Fundamental Problem as I See It

Problems become solvable when the subjects experiencing them become sincere to themselves about the problems. But the problems of Nigerians persist just because of their pretence over their problems. The

Nigerian problem, as this paper sees it, is cyclic in nature. The first phase is that something has ever been as a given, and that is corruption as a manifestation of man's evil nature. This corruption is what we see in both the electorates and the rulers but that of electorates precedes that of rulers which would later continue to sponsor that of the electorates. That of rulers works through devised means and tools ranging from god-fatherism, bad policies, imposition of rulers on the people via appointments and mediocrity in positions like the Local Government Chairmen, Councilors, among other political offices and other political influences and constant non-development attitude which includes willingly and purposefully refusing, but to their own surplus, to give the people basic needs of life (water, electric power, good roads, health and education facilities, good standard of living and mostly security for lives and properties in the society) etc. When all these are present, here arises the second phase which would inevitably play out in the people's lives which is poverty of the mind and pocket. The people now are, as consequences, handicapped and crushed in poverty of the intellect (illiteracy) and financial and economic stuck, having experienced hard life and denied good school. At this juncture, the rulers, having succeeded in the all-round-impoverishment of the people, during another election time, would quickly go into work/use with these established and institutionalized tools, and having known that the people are hungry, they come with cups of rice, tins of tomatoes, sachets of water and salt; having known that the people are very in need of health and school facilities and good roads (some who still have conscience) would clear one site and try to drop a trip of sand, stones, provide some bags of cement and tanks of water (which their members in the area would at last use for their own project) and then boldly inscribe "Work in Progress" at the entrance or better site so as to use them in continuous deception of the impoverished people, conniving with one contract company and situating them (un-working) at these various sites; knowing that the people really need water, electricity, new textile (cloths) and have some domestic equipments, they try to bring one damaged but repaired weak transformer that has been in use before Nigeria-Biafra War and finally "dash" the people, they would also bring umbrellas, caps, polo, shirts, plates and spoons, trays, cloths, cutleries, money that will end in a street bar just few minutes after the whole elections, so that they will have the people's another minimum four years of impoverishment. One thing these hungry electorates/masses forget is that any four years in Nigeria is invariably lineal eternity because within the tenure, all his reliance would be fixed, and you as an electorate has finished the one thousand Naira given to you, and you keep licking your own wound. So, thinking that they are no more there even when they are not physically, is an illusion because they have planned ahead and so, are indirectly still there. For them to ensure their steadiness, if they unfortunately miss the electorates, they still catch up through the members of the national electoral body who should, by expectation, still be non-partisan and among the masses. Through these people, "they force themselves on the people either by exploiting their ignorance or poverty by 'buying' the votes of the electorate" or the moral consciousness or conscience of these electoral managers. At last, the people end up selling their future four years to doom, hardship and hopelessness again still through these rulers who have plenty and excess and who have ever used the people's welfare, livelihood to play politics. However, sometimes, they apply force through the power of incumbency (as is the frequent case in Nigeria) by "re-appointing" (not electing) themselves and into the cycle. Same awful experiences in Nigeria cut across Africa as a continent.

Regrettably, the Nigerian masses/followers have been dealt with by the ruling class that anything is weaponized by these wicked and conscienceless politicians against them so as to subject them to hardship and gnashing of teeth provided they have their ways. They have been mentally and economically caged that they clap for ordinary solar energy street light mounted, waste bins stationed at few quarters, roads patched, not fully

rehabilitated or entirely reworked. They have lost their sense of political and governmental rights and privileges. They are happy with empowerments with five thousand Naira (\$12 US worth only), wheel barrows, shoe shining boxes for the Northerners, for gate keeping “employment”, for being stationed under the sun from morning till night and paid twenty thousand Naira (\$50 US worth only) a month, and other human extortions, while these people who have caged them receive salaries in millions, their immediate families and loved/closed relatives study and live in abroad, offices reserved for them in their absence and even for their unborn, and salaries received in millions in their names from those reserved offices. Look at this scenario, all in the name of “empowerment”, the Federal Government has initiated various means to include Farmer-Money, Trader-Money, Market-Money, N-Power, N-Tech, N-Agro, and any other “Trader and N-” whatever. These are media through which the jobless masses most of whom are Ph.D. holders are sponsored with five thousand Naira only, and when you must have returned it, you are now given ten thousand Naira, after returning it, you are given twenty thousand Naira, you are employed for six months or at most one year and you are dropped jobless again. Some of these “temporally” employed youths never knew where they are sent to, or worked there even for once. The money looted and re-looted in this whole irrational media from low-reasoning oligarchs, if put together, could be very advantageously used to erect five to ten very active industries and firms in every Nigerian State that could have more productively and genuinely engaged/absorbed these jobless youths. By the way, very few of these youths think why do not the children of these oligarchs join in these poor-initiated media of so-called “empowerment”. Surprisingly, all of us are tripping and trooping in to get something to eat at least, from these media because we no longer know what we deserve, our political rights and privileges hence the people with whom we call ourselves “citizens” (the ruling class) have succeeded in impoverishing and caging us in eternal abject poverty of mind and pocket. We are indeed living a terrible life style in Nigeria and Africa at large, and the only way out is opening the eyes of our thinking faculty (mind) and then revival and revolutionary movements. The extremism of the treacheries of the ruling class will always trigger the revolutionary stage for which Frantz Fanon says that “we revolt simply because, for many reasons, we can no longer breathe”. When the people can no longer breathe/bear it, having been pushed to the wall, revolution seriously beckons.

Still in this master-slave relationship, they give the hefty men among the youths peanut money to protect them to the wastefulness of their lives, clap for them for one thousand Naira (four or at most five bottles of alcoholic drinks worth). These political officers receive their salaries as government functionaries in millions, and this does not include allocations, allowances, and other privileges from projects, developmental infrastructures, and other resourceful means they gain from but a professor who is shrinking out of academic stress in the four walls of universities all in the name of teaching/grooming the future generation in his entire working age never receives what a Nigerian senator is paid in a month. So most of the SARS—like strike, teachers-students extortion through unofficial and unnecessary fees, etc.—we fight for their end are initiated through acts by these politicians but though are now perpetuated by the school lecturers/teachers who have been subject to inhumanity but who, as it were, have seen them as means of survival. So the situation of the Nigerian youths expresses the saying that when two elephants (government and other managers of other sectors, for instance, education/school) fight, the grasses (youths) suffer it, and the students among spend five years (a programme that would supposedly last for just one to one and half years) for Masters Programme in the Nigerian public/government universities. The poor Nigerian youths, by nature of the Nigerian system, are all victims of bad system and worst is that there is no sign of light at the tunnel end. That explains why the world

