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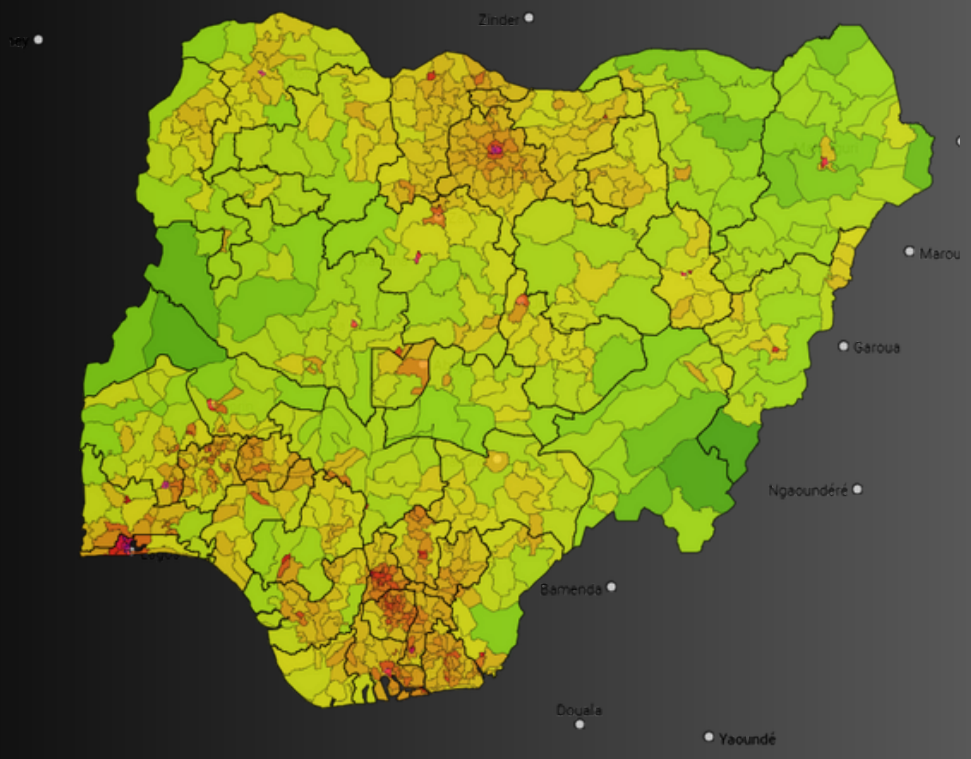

Selfless Leadership and Good Governance in Nigeria

They have strangulated the Local Government System in Nigeria

Fuel Subsidy Removal and its Perceived Socio-Economic Implications on Nigerians

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Fuel Subsidy Removal and its Perceived Socio-Economic Implications on Nigerians

2023

EDITORIAL

Let the Local Government System Breathe

While attempting to arrest Mr Eric Garner in 2014, a New York police officer strangled him to death, in a stranglehold, despite the victim's groaning and agonising cry of "I can't breathe". Six years later, George Floyd was killed in similar circumstances, while uttering the same expression. Since then, "I can't breathe" has become a common slogan among US minority groups that are daily facing police brutality. These incidents are analogous to the way the states in Nigeria are gradually choking the local government system to an inevitable extinction. As a tier of government, the local government also receives allocation from the Federation Account Allocation Committee, (FAAC). Between 2011 to 2021, about N16.4 trillion, which is quite substantial by Nigerian standard, was disbursed to all the 774 local governments across the country for them to perform their constitutional roles as spelt out in the Fourth Schedule of the Nigerian constitution. But it is doubtful if any substantial amount of this money reached them. The simple fact is that they do not have direct access to such funds courtesy of the state/local government joint account that is under the sole control of the state governor. This account was introduced to curb alleged financial recklessness in the local governments. Unfortunately the state governments have been operating it without the prudence and fairness it deserves. The state governments withhold these funds and only give out a morsel of it; sufficient enough to settle wage bills and minor recurrent expenditure.

