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Promoting Collectivism through Education as a Response to Economic and Security Challengies in Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper examined the need for the promotion of collectivism through education as a response to economic and security challenges in Nigeria. This was precipitated by the alarming rate at which the security of life and properties of Nigerians are constantly threatened and the consequent downturn of the nation's economy. For the fact that measures earlier taken to ameliorate the security and economic problems in Nigeria have failed spectacularly, the writers argued that these problems are man-made and basically resulting from agitations and selfish mentality. They opined that education is a panacea to solving the problems. They further submitted that the type of education needed to improve the economic and security state of Nigeria is such that gears towards promoting collectivism in such a way that all and sundry may look beyond ethnic politics and sentiments and shield different destructive sword for the purpose of restoring peace and security, economic stability and overall development of Nigeria. It was recommended that stakeholders in the Nigerian education system should adopt a radical approach of in-and-out of classroom education geared towards effective reorientation so as to expose Nigerians to the need to pursue collective interest and place Nigeria's development above selfish gains and personal interests.

Key Words: Collectivism, Education, Economy, Security.

Introduction

The various problems leading to economic downturn and security threats in Nigeria are to a large extent human-related or may be referred to as man-made problems. One fact that must not be overlooked is that, as long as different people coexist in a society, problems are inevitable because there must be diversity of individual interests and desire for selfactualization. What matters therefore is how a people manage their differences and coordinate in harmony, the individual and collective desires and wants. Economic and security challenges facing Nigeria as an independent nation appear to be an outcome of selfishness in the activities of Nigerians at one point or the other. It seems that individual and sectional interests have enveloped collective interest in Nigeria and such has put forth negative influences on economic development and security outlook of the nation. In this regard, Ufomadu (2018) submitted that the "I" against "We" mentality among Nigerians has resulted to the absence of peaceful coexistence, poor sense of collective responsibility and all forms of corrupt practices which has affected and is still affecting the pace of economic growth and sustainability as well as the effectiveness of the security architecture of Nigeria. Uduka (2019:48) noted that "due to the lack of the spirit of collectivism, different regimes of Nigerian government up to the current regime have applied diverse measures and have invested huge portion of the nation's scarce resources in curbing security challenges and economic recession but have recorded poor results.

In this paper therefore, the writers argue that one sure way to addressing the ugly security and economic situation in Nigeria is by developing the sense of collectivism among the majority of Nigerian citizens, using education as an instrument. Literarily, collectivism is the practice of giving the collective interest priority over individual interest in the society. Without inculcating and promoting the spirit of collectivism, a group of Nigerians will be at one corner planning and working for the development of the country while another group will be at the other end destroying the developmental plans. The inability of Nigerians to collectively pursue the development of the country has done more harm to the well-being of all in the country. For instance, Aliyu (2020) noted that food production and distribution in Nigeria in recent times has been drastically affected by the activities of the herdsmen, bandits and boko haram in the Northern parts of Nigeria while economic activities in the South-East has severely been slowed down due to the regular sit-at-home orders and other activities of the IPOB agitators. People in the western part of Nigeria are not also free from the activities of sectionalists and unknown gunmen. All these are masterminded and executed by human beings (Nigerian citizens).

This brings us to the question: Since the institutions of government, the security architecture and even international aids seem to have failed to provide solution to these problems, what should Nigeria do? This question may attract varied answers according to different perspectives and opinions. However, the writers of this paper argued that the promotion of collectivism through education geared towards reorientation of Nigerians will serve an effective response to these problems. Effort will be made further in this paper to

discuss what this collectivism represent and the role education will play in promoting collectivism as well as how collectivism will help in addressing security and economic challenges in Nigeria. It is therefore necessary at this point to provide greater insight on the major concepts that constitute the topic of this study for better understanding of the issues under discussion.

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Collectivism

Collectivism is a theory or ideology associated with communism. Broadly speaking, it is an idea that people should priotize the good of the society over the welfare of the individual. Ideally, in a society where collectivism is the watchword, decisions are made to benefit all the people and not a person or a group of people within the society. Collectivism is a value that is characterized by emphasis on cohesiveness among individuals and priotization of group over self, (Terry, 2015). Collectivism according to Staunt (2017) refers to a world view in which social behaviour is guided largely by goal that are shared by a collective entity such as family, tribe, workgroup, nation, etc.