must never regard Nigerian political officers who rush to celebrate people with Nigerian descent who have made themselves proud as if it is the Nigerian system, pattern of breeding that sees for their well and commendable conducts that have earned them the global recognition. I laugh seeing the Nigerian Authority citing Philip Emeagwali, one of the most greatest modern scientist, Anthony Joshua, other achievers in boxing who are of Nigerian descent, footballers who have made tremendous waves in football games who are groomed in the foreign system, in health and scientific sector, the Nigerian Pharmacists Adebayo Alonge for developing an Artificial Intelligence (AI) that scans and detects fake and spoilt drugs in 15 seconds, UK-based Nigerian Chika Ofili for his mathematics discovery of a new formula for divisibility by 7, the Nigerian Radiologist Dr Samuel Achilefu who invented high-tech infrared goggles which enable surgeons to see cancerous cells during surgery, in the legal sector, the Nigerian lawyer David Ndudim for ascending to the Superior Court of California, USA, the Nigerian-Canadian Charles Osuji awarded among the top 25 Influential Lawyers in Canada for his contribution to the development and harnessing more of the Canadian Legal System hence the category of Legal Young Influencers, the Nigerian-Canadian Kelechi Madu for becoming the First Black Minister of Justice in the Canadian history, in the economic and management sector, the Nigerian-American Victor Agunbiade for managing \$45 US million cash with every dollar being accounted for, in the political sector, the (Kwara-Oyo parents) Nigerian-American, Adeoye Owolewa who won a Congress Seat in Washington D.C., the Ekiti lady, graduate of Harvard University, Esther Agbaje who was elected into the Minnesota State of Assembly, among many others. They forget to ask themselves the necessary question: had it been these people are here groomed in the Nigerian system, would they have achieved these efforts for which they are proud of them and their family members and friends are happy for and which Nigeria now claim their ancestorship and enjoy the fame? Or is it still a discourse exclusively left for out usual conception of *Akara-Aka* (predestination) (Ugwu, 2019, pp. 62-68). So, it is therefore ridiculous hearing Nigerian politicians claiming parenthood of these great achievers while the ones here in Nigeria are dying of hunger, struggling human existential rights with animals and are killed in their farms for scaring animals that destroy the agricultural products of their sweat in their farms, are at home for years because of strike, etc. Deceivers!

Therefore, the fundamental problem of Nigeria is the intellectual and financial impoverished electorates/masses/the ruled, who, on seeing cloths to wear, rice and spices to cook and eat, trips of sand, rocks and a tank of water in a cleared site and have been politically deceived again, end up directly or indirectly, perpetuating their own doom for a whole minimum of four years in future, there by instituting the authority whose leadership has ever been a failed one and characterized by an unwillingness to lead the people to where they are supposed to be. In other words, the problem of followership presupposes that of leadership. Show me a bad leadership and I will tell you a bad followership. That is to say that the problem is fundamentally the inability of the “impoverished” electorates/masses to keep glutton aside in the affairs of polity and refuse to be confused to sell their “welfare and livelihood destiny-fulfilling-possibility” based on the fact that “this one is our own person” and because of perpetual hunger and poverty they have been truly subjected to, by the conscienceless politicians.

Thus, whence this is now the order of the day, there comes the necessity for the final phase which insists that the electorates/masses must come out and suffer/risk it once and for all by “Saying a Unanimous NO” to this kind of impoverishment and inhumanity by refusing their “political gifts” and then putting or imposing the right person on them (these corrupt rulers) so as to put them out of public offices. This act is revolutionary and shows the awakening of political consciousness and awareness, realization of their political powerfulness and

ownership of powers in and among the masses—the people (especially the youths) of Nigeria. In this regard, it is now

crystal clear that we needed to fight this... enemy with everything at our disposal. Most important, Nigeria needed to identify the right leader with the right kind of character, education and background. Someone who would understand what was at stake—where Africa (Nigeria) had been, and where it needed to go (to). For the second time in our short history we had to face the disturbing fact that Nigeria needed to liberate itself anew, this time not from a foreign power but from our own corrupt, inept brothers and sisters.

Cautiously, to address this problem, we must avoid what Achebe calls “tribal politics” and Uzoewulu terms “money bags in politics” or “food is ready politics” which is all about the “government of stomach infrastructure or food scratchers”. If this revolutionary process, movement conquers the inability of the caged masses to denounce the continuity of the caging, and some among them whose financial buoyancy could be rated average to reject gluttony and stand as a unified team with the ruled-team, then the revolution is already an achievement. Many countries paid the supreme price through such revolutionary movement and today, they are reaping from the struggle. The agitation for the Nigerian-restructuring or secession of the South-Eastern Nigeria (Biafran State) by the Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB) or generally Bafrans shook the whole country and opened many hidden agenda by the ruling class planned to the detriment of the ruled. The #REVOLUTIONNOW that short lived as it were and the recent and even still-ongoing #ENDSARSNOW revolutionary in Nigeria portrayed the effectiveness and reality of the theory we are proposing here—that power, the fate and future of the country belong to the masses, the electorates who decide the future of these corrupt politicians who have messed up and rumbled beyond identifiability, the dignity and nationhood of Nigeria as a country. The #ENDSARSNOW agitation revealed hidden warehouses across the nation where the Coronavirus (COVID-19) palliatives with the inscriptions “COVID-19 Palliatives, Not for Sales” provided for the masses by some conscientious individuals and organizations are hoarded by the ruling class with the intention of using them for their political campaigns/rallies in the next elections while the mentally and pocket wise enslaved masses are dying of hunger, frustration, inaccessibility to basic needs of life like medical care, security, roads, among other social facilities which life hardly excels without. These ills meted to the masses facilitated the ground of possibility for the “hijack” of the #ENDSARS by some criminal minded elements among the people/masses protesting against the injustice against them—an expression of the saying that an idle mind is tempted to be evil-focused. SARS means “Special Anti-Rubbery Squad”, and it is a section of the Nigerian Police arm of the National Security Agency under the Executive Arm of government “powerfully and authoritatively” headed with every “agility and virility” by the President—the Grand Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federation. The protest against SARS and ending it is primarily occasioned by police brutality, incessant killings, extortions, and intimidations of Nigerians, but secondarily, the killings and integrity-reduction of the military, to even queue up on the high ways collecting moneys, carrying out militarily killings and qualifying the evil and criminal incidents with simple grammar “accidental discharge” while the victim is lying in his/her own pool of blood dead, unprofessionalism among the Nigerian security agents, extortions, bribery and corruption and all the ills perpetuated by security personnel—customs, Road Safety Corps, Civil Defense, immigration, military and paramilitaries—Navy, Air Force, etc. Still on the secondary level of the meanings and implications of SARS, it means stop political god-fathersm, rigging, marginalization of some regions that a university prospective candidate in the Southern region will score 300 yet no admission