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The states further tighten this stranglehold by refusing to remit the 10 percent of their IGR to the local governments as required by law, and by completely taking over their sources of revenue in the name of accountability. This has left the local government system in serious distress. Well-meaning Nigerians have raised serious concerns about this unfairness, most often with deafening calls for financial independence to the local governments but certain interests seem bent on prolonging the agony. The governors are not favourably disposed to yielding to the idea of financial autonomy to the local governments and majority of the members of the respective state assemblies would rather pitch their tent with the governors. The civil society is surprisingly casual about it while ordinary Nigerians have remained apathetic. The current state of affairs is not an option. The states need to loosen their grip so that the local government system can breathe fresh air. Nigerians must come out strong and support the process of weaning the local government system from the state governments.

News on SISDev Activities

Reports compiled by Gloria Idoko

Bauchi State Annual Tree Planting Campaign 2023

The annual tree planting campaign for 2023 was flagged off by His Excellency The Executive Governor of Bauchi State Sen Bala Abdulkadir Mohammed at Dungal Housing Estate, Dungal Village at the outskirt of Bauchi metropolis on 31 August 2023. In attendance were the His Excellency The Executive Governor of Bauchi State Sen Bala Abdulkadir Mohammed, the Deputy Governor Hon Auwal Jatau, traditional rulers, commissioners and other top government officials as well as NGOs including SISDev. SISDev was there in a show of solidarity with the ideals of tree planting, and because the event aligns with its key mission of promoting and advocating environmental conservation and community well-being.

In his opening remarks, the Commissioner for Housing and Environment, Danlami Ahmed Kawule highlighted the negative impact of deforestation and its role in climate change. He emphasized that planting trees contribute significantly to combating climate change, reducing soil erosion, and creating habitats for various species. He therefore, called for concerted effort towards planting trees. The Commissioner disclosed that the 2023 tree planting exercise covered a 12.6km roadside plantation from Miri village to Mobil Roundabout in Bauchi town with a view to enhancing aesthetics and improving carbon capture.

In his address, Governor Mohammed stressed on the significance of tree planting in mitigating unpredictable weather conditions. He expressed serious concern about illegal tree felling for charcoal in the state, and pledged to wage a serious war against such activities. The governor urged youths to see tree planting as a source of employment and called on traditional rulers to encourage all year-round tree planting. He also appealed to Caretaker Chairmen to allocate time for tree planting, especially in areas most affected by desertification.

Mrs. Titi Yakubu, the Executive Director of SISDev, delivered a goodwill message on behalf of SISDev. She added her voice to the calls for people to plant trees. Traditional rulers present also delivered their goodwill messages.

The event concluded with the symbolic planting of trees by His Governor and others dignitaries in attendance.

News on SISDev Activities

Commemoration of The International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking

SISDev commemorated the 2023 International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking at the Government Comprehensive Day Secondary School, Bauchi on 26th June, 2023. The theme for this year was "People first: stop stigma and discrimination, strengthen prevention." The event featured a sensitization campaign on the theme and the launching of a Drug-free Club for the school. In attendance were the students and teachers of the school.

Haj Jummai Bappah of SISDev delivered the keynote address in which she disclosed that June 26th of every year is celebrated as the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking during which campaigns, rallies, and awareness programs are organized worldwide on the dangers of the use and trafficking of illicit drugs.

The Day was first adopted in December 1987 by the United Nations. Haj Jummai Bappah went on to engage the students on the dangers and effects of drug abuse and thereafter, talked about the need for the students to see the drug-free club as an opportunity to discourage their fellow students from drug abuse, assist those already involve to quit, and raise awareness about the perils of drug abuse in society.

The Drug-Free Club was later inaugurated under the guidance of Mr Mustafa Mohammed Ahmed of SISDev. Mustafa explained the concept of the club and that it was not going to be different from other clubs the students were already familiar with in their school. The drug-free club would belong to them and hence, should take responsibility for it. The club's name was ultimately determined as "The Drug-Free Club of Government Comprehensive Day Secondary School." Afterwards, officials of the club; the President, Vice President, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer, Public Relations Officer (PRO) were elected from among the students. Members of staff would act as Patrons to guide the affairs of the club.