Collectivism is both a political and economic theory advocating mutual control especially over production and distribution of resources and power in the society. In other words, collectivism operates on the principle of decentralized social and economic control of all means of production. Principles of collectivism according to Brigg (2013) include: economic equality, public ownership, cooperation, collective interest and government regulation. In a nutshell, the idea of collectivism is that the society as a whole, not the individual, is the unit of moral values. Hence, the collective will of the people within a given society must take preeminence and be obeyed irrespective of what an individual members of that society feel.

Education

Education is a way of making an individual go through a process of learning so as to acquire knowledge that would help him or her to cope with the problems of life. Duru (2011) defined education as a lifelong learning process through which an individual, born in a society, learn the ways of life as to function effectively and live in harmony with other people. What Duru's definition implies is that education is continuous except at the point when one is dead and the essence of education is to prepare the receiver to function effectively in the society. In another view, Einstein (2007) described education as the act or process of teaching which is determined by the knowledge, skill or discipline of the character.

This means that education involves the process of transforming and influencing human beings towards acquiring knowledge and developing appreciable skills and character. This also suggests that once learning has taken place, there must be positive change in behaviour, otherwise one cannot boast of passing through the process of education. Definitions of education are unending, but no matter how the concept is defined, it centers on teaching and learning for the purpose of expanding the frontiers of knowledge and skills for the good of the recipient and the society at large.

Economy

Economy is generally regarded as the system of production, distribution and consumption; the overall measure of an economic system, collective focus on the valuation of money or currency values and trade as well as the approaches to resources management. Ezeanyika (2002) noted that economy suggest, the totality of the economic system which is practiced in a given society. He further explained that countries can operate a capitalist economy which involves a mixture of both private and public resource ownership entailing private and public economic decision-making, or socialist economy which is the opposite of capitalism.

A socialist economy, he noted, can be decentralized or centralized. In a socialist economy power to control the production of goods and services are evenly distributed, while in a centralized socialist economy production and distribution goods and services are concentrated in the hands of the supposedly powerful and rich few individuals who are responsible for all economic decision-making. Anozie (2009) identified another economy known as an oil economy and explained that unchangeable laws of distribution and production of the oil industry characterized an oil economy. He further submitted that government with large oil receipts like Nigeria needs less consent from the governed to stay in power because they can reward their friends and buy off their positions even with oil blocks, discourage free market, favour state enterprise and the result of such he noted are repressive and corrupt institution and bloated bureaucracies sustained by oil economy. Odionye and Nnodim (2016) pointed out that Nigeria operates a mono-commodity (petroleum based) economy and the revenue generated in the export of this petroleum product is not effectively invested on diversification of her economy. They further noted that the call for the diversification of Nigerian economy has increased in recent times because the consequences of over dependence on oil is evident in the bad state of the nation's economy and overall standard of living of Nigerians.

What these scholarly views suggest is that the state of nation's economy is very important for the development of the nation and the survival of its citizens but the activities of those managing the economy will determine the state of well-being of the people and the overall development of the nation. In Nigerian context, the state of citizen's well-being and nation's development reveals undoubtedly that the economy is facing challenges which as earlier noted are man-made challenges. In this case, something needs to be done but whatever steps to be taking in the writers' view must begin with change of attitude and mentality of Nigerians.