offer to him/her but 120 in the North will get, religious marginalization against the African Traditional Religion (ATR) that Christianity and Islam would have commissions and sponsorship to pilgrimage, their Holy Books/Scriptures (Bible and Quran) used as means of official oath-taking into political and even non-political offices in Nigeria, but no such consideration is given to the local (ATR) counterpart, rejecting restructuring (insistence on the same wrong ancient system) yet expecting different attitudes (results) from the citizens, not providing basic amenities that life cannot do without, to the people, lecturers' unwarranted strike, neglecting the government labourers/workers—civil servants, not consolidating the dignity of labour, unjust/regional appointments motivated by mediocrity/emotion rather than merit, illiterates rulership, “borrow-borrow” government, unaccountability to the masses whose interests expectedly you represent in the government, insensitivity to the existential plights and quagmire of the masses, not accepting your failure and apologizing and step down (resign) for a capable hand and head, giving rights to even animals, ghost workers saga which is primarily traceable to the rulers and their excessive exercise of political powers and privileges, unprofessionalism due to their illiteracy towards the management of the economy of the country, tribal politics, generally bad governance, among other ills that are rampant and peculiar to and in Nigeria. By this broad meanings and implications, SARS, against which the populace/masses agitated, has become a concept, an ideology and course for which the people conceives worth dying, fundamentally menaces hindering the people's welfare and livelihood and an expression of accumulated grudges and anger, and a medium through which the people's voice was heard thereby becoming a democratic concept and way of restructuring and putting democracy and good governance in better shapes. Nonetheless, the agitations cited above are great and outstanding revolutionary movements in Nigeria in her democratic dispensation that shook Nigeria to her existential marrow as a country, and have revealed many ugly happenings. Even though the “Federal Might” has scuttled the process, nonetheless, the country has worn a sort of new face as the people's voice has once been unanimously heard. Such movements bring about very corrupt-minimized, humane, real and functioning democratic, conscientious, truly loving and caring society. They are signs of the people's realization of their democratic and human rights and their exercises, and the awareness of their ownership of political powers and a reinstating, reaffirmation and re-proclamation that indeed power belongs to the people, not the rulers (leaders). Failure of this realization, consciousness in the national politicking implies the continuity of the fundamental problem of and in Nigeria and indeed Africa, and the mistake of attributing the problem to rulership (leadership) cause. Americans just exercised theirs and spoke against the incumbent president—Donald J. Trump but for Joe Biden. Be that as it may, the real big question is: now that the people's voice (youth) has been heard, the follow-up reactions are the big concerns now. The government has demanded time for re-strategy to attend to the people's voice, will the youths/populace keep quiet or end #ENDSARS agitation, and till when before they swim into actions if the government does not respond and justly, to all the SARS (as enumerated above) against which they have agitated? I am just bewildered at Buhari's congratulatory message (on 10/11/2020 shortly after the results of big determining States like Washington D.C., Pennsylvania and Michigan, among other States were officially announced by the American electoral body) to Biden reiterating that the “political powerful” is the electorate, not the leaders, for the political fate of politicians and the elected leaders hugely lie with the people/electorates. That presupposes that the elected leaders are only but “errands” for the citizenry/electorates and who are compensated with certain “remunerations” for their errand for the masses/electorates and for encouragement to keep going on the errand more adequately for the citizenry. Morally speaking, to which

extent has president Buhari realistically conducted his attitudes towards national affairs in line with this factual expression/message conveyed in his congratulation to Biden? That is still another clear behavioural disposition of self-deception. We know the “good” in Nigeria and how (theoretically) to “act” the “good”, but unfortunately, we never did even for once. It is a pity indeed! Cautiously however, the populace/electorates must be weary of politicization of the movement through “rubbing fat” the palms of the Platonic “soldiers/guardians/courageous” among them who would come back and dispense the “oil” on the palms of certain key and influential stakeholders among them and the movement would die a natural death. This scenario, in every exactitude, played out during #ENDSARSNOW movement where the protest-hijackers are hired by some of these treacherous rulers to blackmail the genuine course⁹. As plan B, when this may fail, they opt for employing armed forces to waste lives of the defenceless citizens who even held high their national flag, through bullets as exemplified in the Lekki Toll Gate killings of 20/10/2020, among other incidents. As negatively “diplomatic” as they are, they also would be ready to deny, every evidence provided by world recognized media like British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), etc., of having hands in such sacrilege to modern-era and democratic principles, today, agree tomorrow, deny next tomorrow and so on. That simply showed how logical, reasonable, patriotic, diplomatic, democratic, humanistic and truthful they “really” are. But no matter how they deny, we know the truth for we are both the subjects and objects of the experience. This is Nigeria, we are “Nigerians” and nobody knows Nigeria more than we. But then, that is the fundamental problem in discourse here, where we propose that if these set of influencers among the populace/electorates could reject the temptation of gluttony and risk it all provided the right thing emerges then the movement is already a success. Human nature is a conglomeration of dynamics—of good and bad.

This juncture calls up for the interaction with a basic question: why should there still remain corruption after all these analysis and prescriptions that are at once dialectical and revolutionary in nature? The fact remains that there is no way corruption as an aspect of evil especially as it concerns politics, will be totally eradicated from the society because it is natural and as a course, part of man’s life. It can only be minimized with: (1) sincerely listening to the conscience; (2) getting the intellect enlightened and critically or philosophically and morally consciously developed. Education or academic enterprise has a lot to do with the sense of moral conduct, responsibility, justice and sincere attitudes in man. Knowing full well the necessity of education and politics to human life, I commend the Greek geniuses—Socrates who opines that knowledge (virtue) must be sought for, if man really wants to bring, to a bare, evil (vices) in the society, and Plato who conceives politics as the master of all sciences and human involvements and which man must be extremely careful with, for any mistake in politics is, in consequence, a mistake in all aspects of man’s life because political power determines the fate and welfare of man in all ramifications. Negative and unreasonable political policies we make are part of our present problems in Nigeria. Thus, at its very primacy, the first step to bring revolution in the society is to bring about revolution in the educational sector of the society. Nigeria is dead and the acts coming out from Nigeria are unwise because the educational sector in Nigeria is dead. That is why she is an epitome of self-contradiction and her citizens say a thing and end up doing another thing. They are intellectually not equipped with a standardized required knowledge that can bring about transformation like the one that transformed Europe they are trying to emulate. Therefore, the eradication of these illiterates from the

⁹ <https://www.vanguardngr.com> and <https://www.m.youtube.com> 20/10/2020; <https://www.thisisafrica.me> and <https://www.saharareporters.com> 15/10/2020; <https://www.indepthnews.net> 22/10/2020; <https://www.bbc.com> 28/10/2020; <https://www.roape.net> 12/11/2020; <https://www.globalvoices.org> 6/11/2020.

political and governance system is the ultimate task facing the Nigerian populace. A good and quality society is measured by the level of practical intellectuality experienced in that society. In a society that her education sector is dead and has rotten, what we see there is a high level of intellectual disorganization and poor reasoning, speeches and attitudes. That is to say that the “character of a state is the result of the character of its inhabitants”, or put in another way, “the virtues of the state are the virtues of its citizens in so far as these are exercised in the interest of the whole” (Plato, 1866, pp. xxxiii-viii). And (3) again, we must bear in mind that educational revolution has to consider the philosophy of “think-home” and has its curriculum being home-considerate so that we do not end up producing products that are not adequate in tackling the social challenges arising from the environment where the products are groomed. That is the first step to reasonably consider in educational revolutionary. Nevertheless, the accomplishment of this strategy must recognize the difficulty in the fact that man is naturally evil which can be expressed in his bias tendencies. Finally, the fact of individuality is another challenge because it plays out in individual’s conceptions, volitional inclinations and attitudinal approaches.