Mrs. Titi Yakubu of SISDev reminded the appointees of their roles and encouraged them accordingly to serve diligently. She later distributed SISDev's branded T-shirts to the club officials and patrons. The event closed with remarks by the Principal of the school. He expressed gratitude to SISDev for their generous contribution and assured that the club would be supported and sustained within available resources. The principal then congratulated the newly appointed club officials, reminding them to uphold their oaths of office.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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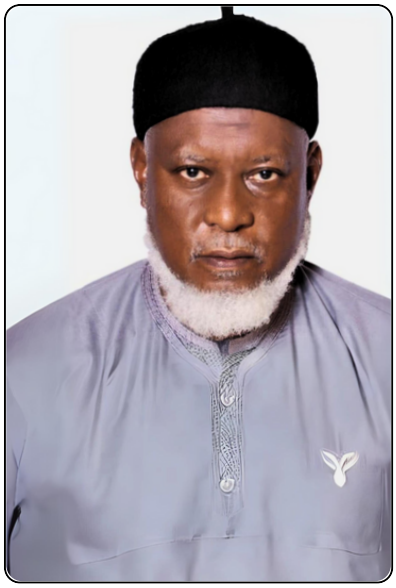
GUEST INTERVIEW

By
Mohammed Sani Muazu

They have strangulated the local government system in Nigeria -
Honourable Hamidu Sa'idu Ghani



Honourable Hamidu Sa'idu Ghani was born in 1956. He attended Liman Katagum Primary School, Yelwa Practicing School and Saint Peter's Primary School both in Bauchi. He had his secondary school education at Government College Bauchi, and later obtained a National Diploma at the then School of Agriculture of the Abubakar Tatari Ali Polytechnic Bauchi and Higher National Diploma at the National Veterinary Research Institute Vom, Plateau State. He also obtained certificates in Public Administration and Local Government Administration from Ahmadu Bello University Zaria and University of Maiduguri respectively. He thereafter pursued an Advance Diploma in Public Administration at Bayero University Kano. Hamidu Sa'idu Ghani has also had training on financial management and administrative planning at Birmingham University. He built a career in the local government civil service; rising to the rank of Director Agriculture. At the return of party politics in 1999, Honourable Hamidu Sa'idu Ghani resigned his appointment and joined active politics. He contested for the seat of the Chairman, Bauchi Local Government and won under the then All People's Party; he served for three consecutive years. In this short interview Honourable Hamidu Sa'idu Ghani laments over the current state of local governments in the country.

Sir, let us begin with you introducing yourself

My name is Honourable Hamidu Sa'idu Ghani, Ciroman Liman Katagum, former Chairman Bauchi local government in the year 1979, and 1999-2002.

What is the history of the establishment of local government in Nigeria?

To the best of my knowledge, the establishment of local government dated back to colonial era when the Native Authority was established under emirs. This was transformed into Native Authority Local government, and later the local government system in the year 1976. By then Bauchi had 16 local government areas.

What role does the local government play in governance?

Local government is the third tier of government. It is the layer that is closest to the masses, the first to receive people's complaints and concerns. It is the main link between the masses and leaders at the state and federal levels. The local government executes minor but important projects for the people.

How can you compare the administration of local government in the good old days and now in terms of personnel management, education, health care services, finances, project conception and execution?

Sincerely speaking, the local governments have in the past played their roles much better than what is obtained now. In the past they received their grants directly from the federal government, which gave them the opportunity to execute many projects even though the joint account was operational. The governors had monopoly over the account yet the local government had some level of autonomy unlike what is happening now. The local government had also in the past used their internally-generated revenue to execute some projects because the local governments had the freedom to exercise their constitutional rights of collecting their own revenue unlike what we are seeing now today. Some state governments are violating this right to collect the revenue meant for local government. Take Bauchi state as an example. The state government had taken over the collection of revenue in the local government areas. In addition to that, the local governments share from Federation Account is also not going to them directly as the state government will decide on the amount to give them every month. What they get can only pay salaries. Nowadays local government chairman cannot execute a project of more than fifty thousand naira which is contrary to what was obtainable in our days. They have strangulated the local government system. On paper we have three tiers of government; Federal, state and local government, each of which had its powers clearly spelt in the constitution but what we are seeing now is something else.

