



Value Re-Orientation of Political Leaders as an Instrument of Restructuring Nigeria for Democratic Consolidation and Development

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ABSTRACT

There had been hues and cries for re-structuring Nigeria in order for it to achieve development and democratic consolidation. Re-structuring had been put forth by some scholars as one solution fix all problems for Nigeria. However, re-structuring without putting some other factors in place in order to achieve its functionality could be a ruse. This paper therefore, examines one other major factor that could aid development through restructuring that is re-orientating the political leaders for better delivery. Relying on the descriptive method, through the use of secondary data, books, journals, internet sources. It was discovered that some predisposition of an average political leader in Nigeria which include, inordinate ambition, lawlessness, greed, perpetuating oneself in office, nepotism, economic sabotage amongst others, have served as major hindrances and concludes that if there is no re-orientation of these leaders to imbibe the hitherto values of hardwork, diligence, honesty, integrity, brotherliness, re-structuring Nigeria may not achieve the expected goals. This paper therefore, recommends that political leaders in Nigeria should be tutored on the values that are held sacred by the country, strict punitive measures should be meted out to erring political leaders, the media (public and private) should have programmes that accentuate these core values.

INTRODUCTION

The foundation of Nigeria could be traced largely to the amalgamation of 1914 of the Southern and the Northern protectorate which a number of scholars have identified as an ill wind that blew and still blowing Nigeria no good. The 1914 amalgamation is regarded by some as the basis of Nigeria's disunity. Over the past decades of Nigerian independence there had been increasing agitations and clamour from all walks

of Nigerian society from the North to South, to East and West for better opportunities, inclusion in government and access to resources amongst others, which in a broad sense is referred to as restructuring. The strong demand for restructuring Nigeria is borne out of different and varied, perceived difficult and negative situations, manifestations and experiences by all segments of Nigerian populace. However, the 'voice' seems to be lower in some areas, segments and sections than others.

Nigeria's federation has been attributed to be a paper, one which does not reflect in the day to day running of government affairs. The federal government has been accused of overcentralization of power, authorities, responsibilities and resources to the exclusion or detriment of the other federating units i.e. state and local government. In a nutshell it (Nigerian federation) has been referred to as a pseudo one with only the structure and not practice. The intrusion of the military has also been identified as a corollary in the distortion of true federalism which was bequeathed to Nigeria at independence through the introduction of over centralized government exemplifying the command structure and unity of direction which the military is noted for. The contemporary federal system is bedeviled with embezzlement, corruption, nepotism, greed, moral decadence, discrimination, fraud, misappropriation of funds, and the likes, hence the increased call for restructuring.

Democracy is pivotal to federalism and hence, politics. Democracy cannot be achieved without the involvement of politics and consequently politicians whether at the gladiator, transitional or spectator levels (Ruedes, 2007). However, the group that plays the most prominent roles are the gladiators who contest election and thereafter, participate in the running of government. Politicians are basically derivatives of the society this is to the extent that they evolve from the society and therefore, exhibit attitudes, characters and values that are evident among the people of the society to which they belong. The contemporary Nigeria has lost its most cherished values which it held sacred in times past. These include honesty, hardwork, diligence, self-discipline, integrity, sacrifice, brotherliness, industry, trustworthiness, equity, fairness justice among others and replaced with greed, self-centeredness, nepotism, ethnicism, embezzlement, corruption in all its ramification, individualism, self love, self-aggrandizement which are clearly evident in most citizens, the politicians inclusive. Whatever value an individual hold sacred will reflect majorly in whatever character or attitudes is put forth (Njoku, 2015).

The questions this paper is poised to answer is - Is restructuring the only answer to quell several agitations in Nigeria? Is there the need for a value-re-orientation of political practitioners? What are the present values of political practitioners that can impinge negatively on good governance in spite of restructuring.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Restructuring

Restructuring is an emerging concept in Nigeria's Federal System and it has been subjected to a number and varied definitions depending on from which perspective it is seen. Restructuring has been identified to be a revert to regionalism that is a re-introduction of the 1963 constitution which recognized, the six geo political zones as the federating units and allows for devolvement of power to the regions (Yaquub, 2016; El, Rufai, 2017). Yaquub (2016) also

submits that restructuring is a process that requires its (Nigeria) citizens to take a closer look at the natural edifice or better still the state of the nation with regard to how to address structural deformities. It is posited to be a means through which Nigeria and its constituting units can be more efficient, acceptable, productive, functional, effective, equitable fair and just (Obaze, 2018).