Indeed, what I have tried to prove is to point the fundamental, the mother-problem of Nigeria from where other problems take their root. I will further the research to enumerate some of the most affecting problems of Nigeria in their practical occurrences which include:

Political God-Fatherism/Wrong Display of Political Prowess

This is a neo-indirect rule and neo-colonialism in clothing. It has ever made us to have “robot” rulers who can only exercise their freedom of thinking but can never say and do anything on their own, but say and do the ones ordered by he who secures a political office for them. It is a very terrible sort of governance. But what do Nigerians expect as gains from anybody who has spent trillions in securing a political office after he must have been rigged in to the office? It is an utmost foolishness expecting anything reasonable as an achievement from such corruption-epitomized person.

Erroneous Constitutional Foundation

After the amalgamation, a Law called “Royal Charter” was made in July 1886 by the British government, granted to “Goldier Company”—a Tubleman (George) Goldie’s which would later change its name to “Royal Niger Company”. This Charter was solely for the interest of the powerful—the colonialists and was at the basic formation of constitutions ever made in Nigeria till 1960 and 1963 when we got independence and republic respectively. We did not change the constitution rather grammars were altered and placed in another places and we went on with it till military era throughout, and now, in democracy, it is still what we are using. Because the structure of colonialism was designed that only the colonizers were cared for, the neo-colonialists, the positioned Nigerians in the political offices are the ones cared for and constitutionally protected. The Nigerian constitution in every “oughtness” must be changed for the cares only for the ruling class and not inclusive the ruled class thereby perpetuating the typical relationship of master-slave one.

Nigerian Identity

Obasanjo once said: “Our first sacred duty is the preservation of the cooperate entity of Nigeria with different identities being recognized and preserved”¹⁰. The deductible implication is the fact that Nigeria as an entity is a product of “force” hence, there will be no unity (likened to peace) in such aggression-filled-unity. From the Federal Prime Minister, Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, we hear:

¹⁰ Obasanjo, O. General. (1993). *The Guardian*. 9(5745).

Since 1914, the British Government has been trying to make Nigeria into one country, but the Nigerian people themselves are historically different in their background, in their religious beliefs and customs and do not show themselves any sign of willingness to unite... Nigerian unity is only a British intention for the country¹¹.

This implicates the idea that

sixty years ago, there was no country called Nigeria. What is now Nigeria consisted of a number of large and small communities all of which were different in their outlooks and beliefs. The advent of the British... has not materially altered the situation and the many and varied communities have not knit themselves into a composite unit¹².

Not even westernization of Africa through British advent in Africa and western education could genuinely unify Nigerian peoples. The only factor nearer to daring this impossibility is religion, but in as much as Nigerians are not all Islamized, then there is never a composite unified Nigerians¹³. These are facts which all the “peoples—supposed different countries” blended “Nigerians” know well. However, suffice it to conclude Sir Bello’s perception of and about Nigeria thus:

Many Nigerians deceive themselves by thinking that Nigeria is one, particularly some of the press people. This is wrong. I am sorry to say that this presence of unity is artificial and it ends outside the Chamber. The Southern “tribes” who are now pouring into the North in ever increasing numbers, and are more or less domiciled here do not mix with the Northern people, and we in the North look upon them as invaders. (Coleman, 1958, p. 361)

Blending your fellow citizen “invaders” shows how deeply sunk (in our mentality) and accepted, our citizenship and how unified a people, we “really” are. Expressing his own observation vis-à-vis the Nigerian identity search, Awolowo (1947, pp. 47-48) said:

Nigeria is not a nation; it is a mere geographical expression. There are no Nigerians in the same sense as there are English, Welsh or French. The word “Nigeria” is merely a distinctive appellation to distinguish those who live within the boundaries of Nigeria from those who do not.

These citations prompt such identity enquiries expressed in the following questions. Does Nigeria have an identity? What are the bases for the identity if it has? With what and how can it be identified among the League of Nations? What really is the identity of a Nigerian? Religion or language or culture and tradition or love or even hate? Today the penetrations of Cameroonians, Chadians, Nigerians into Nigeria and Nigerians claiming the identity of other country to travel to European countries display what we mean here by the Nigerian identity problem and confinement/jurisdictional boundaries also. This problem has a lot to do with the issue of migration, transcultural justice and equally raises some ethical questions. Who are then really Nigerians and by which general-Nigerian-identity are they identified? There have been reports of non-Nigerians ruling Nigerians and many others seeking for more political offices¹⁴. Luckily, this allegation was confirmed in the words of Sir. Ahmadu Bello, the then Sardauna of Sokoto who, speaking to the media years back, once said:

The new nation called Nigeria should be an estate of our great grandfather Uthman Dan Fodio. We must ruthlessly prevent a change of power. We use the minorities in the north as willing tools and the South as a conquered territory and never allow them to rule over us and never allow them to have control over their future¹⁵.

¹¹ <https://www.thisdaylive.com> edited 28/2/2020.

¹² <https://www.motivation.africa> edited 5/5/2020.

¹³ <https://www.laits.utexas.edu> USA/Africa Dialogue, No. 342: The Mother of all Conferences?

¹⁴ *The Sun*, Tuesday 5/8/2003, 33.

¹⁵ Benilily, “Sir Ahmadu Bello’s Statement” made in *The Parrot Newspaper* on October 12, 1960, Days after Independence. Accessed from <https://www.nairaland.com/1977382/sir-ahmadu-bellos-statement-made> 2/10/2018.

The “we” here referred to his Fulani kith and kin whose progenitor was Dan Fodio—an Arab, and who have besieged and caged Nigeria in every aspect be it security, economy, politics, religion, agriculture, etc., as their own property, after all, ruling others is their destiny and birth right and doing anything to perpetuate this course is religiously justifiable hence jihad. It is still based on this Nigerian identity crisis that we must revisit Buhari’s conduct towards the election of the substantive Secretary-General of the Organization of African Union (OAU) during the 1985 Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia where he voted against a Benue Statesman (Nigerian) whom Julius Nyerere even lobbied for, Peter Onu for a fellow tribesman from Niger Republic, Ide Oumarou¹⁶. This single act portrayed Mr. Buhari, the first and only Head of State in the history of modern international relations to vote against his country in favour of his tribesman—Fulani. His patriotism, allegiance, faithfulness and trust have always been for his fellow tribesmen and Islamic courses rather than what is Nigerian. This attitude stands out as a reference point to the Nigerian identity crisis and tribal allegiance as against the Nigerian forced nationhood. Be that as it may, we must recall that the question of identity is indeed an existential one and borders on personality too.