What is your take on local government autonomy?

Well, this is a big issue in the country. The local government, state assemblies and judiciary are all not enjoying the autonomy they deserve. For the local government to be fully autonomous is the best thing. The problem is with Nigerian Constitution itself. It gives the state some level of independence to the effect that the President does not have

the constitutional powers to ask state governors to account for funds allocated their states but the same Constitution has denied local governments financial independence; they cannot have any expenditure without the permission of the state governors. So, you see the autonomy is just on the sheet of paper. So many states cannot stand on their feet without local governments funds, and since state governors are the ones controlling these resources, it will be very hard to see the actualisation of local government autonomy. Now local government cannot do anything even construction of culvert. These are some of the bottlenecks to quality local government administration. Apart from financial autonomy, they should allow the local government chairmen and his councillors to be elected independent of SEIC, and council members should have the powers to impeach the chairman just the way state assemblies can impeach governors instead of governors having the powers to instal and remove chairmen at will. Local governments must be autonomous for people at the grassroot to enjoy dividend of democracy and development.

Is local government autonomy possible in Nigeria? If yes, how?

Yes, it is possible if certain bottlenecks are removed. In the first place there must be an independent state legislature whose members are voted into office in a free and fair election. As a house of assembly member, if you know that it is not the masses that brought you into power, but through the imposition of the state governor, it is impossible for one to challenge the governor. Closely linked to this is the conduct of local government elections. What we have today is a mockery of elections. SIEC is partisan and only the governors' favourites win elections and as such cannot push for local government autonomy. Therefore, local government elections should be conducted by INEC just like it happened in 1999, which enabled opposition parties to produce chairmen of local governments. Today governors and chairmen of local governments control the political parties; virtually choosing all the party leadership. So, there is no way political parties will have a stake in achieving local government autonomy. If these issues are fully addressed local government autonomy is achievable.

The Devolution of the Functions of Correctional Services in Nigeria and its Implications for Crime Prevention in the states

By
Mark Tumba

Each country operates its own criminal justice system which, mostly is tripodal; containing law enforcement agencies, the courts and a correctional system. The correctional system consists of mostly government agencies that operate jails, prisons, juvenile institutions, and penitentiaries. It protects the public from dangerous criminals and other social misfits, punishes people found guilty of committing crimes, reforms them into responsible citizens and deters potential criminals.

The origin of correctional functions in Nigeria is traceable to the period when Lagos became a British colony. The British colonialists needed to protect their commercial interests and missionary activities and thus, set out to establish formal institutions and machinery of governance. In 1863 the then acting governor of Lagos colony; McCoskry established a police force of about 25 constables, and created a Police Court; to adjudicate on minor issues, a criminal court; to handle serious crimes, a slave court; to try cases of trade in slaves and a commercial court; to handle dispute among traders and merchants. It became imperative to have a prison system in the new colony. Hence, in 1872, the Broad Street prison with an initial capacity of 300 inmates was built. Later, British colonial expansion into the hinterland and the subsequent formation of British protectorates at the close of the 19th century necessitated the establishment of more prisons. Consequently, by 1910, there were prisons in Calabar, Degema, Benin, Onitsha, Sapele, Jebba, Ibadan and Lokoja. Since independence in 1960, the penal system in Nigeria has witnessed a number changes; ranging from the indigenization of the management staff, the amalgamation of all native authority prisons into a single federal entity to today's changeover from the Nigerian Prison Service to the Nigerian Correctional Service; a federal agency with presence in all the 36 states and FCT.