Security

Security may be defined as the condition of not being threatened physically, psychologically, emotionally or financially. It may also mean an organization or department responsible for providing security by enforcing laws, rules and regulations as well as maintaining order. Bodunde, Oluwafemi and Banudele (2014) submitted that security has

to do with freedom from danger or threat of nation's ability to protect and develop itself, promote its cherished values and legitimate interest and enhance the well-being of its people. Nwagboso (2012) defined security as the act of being safe from harm or danger, the defense, protection and preservation of values. He further noted that security exist when people live together in a certain environment without disturbances or violence. Adejumo as cited in Onwuka and Onwuka (2017) perceived security as an act of keeping peace within the governing territories by upholding national laws and defending the internal security threat in different areas of the country. Adebakin (2012) submitted that security involves the prevention of violence and criminal activities in different societies by strengthening the internal security systems that will ensure freedom of people from criminal disturbances and ensures the absence of criminal tendencies which can undermine its core values and meet the legitimate aspiration of the people. He further described security as the act of seeing the survival of all and sundry in the society; a search to avoid, prevent, reduce or resolve violence and conflict in any society. What scholars have described as security simply suggest that insecurity arises when the people in the society are living in fear and cannot go about their lawful business because of disturbances and threat to live; when there are different criminal activities, violence and breaking of law in a state of insecurity. In this case, no reasonable fellow would contest the fact that Nigerian as a country is in a serious state of insecurity at present.

This state of affair is actually what the philosophers of education seek for solution in this annual conference and it is believed that stakeholders in the security architecture and governance of Nigeria will find in the proceeds of this conference, reasonable suggestions to apply in curbing economic and security challenges facing Nigeria.

Crux of the Matter

It is no longer fresh news that Nigeria is challenged with the deadly activities of Boko Haram, the Fulani herdsmen, bandits, unknown gunmen and other deadly insurgent groups that are springing up almost every day. These signify that Nigeria's national security is seriously threatened and have placed the nation and its citizens in a state of uncertainty. Again, Utomi (2020) noted that the issue of economic depression and recession has been a recurring subject of discussion in the national dailies, on the floor of the national assembly, at the federal Executive Council meetings, at the board meetings of the finance ministry and that of the ministry of budget and economic planning among others. Ekemam (2021) also observed that the stakeholders in the critical sectors of Nigerian economy have continually raised alarm over the poor state of the nation's economy. He also lamented that unfortunately, the Nigerian people especially, those at the lower class are at the receiving end of these problems. Mbachu (2019) noted that the level of inflation and high cost of production and distribution of goods and services no longer allow for the survival of the common man in Nigeria. He also pointed out that the devaluation of the naira is even worse, thereby making exportation and importation of goods to be left in the hands of the privileged few.

In recent times, the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and their counterparts from west came up with serious agitations for secession from Nigeria. The activities resulting from these agitations by their supporters at one point or the other have halted economic activities and have caused continual security breach in those parts of the country. One can go on and on to cite more cases bothering on insecurity of lives and properties as well as economic degradation in Nigeria. In a review and analysis of ministries and parastatals annual budget, Emefiele (2020) lamented that Nigeria spends over two billion monthly on security. This mentioned sum, if invested in the nation's critical sectors like health, education, and agriculture would yield greater positive and life changing results that will lead to economic growth and better standard of living. Yet, the state of insecurity is still at an alarming rate and the economy keeps dwindling probably because everyone seem to be lamenting more than proffering solutions.

With regard to the solution (s) to the economic and security problems facing Nigeria, the authors of this paper argue that promoting collectivism through education is a workable solution that must be applied. The basis of this discourse is therefore to establish how to promote collectivism through education and how collectivism if promoted can solve the economic and security problems facing Nigeria.

First, it is agreeable that both the leaders and the led are all citizens of Nigeria except in some cases where foreign experts are employed to render services. The president, his vice president and ministers are also Nigerians. It is still Nigerian citizens who are in charge of the Nigerian army, the police force, the air force, the Nigerian immigration service, national drug law enforcement agency, the navy, the civil defence and other security agencies. Those in the two chambers of the national assembly are all Nigerians. The governors, members of states assembly, minister of the federal capital territory and all others at the state and local government levels are all Nigerian citizens. It is still Nigerians that are in charge of the central bank, stock exchange market, custom and other economic sector of Nigeria. Looking at it from the other angle, those who operate as bandits, herdsmen, suicide bombers, Boko Haram, extremist sectionalists and agitators and their supporters are all Nigerian citizens. In a nutshell, one can agree that Nigerian citizens through their activities are responsible for the security and economic challenges facing Nigeria. The writers' position therefore is that, if Nigerian citizens are given adequate education geared towards mental emancipation, sportsmanship, civic responsibility, patriotism, peaceful co-existence, among other values, they will begin to embrace collective interest as the basis for national peace and development.