Centralization of Power

In Nigeria¹⁷, there are too much and absolute power which corrupts absolutely in the center allotted to the Executive—the President precisely which has made him, his appointees and loyalists untouchable and *odara iwu eje nga* (preferential treatment) leading to the whole Hobbesian Leviathan. By this, every Nigerian citizen is enslaved to a single person—the president. At the final analysis, no one’s right is free but streamlined to the officialdom and power of the president. Borrowing from Obasanjo, a former president of Nigeria, even the Vice President is “boy boy” (servant) to the president. All these are rooted in the tenets expressible in and from the Nigerian constitution. It is all about the Thrasymachus’ position that “Power/Might is Right/Justice”. Anyone who is found outside the corridor of power is already a victim and object of history-making in the hands of the powerful. Laws are like cobwebs, they catch only ants, but not bigger animals. This is one of the worst Nigerian fundamental problems that differentiates her democracy from every others, militarized-unitary-democracy. It is the base for restructuring agitation having seen clearly that every Nigerian is caged to one person, and the States (component units) are handicapped and powerless to the whims and caprices of the federating unit. However, another stumbling block is that the Northerners believe they are born and destined to rule, and would never allow the idea of restructuring for that amounts to dissolution and balkanization of their political powers and jurisdictions of their effectiveness. You would not restructure, you would concede to secessionist demand of some regions for self-government, we would remain in an old system that does not picture the reality of the Nigerian environment. It is based on this view that one Former Nigerian Minister of External Affairs, Prof. Bolaji Akinyemi contends that #ENDSARSNOW protest may resurface because of restructuring-rejection by the Federal Government¹⁸. Nigeria has myriads of problems that one may not be wrong if argued that Nigeria is itself an embodiment of problem—political, religious, economic, etc.

Heavenly-Earthly Government

In Nigeria, we see the political rulers, even traditional rulers naming a quite considerable numbers and even geographical locations of States and Countries abroad where they have visited and how lives are

¹⁶ <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/02/23/dagashi-i-the-oau-reality-or-fiction-2006/>; <https://www.chxta.medium.com>.

¹⁷ 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as Amended, Sections 80, 81, 130.

¹⁸ <https://www.nairametrics.com/2020/10/28/>.

practically felt and lived there, but on the other hand, they can neither name how many Villages, Communities, Wards, Councils, Local Governments or States there are in their own Places and Country nor coming home and experiencing with the people what they are feeling so as to knowing how they are living their pitiable lives in the village, yet, they represent the people of these places at Abuja and different State Assembly Houses. They only come “close” to the followers/masses (amidst heavy and intimidating security yet) when it is time to lure them again to the way of deception, the time of election. Conclusively, critically looking at the scenario, the typical relationship that exists between the ruling class, both political and traditional ones alike, is that of master-slave relationship. They visit the ruled, the followers who are left to the wickedness of the world from both human beings and emanations from the dungeon they have been left in and they have no option than to live there in and adapt. They know they would not live in such messed-up environment for a day without being dead and even when they visit they return to base (developed cities) and still rush to hospital for re-examination. None cares about the fate and future of these people who have been there, in the rural, undeveloped villages throughout their lives, yet it is on their mandate that you screwed your way to that “heaven” where in you are living and enjoying. A question of consumerism and existential dependency on the “external/outsider” instead of “internal” struggles for a better future, again arise in such life. Conclusively however, in Nigeria, as well as Africa in general, if you are not in the coverage of political power, you are already gone.

Tribalism

Because Nigeria has never been really one as a unit because there is never a necessitating base for that, the unity of Nigeria [which Asika Ukpabi described as “an absolute good” (Achebe, 1983a, p. 32)] remains, if and only if “our people” are at the head and “we” control every sector and gain in all angles. This informs Madiebo’s assertion that owing to the effectiveness of tribalism, “the federation of Nigeria, as it exists today, has never really been one homogenous country, for its widely different people and tribes are yet to find any basis for their unity” (1980, p. 3). So, in tribalism are our pretending unity, patriotism and joy of nationhood. Even among the nationalists, their nationalism is based on tribe and religion. The then Sardauna of Sokoto, Sir Ahmadu Bello in expressing his perception of and about Nigeria has this to say: “North for the Northerners, East for the Easterners and West for the Westerners” (Nze, 1994, p. 7). Having found the truth and likening his position to that of Sir Bello, Ojukwu notes that “Nigeria never was and can never be a united country. The very nature of Nigeria inevitably gave rise to political power groups, goaded by sectional rather than national interest... Nigeria was not united, the Nigerians knew it” (Ojukwu, 1969, pp. 1, 5; Agbo, 2016, p. 48). From Gowon we hear that “putting all considerations to test—political, economic as well as social—the base for unity is not there or is so badly wrote [sic], not once, but several times” (Agbo, 2016, p. 48). These were statements from figures who are today referred to as nationalists. Tribalism was that which Yoruba taught to the Igbo through Azikiwe and the Igbo in retaliation taught it to the South South through IyeIita, and even till today, the Buhari’s All Progressive Congress (APC) led federal government never left it unpractical. A fact Nigeria always bury is that the force (unity) from tribe, no doubt, is more genuine than the force (unity) from the forced nationhood of/from Nigeria because there are more justified basis for that. This fact has always played out even in the subconscious minds of Nigerians. For instance, in an interview response on the Niger Deltan crisis and generally Southern related challenges, Buhari says that he would give only 5% attention to the South but 95% attention to the North following the number of votes got in these two regions. This is an outstanding issue on the discourse on tribalism as a Nigerian negative factor.