Restructuring is submitted to be the practice of true federalism, where some items like prison, police are expunged from the exclusive list for state legislation and control thereby enabling each unit to develop at its own pace (El-Rufai, 2017). Restructuring has also been viewed from the standpoint of an attempt to compromise the historical and natural advantage of the Northern part of the country which has about 55 percent population and two-third land mass of Nigeria (Yaquub, 2016).

Restructuring is therefore, the employ of equity, justice and fairness in the handling of resources, appointments into offices and the share of the Nigerian commonwealth. It also involves, de-over centralization of powers, functions, responsibilities, authorities, resources at the disposal of the federal government to the state and local government as it is provided for in the constitution. In a nutshell the practice of true federalism.

Values

The term value has been defined in different ways, which include being a representation of the quality of worth or importance which people identify with what they have in mind (Okoh, 2012). Bolarin (2005) in Okoh (2012) submits that value is the worth, merit or esteem given to a person or an object or an idea. It is posited to influence how people behave and a pedestal on which other people's behaviour is measured. Value is believed to be principles or standards of attitude, behaviour, character which a group of people hold dear or important (Asaju, Arome and Galloway, 2008; Mukaila, 2014). It is an acceptable standard, ideal way as well as the proper way of doing things in a society (Njoku, 2015).

Value is about the attitude, character and acceptable ways of doing things. It is a concept of what a particular society holds sacred in terms of what behaviour is good or bad. This however, differs from society to society. Attitude and character are adjudged as derivatives of value, that is, what is held as worthy and standard way of behaviour.

Re-orientation

Re-orientation is opined to be a re-enactment of what had been before (Njoku, 2015). It is also seen as doing something again (Odey and Ashipu, 2018). Re-orientation therefore, presupposes bringing back or re-introducing what had been in existence before. The implication is that those things had been forgotten, expunged, deleted or no more visible. It is a sort of a new attempt at charting a cause for what had been done before.

According to Asaju, Arome and Mukaila (2014), value re-orientation is an act of re-consideration of value orientation that are more philosophical with acceptable ideologies that form natural belief system which are workable for the individuals and national development. It is about bringing back, recreating, re-introducing or re-teaching an awareness of a person's temporal, practical and circumstantial situation with a view of drawing the individual's focus to as well as helping him/her to ponder on his/her societal values which is expected to result in modification or improvement of behaviour. It is submitted to mean a conscious or deliberate development of human resources through ideological appeals, indoctrination, planning, training, productivity, effectiveness and efficiency in achievements and positive results through a collaborative culture (Njoku, 2015). To Odey and Ashipu (2018) value re-orientation is the ability to bring back the good values of old back into existence. They stressed that it could also mean efforts directed towards re-enacting the good values that had been held sacred before and the ability to imbibe these values on the individual or members of a particular society.

Value-orientation therefore, involves an attempt at re-introducing some previously accepted good values that had gone into extinction or on the verge of going into extinction. Bringing back to the fore societal values that had been adjusted to be best practices which however had become unpopular or no more in practice.

Political Leader

A political leader, politician or political figure is posited as a person actively involved in politics and influencing policy and decision making. It includes people who hold decision making positions in government and seek such positions by whatever means ("Who is a Politician"?, 2020). A politician is also perceived in a broader sense as a person with the specific and accurate ability, experience, knowledge, skills, passion, sense of justice and trust with an awareness and understanding. Who is chosen to work in getting an optimum result in governance. Ensuring that all fundamental rights of citizens are taken care of through equal distribution of wealth and justice across society, country and jurisdiction. Creating and empowering an accurate system of checks and balances (MaryC, 2019). The above brings to the fore an all encompassing conception of a politician or political leader to the extent that societal values, attitudes, behaviours and conduct of a good political leader are embedded in it.