In March 2023 President Muhammadu Buhari signed into law 16 Constitutional Amendment Bills, one of which was a bill that removed correctional services from the Exclusive List to the Concurrent List in our national constitution. The presentation of this set of bills to Mr President was the last lap in the constitutional amendment exercise initiated by the 9th National Assembly. Accenting to this bill trailed the signing of Nigerian Correctional Service Act on 14th August, 2019 which effectively repealed the Prisons Act of 2004. These 2 new laws represent a bold step towards the transformation of our prison

system.

The Nigerian Correctional Service Act 2019 came with notable innovations in correctional services in the country. The change from the appellation 'prisons' to 'correctional services' suggests a new perspective to penal administration in the country with specific focus on

reforming inmates in addition to providing both custodial and non-custodial services. The Act makes the provision of educational and vocational skill training for inmates mandatory. It prohibits the incarceration of mentally-ill persons and individuals with severe bodily injuries. Women and children must be housed in separate correctional facility where their special, medical and nutritional needs can be adequately addressed. Pregnant and nursing mothers must have access to pregnancy tests, DNA analysis, prenatal and antenatal care and other relevant health concerns. Juvenile offenders must not be mixed with adult male or female inmates but accommodated in separate male or female juvenile institutions. Their treatment must conform to international human rights standards and good correctional practices.

The Act addressed the issues of high number of pre-trial detainees, prison congestion and delayed trial. It empowers the Chief Judge to commit death sentences to life imprisonment where the death sentence is not carried out after 10 years. No inmate should be subjected to torture, inhumane and degrading treatment, sexual and non-sexual violence as well as any form of slavery or servitude. Deserving inmates going on discharge from the prison can be given certificate of good behaviour. All inmates must be profiled, documented and captured in a central database. It is cheering to have these innovative clauses; they are capable of repositioning our penal system for effective crime prevention.

Nigeria is a country with a high level of crime, but her criminal justice system has not been responding appropriately, and one of the outcomes is high inmate population, which is put at 80, 883; the highest in West Africa and the 27th globally. With this extraordinary number of detainees and the attendant prison congestion correction centres cannot effectively reform the inmates into law abiding citizens and reduce recidivism. Recidivism is the act of relapsing into crime after one has been sanctioned or rehabilitated for a previous crime. One of its causes is poor correctional practices. An ideal correctional system ensures that inmates are reformed and successfully reintegrated into the society without going back to crime. This suggests a link between correctional practices and crime prevention.

Crime prevention is core to the maintenance of public order. It is a multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary endeavour. It includes strategies and measures by the government to prevent crimes from occurring or reoccurring. And one of the strategies is criminal justice prevention, which focuses on preventing crime. This strategy comprises a diverse range of interventions by the police, the courts and correctional institutions in the lives of convicted criminals with the sole aim of deterring them from committing crime again in future. Psychologists, health and medical personnel, social workers, counsellors and other professionals collaborate with correction officers to transform prison inmates into law abiding and responsible citizens.

Crime such as theft, rape and other sexual offences, kidnapping, banditry, terrorism, burglary, robbery, drug and chid trafficking, arson, and cattle rustling are the common crimes in Nigeria. The pattern indicate that the youth predominate and crime is becoming more violent. This calls for the states to take their responsibility for crime prevention more seriously especially now that correctional functions have been decentralised. This will entail them fully exploiting thr 3 components of the criminal justice system: the police, the courts and the correctional system.

However, the states do not their own police force but instead solely rely on the Nigeria Police and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps to get offenders arrested and prosecuted. But these two federal security agencies are themselves facing dire challenges of inadequate personnel and equipment. As a way out of this most states employ the services of vigilantes and volunteer groups to police their communities. However, these organisations suffer from the same if not worse operational knots. Courts have been existing in the states but the state judiciary is weakened by poor infrastructure, inadequate facilities, and the lack of trained personnel. It operates with decelerative and outmoded procedures. Correctional institutions have also been around in the states, although not beyond the level of juvenile institutions such as Remand Homes, Borstal Centres, Approved Schools, and juvenile courts, which have limited capacity and are more often than not left without government attention.