Religion

Religion is a huge Nigerian, African issue that has more divided, alienated us socially, intellectually, developmentally, economically, uprooted us moral-consciously, politically, culturally and otherwise, than it has united us. In Nigeria, religious unity is in arithmetic order but its disunity is in geometric order. Almost every issue has its own religious perspective in Nigeria. In fact, its disunity has skyrocketed to the extent that family respect seems to base on religious affiliations today. In some families, it is not impossible to see all the members belonging to different religious faiths, consequent upon that, even respect in the family appears to follow “who share the same religious belief with me”. To its extremism, this factor is too common to see with the Muslims owing to the fact that their respect and allegiance are first to their religion and tribe than to national courses. An instance is cited with Mr. Buhari who in August 2001 in a speech delivered at a seminar organized by the Supreme Council of Sharia in Nigeria says: “I will continue to show openly and inside me the total commitment to the Sharia movement sweeping all over Nigeria... God willing we will not stop the agitation for the total implementation of the Sharia in the country”. Among the Northern political elites, one may not be far from the truth by positing that there has never been a true nationalist, patriot, but ethnic and religious bigots and fanatics. Even among the so attributed “Nigerian Founding Fathers” which though I have disputed in the earlier part of this work, we see this core undivided allegiance to religion than national issues. In some core Islamic Northern States, Sharian Law is supreme and applicable on daily basis, than the almighty Constitution of the “Federal Republic of Nigeria”. Hear this testimony from a Northern figure of Nigerian nationhood founding father as recorded by scholars (Kenny, 1982, p. 33; Agbo, 2016, p. 47; Asadu, 2018; P. O. O. Ottuh, J. A. Ottuh, & Aitufe, 2014, p. 54): “Holding this country together is not possible, except by means of the religion of the prophet (Mohammed). If they want political unity, let them follow our religion (Islam)”. Putting it more succinct, Sir Bello says again: “These southerners who desire a united Nigeria should first embrace Islam as their religion” (Agbo, 2016, p. 47).

Un-allowance of Criticism/Un-listening Government

It is a factual experience that the Nigerian governments are very insensitive to plights of the people and so, never listens and allows public opinions because of two most important reasons: first, too much politicking and politicization in the system; and second, you do not expect the might, the Leviathan to come down and listen to you as a citizen. Because the absolute has the “almighty political power”, you do not criticize what “she” does/says because that is tantamount to either “Hate Speech” which is now a capital offence, or “Fake News”. If it escapes being a Hate Speech, we must then ignore it because it is nothing buy just an expression of bias or sentiments from the opposition. If it extricates these, then we must get the mouth/hand of the speaker/doer shut/cut by hook or crook and imprison him or if he is under the immunity clause as a sitting opposing authority, we must use the “executive” power and intimidation to track him down to show him that he may be the head at the State level but we are at the federal level. The opposition has no say, the country is owned by the absolute and her loyalists, yet we are in democracy.

Diplomacy Question

“Diplomacy” which should be showing our intellectuality and expertise in managing national and international relations/issues, is, in Nigeria, all about telling lies and keeping “executive” silence in the face of truth and abomination and that is why we cannot differentiate between diplomacy and lies. To our ignorance or perhaps our enthusiasm or lips-service to become noticed by authority, one of the negative effects of our

diplomacy is that we end up selling our dignity and blackmailing our image provided we pay this lips-service or tell this lie to the world.

Greed

This, as a mother-corruption, is fundamental in the history of Nigerian problems. It masterminds oligarchy where few sell the welfare of their fellows provided they eat. It has made some to insist and show unreasonably their over zealousness towards power and has brought about bloody experience. It has encouraged political (party) prostitution, inconsistency and unfaithfulness and how our politicians play with our welfare and has equally exposed their ignorance in some areas of life. It has encouraged betrayals and mediocrity, *eze agwuagwu/eze akonam* (political power greed) syndrome, conscienceless attitudes, egoism, classist society and finally led to solipsism—the idea of *so m bu mmadu* (only me is human) where as every other person is non-human and therefore, any act is due to them.

Official Negligence and Carelessness

A very challenging situation in Nigeria is the fact of sycophancy among the political rulers. When a ruler emerges, the next day he goes to Europe to submit himself and get the “real confirmation and accreditation” of his political status. He keeps travelling all over Western countries to the detriment of his official responsibilities. I think they come to congratulate a king in his palace, but in Nigeria, the king goes round begging for consent of his fellows “outside”, and at last, none will be seen in his palace. And to concretize this sycophancy, he would end up molding these fellow visited kings (with the people’s money, with no question and accountability at last) in strategic places in Nigerian government quarters. The attractive glory that should be there has thus been sold and undignified.

Illiteracy

This is the state of being intellectually blind. Having succeeded in bluntly refusing to build schools let alone standard ones and standardizing the educational system so that it could still be used in the next campaign, illiteracy is so inevitable. The rulers themselves are not literate and this is clear in their attitudes and manners of approach to national issues. So, for them to equally hide their illiteracy, they deny the younger generations good education so that they would continue to blindly rule them and they would be blindly following them. In Nigeria, because of ephemeral gifts and tribal politics, we choose sick and retired and tired military octogenarian and village herder who has no O’ Level certificate over a young Ph.D. holder and active lecturer. Nigerians are terrible set of people who appear to delight in darkness/backwardness, and it gets worst and most annoying among the youths, and I become weary about the Nigerian future.

Curriculum Problem

Of course the whole idea of curriculum came with formal education system which came with the colonialists; and to make their mission successful, they trained our people only for interpretation, primary mathematics and little clerical jobs. “No effort was made to train skilled man power who could harness the abundant natural resources in the (African) environment” (Ebie, 2015, p. 44) and this explains why Clarke insists that Nigeria must change her Europeanist Curriculum which is a subtle means to instill and sustainably keep the European imperialism, colonialism and slavery-influence alive, and this serves as a hallmark to the bad historiography and misrepresentation, disorientation and misinformation of us and to the world and the whole movement of “colonization of information” (Clarke, 1991 cited in Diop, p. xvii). Nigerian curriculum

must picture the Nigerian realities and that is not obtainable in the Nigerian academic curriculum for it is focused on grooming certified graduates instead entrepreneurial and self-dependent skilled graduates for both human and natural exploitations.

Unsafe of the Citizens' Works

We now propose by encouraging entrepreneurship and creativity in our curriculum, but it is a problem when people's works—products of their intellectuality and critical thinking—could not be seriously protected constitutionally. Nigerian government has given a less concern to the cries of the citizens whose ownership of their intellectual works have been denied of them. In fact, piracy and plagiarism have even become an occupation to some Nigerians. That is why some now resort to “yahoo” and “Picking Pocket” and all sorts of atrocities and illegal engagements even outside Nigeria where they think that they can “blow” easily and these, entirely boil down to the question of the real Nigerian image.