Secondly, in an interrogation on reasons all the measures put in place towards security and economic stability have not yielded commensurate positive result, Nwafor (2019) opined that transparency, collective interest, selflessness, and accountability has not been made a watchword in running the affairs of the nation. Hence, the governed have in most cases failed to be in agreement with the government. Stevenson (2015) noted that the state operates on a social contract theory in which the elements or ingredients of the contract is that the people willingly submitted their powers and will to the government on the grounds that the government will take care of their well-being while they in return obey and

support the government. However, he noted that the people reserved the right or power to revolt in case the government fails to keep to the terms of the social contract. One may not be out of place to say that in Nigerian context, the terms of the social contract have been violated. Hence, people most times revolt against the government. This more often results to threat on the economy and breach on the security of the nation. It is expected therefore that through education geared toward collectivism, citizens (both those in government and the governed) would be made to respect the terms of social contract and the see the need to honour them.

Again, an American political analyst and security expert John Smith (2017) in one of his lecture on security intelligence says, "any security threat that last for twenty four hours in a country has the backup of the government because no individual is more powerful than the government". If we relate this statement to Nigeria, it means that either the government has not risen to sincerely fight insecurity or is comfortable with it. Even if the government is really out to address security and economic challenges, there will hardly be any tangible result once the effort of the government is thwarted by the people in the same government and in the same country. It is also expected that through education geared towards re-orientation, both those in government and those being governed would develop the attitude of complimenting the efforts of each other towards providing lasting solution to economic and security problems in Nigeria.

On issues of the economy, Nigeria is considered not only rich but wealthy with abundance of natural, economic and human resources, but Udemmadu (2017) posited that, why all the measures taken to improve the economic state of the nation have not recorded appreciable result is majorly because of corruption. He further noted that, where resources meant for national development are diverted to private purses coupled with concentration of means of production and distribution of goods and services, there can never be economic stability.

Nigerian economic situation as at now could be said to have reached the state of uncertainties. Okonjo-Iweala (2018) noted that Nigeria has more political crises, debt servicing issues and turbulence in the oil sector, high inflation, fluctuation in the foreign exchange market and fall in revenue to deal with. She warned that if Nigeria fails to adopt and implement workable economic policies, the effect will be more disastrous than it is at present. Previously, words like 'austerity' and 'melt down' have been used to describe the Nigerian economy. Today the jingle everywhere is 'economic recession' yet, everyone seems to be raising more of lamentation than proffering solution. On this note, education is still considered to be one of the solutions because through it, the intrinsic and extrinsic values to sustain the economy would be developed in Nigerian citizens. When these values it culminates in them, it automatically positions the Nigerian citizens for meaningful contributions towards the economic development of the nation. That is to say that through proper and functional education, Nigerian citizens will be equipped with knowledge, skills and competences that will enable them to explore the environment and economic opportunities for the good of the country.

All efforts to curb the security and economic challenges in Nigeria would have yielded more positive results if her education system has tended toward promoting collectivism, (Essien, 2018). The point here is that by promoting collectivism through education, selfishness noticeable among Nigerians (both the leaders and the led) would have been overtaken by sense of collective responsibility. With proper and inclusive education of Nigerian citizens, ethnic and religious sentiments which seem to have beclouded the reason and mentality of most Nigerian would have been a thing of the past. Edom (2017) pointed out that the federal character principle as enshrined in the 1999 Nigerian constitution provided for and equitable distribution of social amenities an power but has been violated and deliberately ignored in the course of appointment, employment and deployment to various positions of authority and service in Nigeria. Aliyu and Adebayo (2019) also noted that the "we feeling" and brotherhood spirit has been drowned in the ocean of hatred, bitterness, segregation, religious differences, party politics and corrupt practices. He further submitted that lack of mutual respect for collective interest gave birth to the crushing of national security and economic development. Therefore, the writers of this paper submit that Nigerian education if it is well-articulated and geared towards reorientation and civil literacy for the promotion of collectivism, would be able to corrected these noted anomalies and once that is done, the security and economic status of Nigeria would be restored.