The states would need to vigorously pursue the demand for the creation of state police, modernise the state judiciary and establish their correctional system; huge undertakings that require lot of resources. Regrettably, they are poor, with most of them without any strong revenue base but heavily depending on the monthly disbursement from Abuja. In the interim the states have two options. Firstly, they could pursue alternative strategies of crime prevention; that is addressing the root causes of crime (such as high level of poverty and unemployment, social inequalities), adopt community-driven crime prevention measures and non-judicial processes including the use of technology for effective surveillance. Secondly, the states could use available resources to upgrade and expand existing facilities in the judiciary and the juvenile institutions in a step-by-step manner. They need correctional officers and professionals in psychology, substance and drug abuse management, probation, parole, juvenile delinquency, health, and social services. They also need specialists in administration, psychiatry, vocational education, counselling, etc. These categories of professionals may not be readily available in the labour market and therefore, the states may have to partner with the Nigerian Correctional Service and applicable tertiary institutions as well as the UN, local and international NGOs and donor community.

A major consideration for the states is to enact laws for the establishment of their individual state correctional service. Such laws must be in consonance with international standards and local laws including the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, the Beijing Rules (1985), the Riyadh Guidelines (1990), the Bangkok Rules (2010), and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990), and other international instruments as well as the provisions of the Children and Young Person Law (1958), the Child Rights Act (2003), and the Criminal Procedure Act (1990).

Crime will continue to fester in our society, and states have the obligation to fight it. The decentralisation of correctional functions in Nigeria is an opportunity for them to strengthen their criminal justice system with specific focus on crime prevention. For now, their best option is to upgrade existing facilities, address the root causes of crime and use non-judicial processes of crime prevention.

Selfless Leadership and Good Governance in Nigeria

By
Attahiru M. Jega
Saturday, June 4, 2021

Presentation at the Memorial Workshop in Honor of Late Alhaji Lateef Kayode Jakande, Organized by Federal Social Democrats (FSD), Lagos

Introduction

I appreciate the honour of being asked to make this presentation at this event and I am glad to do so. Late Alhaji Lateef Kayode Jakande was indeed a selfless leader in governance in Nigeria. He was among the very few selfless leaders Nigeria has had, in his time, since then and indeed in our country's entire history. He was not only selfless but also a visionary leader, focused on initiating and executing policies, programs and projects to address the fundamental needs and aspirations of citizens. By so doing, whether as Governor of Lagos state October 1979 – December 1983, or as Minister of the Federal Republic September 1993 – June 1998 (?), in the discharge of his assigned responsibilities, he was impactful and he touched lives, and he did it selflessly; not for pecuniary gains. Consequently, his legacy and memory live forever.

Nigeria has been afflicted by or with the misfortune of having characters in governance, who are neither selfless, nor visionary; who are rather essentially greedy (for power and/or money), clueless, reckless and therefore perpetrators and consolidators of poor / bad democratic governance.

One of the major challenges of good democratic governance in Nigeria, therefore, is that of getting selfless, visionary, patriotic, pro-people, inclusive, focused and effective leadership, to drive/pilot Nigeria's national affairs and the political economy towards good, democratic governance. We have muddled through national problems, epileptically and superficially, essentially due to the absence of such requisite leadership, as a result of which the challenges have magnified and become complexified, appearing daunting and insurmountable, and pushing the country towards the precipice and potentially off the cliff. In the current situation, getting things right and reverting to the appropriate trajectory of good democratic governance would require selfless, visionary leadership committed to, and focused on, people-oriented policies for socioeconomic growth and development.