Expensive Government

It is an undeniable fact that Nigeria is excessively rich; but we must also remember that riches do not come and retain by its acquisition and mismanagement. Perhaps we now choose to dwell in an expensive government system because in the past, we have told the world that we have so much but did not know how to spend it. Each upper and lower chamber members, some of whom even without any university degree, receives summarily at least a salary of #20,000,000.00 and #15,000,000.00 monthly respectively¹⁹. Ministers, Ambassadors, Personal Aides, Commissioners, etc. are not yet discussed, their allowances and other official privileges which run in millions are excluded. But these are people who say they “love” and “care” for the poor masses! Presidents and Governors (and perhaps their assistants) are placed on life pension of at least for that of Governors #10,000,000.00 every month. While in other countries teachers precisely knowing the value of education are the highest paid, the Nigerian political office occupants are the highest paid; and if not the highest, among the top three paid in the world. Ironically, the Nigerian civil servants, including teachers are, if not the lowest [having #18,000 (not the #30,000 official government statement) as their effective minimum wage], among the top three lowest paid globally. But these are people who claim they know the value of education and want to invest in education and human development. All these are the insincerities inherent in the Nigerian constitution and because they favour the political/ruling class, none of them wants to alter it—constitutional review to release and relief ourselves of this anti-democratic and anti-human right constitutional cage. With ordinary school certificate (O' Level) (unfortunately even most of them do not have but were squeezed in, in the cycle through political god-fatherism), you can become the president, senator, etc. hence you have got to certain ages. Even at this, there is no retirement age for them (be it constitutional or otherwise), yet the jobless and or hungry/unpaid professors, Ph.D., Masters holders, in their teaching/lecturing job in Nigeria, among other civil servants, workers even in non-governmental institutions, have retirement age. Nigeria, what is the retirement age for your political office holders? The expression-of-interest-form or nomination-form of political parties for presidency is sold #27 million (2015) and #55 million (2019) perhaps, by 2013 elections, it will be around #100 million. At this, I would ask if this is really form-for-nomination-and-inclusion or elimination and exclusion (of the poor who may politically perform better than those who can afford it—having accumulated it already from the system). This is clearly corruption-encouragement for the winner has to pay back and settle

¹⁹ <https://www.qz.com> 15/5/2017, <https://www.cfr.org> 20/3/2018, <https://www.allafrica.com> 27/6/2019.

first, before doing anything for the masses. In fact, most of our political officers are conscienceless thieves—beasts in humanity and morally dwarf and still dwindling even on daily basis. These political officers are never owed, but a professor who toils round the walls of the class rooms and school environments clearly working hardly is paid peanuts and most of them owed for years and months. We must determine to stop self-deceit.

Politicization of Non-political Organizations

One of the ugliest and harmful Nigerian problems is the politicization of Non-Governmental Organizations, the military, security agencies, Legal System, and Civil Societies alike which should be there to mediate between political (ruling class) and non-political (ruled class) entities. That is why we see the revenue of a non-governmental organization being squandered by the heads (chosen ones of these politicians), yet they are covered and even when the case gets tough, they run to these politicians and be rewarded more with higher positions. We politicize socio-political structures used for attitudinal corrections in the political management of the country. This is clear when we politicize civil agitations (unarmed) in the Southern hemisphere like the IPOB, Niger Deltan agitation, etc., and officially proscribe them terrorists, and then the real terrorists, the Islamic extremists—Boko Haram members are caught, pardoned, pampered and offered scholarship to them to travel abroad, and some, integrated into the security agencies. Little wonder the level of reckless and conscienceless brutality, intimidation and unprofessionalism in the security system and the world's conception of us as a terrorist country. Terrible indeed!

Executive Disobedience

In Nigeria, the citizens are advised to be law-abiding for if anyone is caught going against the law, he shall be punished. But Nigerian citizenship is of two: those who are above the law yet they make, enforce and interpret it; and those who are ever under the mercy of the wickedness of the other citizens hidden in the law. For instance, how many Nigerian rulers or these capitalists queue when there is traffic jam or obey the traffic light command? They would take the opposite lane and still hit your car and yell at you intimidatingly, hit your car to a point of damage, create social nuisance and pollution with their siren and all the executive alerts and noise and then bravely zoom off to demonstrate power and strength as personnel in the executive arm, after all, they are armed and you know what it means as a Nigerian. But I am personally always happy seeing them being handicapped in intimidating people on their lane and getting stuck amidst traffic and shamefully within some minutes of reality of the situation that they could not go any further and the siren noise still blowing, shameful switch it off and then leave the rotating light, and even to an extent, still switch it off and then forced to rest. That is the reality of life, but regrettably, they never learnt that. Political and executive ego will always hinder them from grasping this reality. Achebe (1983a, pp. 55-56) told his experience of such “executive” disobedience when orders were not only violated but also the less privileged citizens inhumanly intimidated. Nigerians are always intoxicated by the power/authority in a little opportunity granted to them into the domain of management of public affairs.

Self-deception/Contradiction

It is said that “Integrity is telling myself the truth, Honesty is telling other people the truth”. Woe to he who says there is peace when there is no peace. Chief Ahmed Bola Tinubu—a national force in the ruling party—All Progressives Congress (APC) whom we believe can do something positive having seen this problem—once concluded it this way:

We say we are a federal republic, we are not; we are unitary and over centralized because all the powers lie with the Federal Government at the center. We say we are a republic, yet the royal fathers draw funds from the state treasury. We are a secular state, yet we sponsor people to Israel and Saudi Arabia every year. We are in self-denial²⁰.

We expect more from him now that he is an influential figure in the ruling party, but disappointedly, we saw self-deception. Same could also be said of many Nigerian rulers to include President Buhari on issues like security and economy through agriculture, former Presidents—Chief Olusegun Obasanjo and Dr. Goodluck Jonathan on the issues of Local Governments dysfunctionality owing to their enslavement by the State Governments and political malpractices respectively, Former Speaker of House of Representatives—Yakubu Dogara on the issue of weaponization (leading to enslavement/weakness) of democratic institutions, present Culture and Information Minister—Lai Mohammed on the issue of Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strikes and security, Northern political elites (Leader of Northern Elders Forum—Prof. Ango Abdullahi, Kano State Governor—His Excellency Abdullahi Ganduje, among others) on the issues of restructuring or power devolution and political offices zoning, among many Nigerian prominent figures who saw the negativity of the Nigerian tomorrow, but when in power to renew the national-dying-face, suddenly become corrupted and dumb²¹. Factually as Nigerian factors, all the heavyweights of the ruling party know very well the problems of this country, when in opposition, they weaponize them against the ruling party, but when the mantle of leadership is given to them, all those identified problems are no more problems, and as serious as it could be, many get to defend them with every logic and grammar possibly seen in them. We caution we must change our ways of doing things yet there will be no restructuring in our system because it is against a region and a subtle way of dividing the indivisible and indissoluble. The 97% of Northerners reject restructuring movement for many reasons: religiously, for Islamization or better still Fulanization of the country, politically, for holding power as “humble and loyalists” to Britain, economically, to keep feeding from the mono-source economy (oil) from the Southern Region—for they have no or little of it, secondly to keep getting the lion share as they believe in the politics of number—twenty five States are from the North and in the National Assembly, three quarter are from the North and so are allocations being pumped there to the detriment of the real owners of the oil. We must determine to stop self-deceit and contradictions for it can lead us to nowhere. The General Overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Pastor Enoch Adeboye at the 60th Independence Day Celebration Symposium co-organized by his Church and the Nehemiah Leadership Institute has called for restructuring to avoid possible breakup of the country²², but the Presidency quickly through the Senior Special Assistant on Media and Publicity, Malam Garba Shehu saying that the alteration is unhelpful to the Nigerian situation and as condemned as very unpatriotic and as a result, that the Federal Government must never succumb to restructuring pressure coming from all the corners in the country²³. Surprisingly, tomorrow when it does not favour these people in politics now, they would turn to this truth and pick it and then use it to blast the incumbent government. This is the typical level of our insincerity and how we play politics with the people’s welfare and the public opinion, display with impunity our insensitivity to the reality of the situation of the citizenry. Nigeria and these existential quiddities—truth, sincerity and humanism—are finally scam, unreal.