A political leader is conceived as an elected person who holds office for a particular period of time in a continent, country or state. Who is expected to serve the people with a clear understanding, being accountable to the electorates that voted him into power ("How do we define Leadership...?", 2020). Deriving from these views about the concept, political leader or politician one can work through Milbrath 1965 Framework of political participation. He identified three levels of political participation, that is, spectators,

transitional and gladiators (Rueden, 2007). Examining the activities involved at these three levels, the researcher is of the opinion that a politician is not exclusive to a person who contested and was elected into a political office but also include anyone who is actively involved in politics. This is in view of the fact that there are no clear cut demarcation at each of the level of political participation as identified by Milbrath (1965). Hence, a politician at the spectator stage can at any time get to the transitional stage and consequently become a gladiator.

What Necessitates the Call for Restructuring?

The clamour and agitations for restructuring had become a recurring and resonating decimal in Nigerian parlance. This is borne out of the fact that a number of citizens, sections, ethnic groups are disgruntled about how the polity is being run and governance in general. Reasons that have been advanced for the urgent and perceived inevitable need for restructuring include.

The need to make the other federating units, states and local government to be more pragmatic in their operations. The present practice makes these units to be over dependent on the federal government which is perceived not to portend the ability or opportunity to be innovative, creative and dynamic in governance. Consequently, delivery of functional and good standard of living to the populace (Obaze, 2018).

In addition, there is an urgent need to stem the tide or mitigate the effects that evident distrust, agitation, marginalization, lack of justice, inequitable allocation of resources and official posts are generating. This a number of times have led to inter-ethnic skirmishes, unrest, crisis, instability, tension insecurity in the country. It is believed that restructuring Nigeria when handled in a collaborative, and systematic way will achieve this aim and still keep the country as a whole (Abutudu, 2010; Yaqub, 2016; Obaze, 2018).

The central government have also been alleged of having too much power, responsibilities, authority and wealth of government at its disposal. It is posited that there is a pertinent need for the government to shed some of this weight in terms of allowing the state to have more access to the resources and wealth of the nation with issues like resource control, allocation of resources, policing, prison services re-visited in a way to enable higher, greater participation and involvement of the state governments (Yaqub, 2016; El-Rufai, 2017).

Political leaders especially people in government have been capitalizing on the lacuna in the operations of the federal system of government in Nigeria to embezzle, loot and waste public funds. They have also been accused of engaging in nepotism, ethnicity and selfishness in governance. Public funds are siphoned into private purses thereby depriving the populace of the much desired good governance. Official posts are also reserved for party cronies, families and ethnic members at the detriment of meritocracy. The political leadership are identified as being corrupt, abusing power and not charting the path

of sustainable development (Abotudu, 2010; Agu, 2015).

The thrust for restructuring is majorly hinged on demands for equity, justice, fairness in the allocation of political space and proceeds from resources. This is in view of the fact that, governance and entitlements to revenues and posts are now determined by access to power. The winner takes all stance of politicians in power/government is generating a lot of agitations from minorities and marginalized groups and persons. Most of the items under restructuring reflects issues around resource control, revenue allocation and power sharing formula. These include (but not exclusive to) devolution of power, resource control, power sharing and rotation of political offices, fiscal federalism and revenue allocation (El-rufai, 2017).

The Pentchant/Predisposition of Nigerian Politicians/Political Leaders

The Nigerian traditional or pre-colonial system across regions, ethnics, geo-political zones, peoples and citizens held some values sacred. These values are the hallmark of human relationships and behaviours and they are standards on which attitudes, characters and ways of life are expected to be based. From the North to South to the West and to the East in Nigeria the foundation of human interactions are entrenched in these identified values which include: honesty, hardwork, temperance, self-discipline, moderation, obedience, loyalty, self-control, trust, gentleness, faithfulness, goodness, kindness, peace loving, contentment, loving, brotherliness, cooperation, compassion, forgiveness, respect for others, accountability, sacrifice, integrity, justice, fairness, equity, industry. The tenets of what is wrong or right as regards acceptable behaviour are based on these qualities (Babawale, 2008; Galloway, 2008; Okoh, 2012; Asaju et al, 2014; Njoku, 2015 and Odey & Ashipu, 2018). Value are imbibed through socialization and consequently, political socialization which involves the development of processes through which individuals acquire political cognition, attitude and behaviour. Acceptable norms and behaviour in respect of running a virile political system are cultivated and transmitted from one generation to the other, ideas about political values which are transmitted through agents like family, educational institutions, peer groups, and mass media have as its bedrock societal values. By implication, political values do not exist in a vacuum but are derivatives of values held by the society at large ("Political Socialization", 2014). Politicians or political leaders and office holders are expected to hinge their behaviour, attitudes and character in government on these. It is however, unfortunate that in the contemporary Nigeria the hitherto respected values had been warped and exchanged for greed, bribery, embezzlement, instant wealth without hard work, unearned income, misappropriation, lackadaisical attitude to governance, lawlessness, tribal and religious division, economic sabotage, inordinate ambition, manipulations amongst others (Okoh, 2012; Asaju, et al 2014 and Njoku,