In what follows in this presentation, I elaborate upon the following points:

- There is the need for proper understanding and appreciation of the concepts of "Good Governance" and "Good Democratic Governance". What Nigeria needs and requires is not merely good governance but good democratic governance
- There is a correlation between selfless leadership and good governance, especially good democratic governance in Nigeria

- Although a necessary condition, selfless leadership is not a sufficient condition for good, democratic governance
- For Nigeria's progress and development, which address the fundamental needs and aspirations of the citizens, Nigeria would require people in leadership positions who are not merely selfless, but also visionary, patriotic and people oriented; who have the capacity, competence and ability to appreciate and manage the complexity of our diversity, on the basis of equity, equality of opportunity, fair-play and the rule of law. Leaders who can protect, defend and advance citizenship rights against discrimination, marginalization, predation and exclusion.

Conceptualizing Governance, Good Governance and Good democratic Governance

I have articulated this conceptual differentiation in a paper presentation in 2017 and it is worth repeating here (see Jega 2017).

In the context of the public sector in modern states, governance is about "steering" the course amidst "the changing boundaries between the public, private and voluntary actors, [which] may include a range of themes [such as] "the process of engagement (politics), the substantive issues (policy), and the institutional structures through which state and other actors relate to one another (polity)" (Hardiman, 2014: 228). Even in stable democracies, the complex interactions and associated outcomes, which governance represents, are in constant need of refinement and replenishment through reform measures. In unstable and transitional democracies, such as in Nigeria, governance requires constant attention and requisite reforms for it to deliver on the fundamental needs and aspirations of citizens, amongst which human security is paramount. Human security, broadly defined, is essentially about wellbeing, peace of mind and happiness of the entire citizens, without which, no nation can ever be at peace. Governance is therefore intricately linked to human security. Good democratic governance is the panacea for national socioeconomic growth and development and human security in countries that are democracies or aspire to be so. Bad governance and mis-governance, on the contrary, obstruct democratic development, undermines economic growth and nurtures, as well as entrenches human insecurity.

Governance is often confused with government. But, as Heywood has noted, "'Governance' is a broader term than government", in the sense that it "… refers, in its widest sense, to the various ways through which social life is coordinated [in a given polity]. Government can therefore be seen as one of the organizations involved in governance…" (2015: 84). In this sense, government is the organizational platform of governance in the public sector, as "market" is the organizational platform of governance in the private/economic sphere, and "networks" are the organizational frameworks for governance in the civil society sector.

Governance is often confused with government. But, as Heywood has noted, "'Governance' is a broader term than government", in the sense that it "… refers, in its widest sense, to the various ways through which social life is coordinated [in a given polity]. Government can therefore be seen as one of the organizations involved in governance…" (2015: 84). In this sense, government is the organizational platform of governance in the public sector, as "market" is the organizational platform of governance in the private/economic sphere, and "networks" are the organizational frameworks for governance in the civil society sector.

Governance in the context of a modern nation-state is first and foremost about providing for the fundamental needs and aspirations of citizens, through governmental institutions and processes, steered, driven and guided by chosen representatives of the people through competitive elections, which are free, fair and credible. Amongst what can be termed as the fundamental needs and aspirations of citizens in any country are: food, shelter, health, education, rights, wellbeing and human security, which is indeed paramount.

In the crisis and adjustment period of the mid 1980s, the Washington Consensus served as the framework for the intervention activities of the World Bank and other international economic development institutions in the "economic development" of African countries, such as Nigeria (World Bank 2000). It pushed for "massive deregulation of markets, tightening of public spending, guarantees for property rights and large scale privatizations" as the requisite conditions for economic growth and development (Rothstein 2014a: 144).

The notion of "good governance" evolved with the failure of structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) to catalyze economic growth and development in the so-called developing countries, and seem to have replaced the Washington Consensus in the 1990s. Since the 1990s, scholars have attributed the failure of the Washington Consensus strategy to the lack of functional, or weakness of, institutions and have been preoccupied with the search for measures and mechanisms of reforming public institutions and making the delivery of public sector services to the public more transparent, accountable, efficient and cost-effective through reform processes. As Rothstein has noted, "since the late 1990s, economists and political scientists alike have started to argue that dysfunctional government institutions play a central part in many of the world's most pressing economic and social problems" (2014b: 5). Hence, panacea was seen as "good governance", which can remove distortions in the public sector and restore functionality of institutions. Thus, "good governance" became the framework within which to introduce market mechanisms into the public sector governance processes. Many conceptions of "good governance" abound, as summarized by Rothstein: from good governance as small government, to good governance as the absence of corruption, to good governance as the rule of law, good governance as democracy, to good governance as government efficiency, etc. (ibid. 2014a: 146-152).