²⁰ *On the Marble, News watch*. Dec. 20, 2010 compiled by Ezugwu Anayo and Mmahi Adanna.

²¹ <https://allafrica.com/29/9/2017>; <https://www.sunnewsonline/13/3/2018>; <https://punchng.com/23/8/2016>.

²² <https://www.channelstv.com/3/10/2020>; <https://www.m.youtube.com/4/10/2020>.

²³ <https://www.guardian.ng/5/10/2020>.

Unaccountability

The sense of accountability shows humility, articulate functionalities, carefulness, adequate understanding of democracy, building of public trust and showing value to the public offices entrusted to you to manage. These understandings are lagging in the attitudes of Nigerian public officers. In a clear instance, this lack largely played out in blazing more the activities of Boko Haram terrorists during the political tenure of former President Jonathan Goodluck and the military managerial case of his National Security Adviser, Sambo Dasuki. Both the government and the appointee aid were insensitive to the fact.

Lack of Maintenance Culture

Nigeria has had good and quality structures in the past—most of which are products of colonialism—either imported or built then. We care less about these structures and consequently, it bounces back negatively on our economy, national unity, social tranquility, education, politics, etc. For instance, Nigeria has many refineries, many abandoned firms, academic institutions of foreign standard, etc., but unfortunately, how many are properly working? Some regions where some of these structures are located are angry and keeping grudges against the Federal Government for marginalization contending that the ones at the region of those in authority are working and creating employment for the region. This point is one of the agitation-arousing factors that have many times, triggered social uproars thereby disrupting social tranquility, hampering economic activities, destabilizing politics, among many other negative impacts. Further, Nigerian students are risking their lives under dilapidated structures called “school buildings/structures” where they are exposed to harsh weather, unfavourable atmospheric conditions and unconducive environment (Ugwu & Ozoemena, 2019a). Nothing stops the rehabilitation of these structures to enhance learning and standardization of the Nigerian education sector and to rescue Nigerian masses from the thunder positioned on them by private schools in their school fees. But that does not interest “them” because it does not affect “their” children after all, they are comfortably gaining better knowledge in abroad. Hence, what we are waiting for is when everything Nigerian structure will be privatized, and we will not take responsibility till Nigeria is itself privatized!

Lack of Strong Political Institutions

Strong political institutions equal pure functioning democracy for they are political structures, democratic functionalities that make anti-democratic emergence impossible. Lack of these makes the Nigerian democracy autocratic and unitary in nature and operations. Barack Obama among many other world-leaders has seen the problem of and in African leadership—weak institutions—the very opposite of what Obama was brave enough to tell Nigeria, Africa at large. All his advice could be summarized thus: “Africa doesn’t need strongmen, it needs strong institutions”²⁴. Why do we have “weak” institutions and “strong” men? Simply, it is rooted in the constitution—all the constitutional rights of every citizen, at the final analysis, are indirectly bundled and pigeonholed to the “centre” where one man is the “supreme and general manager”. Both these institutions and these enslaved citizens to manage them are never independent and as such, can never function and be conceived theoretically and actively as strong political democratic institutions. So, it is as good as that Nigeria has no political institutions let alone independent and strong ones for through their independency, they gain their strength as political functionalities. This simply exposes why all the institutions—say security, legal, political, electoral, non-governmental institutions, educational, religious, etc. are institutions where we see “robotic or

²⁴ <https://www.obamawhitehouse.archives.gov> 28/7/2015.

rubber stamped operations”, you as the manager cannot act according to either the guiding norms and policies or the natural oughtness of rationality, because the man who stations you there through his presidential “veto power” exercise (political appointments) must be consulted before anything is said and done, even though you are free as a thinking being, to think about it. All the “heads” in these institutions like the security, legal, educational, etc. are all the presidential appointees, political institutions like the National Assembly—the peoples’ parliament—have been politicized, influenced and besieged by the president and the gangstery formed by his political party members, religious institutions have also been politicized that the “spiritual heads” there in are the anointed ones of politicians, and they form competitive alliances with the politicians, parties and government and finally are defenders of what the governments say because they share in the oligarchic privileges provided by such governmental actions and spiritual attention is based on “what you can offer to the Lord”. We claim we model the American type of democracy, yet we will not model them in many structures and functionalities that portray core democratic operations. It is indeed a pity!

Conclusions

In a WhatsApp Group of academics I belong to, a funny but truth-revealing-picture was posted. It was a picture showing an inscription of electrical department of an anonymous university, above the inscription is a supposed light to glitter on the inscription so as to be seen clearly every time of the day, but unfortunately spoilt; the bulb part is no more, the metal part holding the exposed wires nailed to the wall just above the inscription. All these are at the entrance door of an electrical department of a Nigerian university. What a shame and self-contradiction that ordinary light in such a department is impossibility. That single picture-story has explained all we try to say here that: Nigeria has everything but enjoy nothing. Is that not so worrisome and unfortunate? The most disappointing and depressing aspect of it all is that those who should be most worried do not even care, rather they resort to internal-politics-of-hatred where every part of the whole system is against themselves. Indeed, things have fallen apart in Nigeria. Nevertheless, one thing that is assured is that Nigeria is growing and this growth is never seen without both funny positive and negative aspects—that the dead could even be considered for certain appointments, that snake would swallow billions, that rats can chase away a herdsman from an official domain, that billions of Naira could be used for school feeding yet we have not seen any school pupils fed unless the ones we see and hear on their official media—Radio Nigeria and Nigeria Television Authority, etc. But all these would later become the Nigerian historical developmental stages. What we experience now is our yesterday and has a lot to do with our future direction for the past is the best prophet of the future. It is our intellectual archive and anyone who lives till then and can still remember any of such incident, becomes the archivist. Nevertheless, we have been able to trace and postulate what we think is the number one Nigerian problem which lies with the electorates—the supposedly kingmakers (followers) but who become the unfortunate and architect of their own doom. The Nigerian problems have metamorphosed Nigeria into “capitalist-democratic State” where the daily experiences express the saying that the land is not good is for benefit of *Nze* (well-to-do) people and where the *hut house* will suffer getting money, and the *zinc house* will come and take it with neither impunity, qualms of conscience, nor apologies. And to eradicate this social quagmire, there must be a standardized education system to curb illiteracy which is at the centrality of the whole course as a perpetuator. There is no gainsaying that at the achievement of this level, revolutionary activities, re-structural agitations will now finalize the process for a new Nigeria and Nigerians.

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