2015). Political leaders in Nigeria are not excluded from these vices and some scholars in Nigeria have attributed the failure of leadership in Nigeria to their inability or refusal to imbibe these essential values which the society holds supreme (Asaju et al, 2014). In fact, a sizeable number of Nigerian political leaders are in particular characterized by love of money, base honour, immediate material gain (nothing is done for posterity or altruistic reasons), no respect or penchant for creative labour, ethnicity and nepotism, accentuation of private gains as against public gains and benefits (Njoku, 2015).

These positive characters play a pivotal role in shaping decisions, goals, aspirations, choices, relationships, life achievements and outcomes (Prensky, 2014).

Juxtaposing the Call for Restructuring with Predisposition of Political Leaders

Examining the factors of resource control, revenue allocation and power sharing which are at the front burner of reasons for the call of restructuring Nigeria. This is against the backdrop that when there is devolution of powers and wealth more people will be able to benefit from the national wealth and posts. Hence, development would be achieved with little or no feeling of marginalization that generates agitation, tension pressure amongst others. It is believed that it would lead to an equitable, just and fair society devoid of deprivation and exclusion. However, this might not be the situation in view of the evident characteristics of most political leaders. It should be noted that these are derivatives of the society whether at the federal or state level. Political leaders in Nigeria regardless of their location or origin (North, West, South, East) have been found to practice, embezzlement, ethnicity, nepotism and the likes. It is therefore, pertinent that for restructuring to achieve the aim of its propagators there is an urgent need for value-re-orientation on the part of all Nigerians and most especially the political leaders. This is in view of the fact that no system is fraught of loopholes or lacuna which pervert minds can cash in on to perpetuate whatever ill that are conceived. For restructuring not to be a risk, an aggressive attention must be given to the indices of National Policy on Education directed towards imbibing

- Values and attitudes, moral principles in interpersonal relations.
- Shared responsibility for the common goals of the society.
- Respect for dignity of labour and promotion of emotional, physical and psychological health of all children. (FRN, 2014).

Leadership is about being an example of what is preached or taught others and such must be seen as obedient and practising the tenets on which the society is based because of the influence it wields on the followers. It is expected to show direction. For Nigeria to achieve its major goals and objectives of achieving an holistic development, the values that were in operations before should be re-enacted and

re-cultivated by all including politicians. With the crop of people that are at the helms of affairs or major players in Nigeria political parlance restructuring may not be able to achieve its desired goals.

CONCLUSION

For Nigeria to practice true federalism and go away from the Unitary Federalism introduced by the military into the system, restructuring, true federalism, fiscal federalism, devolution, resource control, regionalism self-determination or whichever coinage is used the political leaders have a major and pivotal role to play in its success. If the present mindset of these leaders is not worked upon in order to re-enact positive values which will ultimately affect their delivery of good governance, restructuring even when carried out would be a ruse. It is therefore, pertinent that value re-orientation be given a pride of place among all citizens of Nigeria and more importantly, the political leaders who are the driving force of the system.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Political leaders in Nigeria should be tutored (through seminars, workshops etc.) on the values that are held sacred.
- Stringent punitive measures should be meted out to erring political leaders who contravenes these ethical values to serve as deterrent to others.
- The media (public and private) should hear programmes, jingles etc. that accentuate these core values.
- Intensive teaching to imbibe positive values in young Nigerians should be given a pride of place.
- Rhymes, songs, eulogies that used to portray basic virtues and values should be re-introduced in Nigerian schools.
- Citizens who exhibit these positive values should be handsomely rewarded and celebrated.

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