It has been established in this discourse that education is a veritable instrument for social progress, social change, mental emancipation, reorientation and overall human and national development. It has also been established here that without first making Nigerian citizens to embrace education that would positively influence their behaviours, it will be difficult for the mercenaries and institutions of government even with international aid to curb the security challenges facing Nigeria especially in recent time. The writers have also submitted that the problems leading to insecurity and economic downturn are mostly caused by activities of Nigerian citizens at one point or the other and chiefly due to selfishness and poor sense of collective responsibility. Therefore, what Nigeria must do is to refer back to her drawing board, embrace history for recollection of sources of problems and reactivate the social functions of her education towards reorientation, metal emancipation and promotion of collectivism.

The essence is to change the psyche, mentality and perception of Nigerian citizens in such a way that all and sundry will begin to eschew bitterness and rancor and embrace each other irrespective of ethnic, tribal, party, or religious differences. Again, the type of education needed for the promotion of collectivism must go beyond the four walls of the classroom because there are too many Nigerians who have either not embraced education in its fullness or are not privileged to go to school. Achieving collectivism is realistic if government and all concerned stakeholders and agencies would rise to merge forces and strategies as well as strengthen their collaboration towards in–and-out-of school education of the majority for Nigerian citizens. This way, positive change of attitude, mindset and behaviour would be achieved. When that is done, education would be said to have served as a response to curbing security and economic challenges facing Nigeria as an independent nation. The writers optimism in this regard is justified by their earlier research finding on the philosophy and practice of education and national development in Finland, which revealed that, Finland has been a able to sustain peaceful co-existence, security of lives and properties and sustainable economic stability because their philosophy of education was designed to produce citizens who believe in and respects collective responsibility against self-interest.

Conclusion

One's mindset controls to a greater extent, his or her behaviour and activities in life. For this reason, the mindset of Nigerians needs to be directed properly towards embracing peace, unity, love and oneness. The whole activities leading to violence, crime, corruption economic downturn and insecurity are considered to have been resulted from selfishness and lack of mutual respect for collective interest and responsibility. Education is therefore justified as a veritable instrument for righting the wrong with regard to national security and economic development in Nigeria. This position is spurred by the fact that education especially when it is functional, transforms human beings who will in turn transform the nation. So, if Nigeria can repackage her education system towards mental emancipation, promotion of democratic ideals, collective responsibility, peaceful coexistence, etc, these security and economic problems would be a thing of the past. Again, once the leaders are well educated and are continually enlightened, they will develop the instinct to embrace collectivism as a watchword; as such they will become conscious of the fact that they must be held responsible for any of their actions without sentiment. When that is done, things will begin to fall in place in Nigeria. All and sundry are therefore charged go back to drawing board to fashion a better Nigeria where collectivism is highly promoted and where unity, peace and justice reigns.

Way Forward

Having x-rayed the security and economic challenges facing Nigeria, it is established here that the bulk of the problems are emanating from lack of the spirit of collective responsibility which has caused more harm than good. To remedy the situation in line with the discussion, the following recommendations are made:

- i. The Nigerian government in collaboration with her educational institutions should adopt a radical approach to in-and-out of school reorientation of Nigerian citizens with the view to promoting collectivism.
- ii. Government at all levels should be guided by principles of collectivism in the distributions of resources, employments, deployments, positions of authority, etc. to avoid agitations rising from feelings of marginalization.
- iii. Political parties should cue in to reorient their candidates, followers and supporters towards embracing peace and collective responsibility

- iv. Religious leaders, traditional rulers and parents should complement the efforts of government in promoting peace and sense of collectivism in various homes and places of worship.
- v. Government at all levels should show transparency and sincerity in tackling issues of insecurity and economic management by enforcing national laws on offender without sentiment of any sort.

These among other ways will help in no small measure in curbing the security and economic challenges in Nigeria.

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