In advancing the case of good governance, many other concepts are also bandied about; such notions as "devolved governance" related to organization of public administration; "delegated governance", in regulatory policy; and new issues were introduced to "fiscal governance" (Hardiman 2014:236). In particular, under the framework of "good governance", African countries were guided to "bring managerialism into the public bureaucracy" and introduce "public management reforms" which have the objectives "of increasing efficiency, cutting costs, and helping the public sector to deliver high-quality service" (Pierre 2014: 188 &190).

In any case, good governance came to mean the absence of bad governance. Characteristics of "bad governance" are identified as: lack of accountability and transparency, interference with the rule of law and corruption. Indeed, bad governance is perceived as the inability of public institutions to manage public affairs and public resources; and the failure of a government to meet the needs of society while making the best use of all the resources at their disposal.

Ironically the World Bank's conception of "good governance" is applicable within the contexts of both democratic governments and authoritarian regimes, with profound contradictions being evident. Cutting costs, "rolling back" the state, efficiency, institutional capacity building, were pursued vigorously at the expense of inclusivity, participatory processes, bottom up approaches and to some extent, even transparency and accountability. Thus, good governance is stripped off its normative democratic content.

Perhaps a more useful concept would be that which qualifies governance, such as a notion of "good democratic governance". In a transitional democracy, such as Nigeria's, whatever else governance could be, it must include a democratic content: it must be participatory, with bottom-up processes and it must have inclusivity. What does good, democratic governance entail? Its framework is necessarily democratic, it is governance within a constitutional framework and based on the rule of law, as well as circumscribed by universal rights and freedoms. Governance in an undemocratic context and framework, no matter how good, may not necessarily be sustainable. That is why it is better to focus on good democratic governance, rather than just good governance.

Characteristics and Attributes of Selfless Leadership

Selfless leadership is desirable for societal progress and development as it is focused on satisfying collective needs and aspirations, in contrast to leadership characterized by selfishness, which is preoccupied with personal gain and the advancement of particularistic objectives. Selfless leadership encompasses, among other things, the following:

- Good character, ethical conduct and moral uprightness
-Capacity and ability to facilitate the happiness, success and aspirations of citizens, at enormous personal sacrifices
- Show of concern more with the needs of others than personal selfish ones
- Thinking and acting more of others beyond self; and sacrificing time, comfort and effort in the service of others
- Humility to listen to, understand and treat others with dignity and respect
- Disposition to be responsible and responsive to the expectations, need and aspirations of the citizens
- Commitment to give one's best without thinking of personal gain
- Courage of conviction
- Empathy
- Motivated by, and striving for, excellence
- Incorrupt ability

Selfless leaders are the epitome of service to the people, deserving of the recognition and title of "Servant-leaders". They devote themselves to effective and efficient service delivery to the citizens, driving satisfaction from positive outcomes and value-addition, and not from personal, material reward or gain. The truly great leaders in modern history are selfless leaders, people who, by their selflessness, motivate, inspire others and achieve greatness for their countries. Selfless leaders are the epitome of service to the people, deserving of the recognition and title of "Servant-leaders". They devote themselves to effective and efficient service delivery to the citizens, deriving satisfaction from positive outcomes and value-

addition, and not from personal, material reward or gain. The truly great leaders in modern history are selfless leaders, people who, by their selflessness, motivate, inspire others and achieve greatness for their countries.

Nigeria: Situational Analysis

In Nigeria's history, both in the colonial, post-colonial and contemporary era, we can point to examples of selfless leadership. Prominent personalities in leadership positions in governance who have made enormous personal sacrifices, eschewed personal material gains, served their country diligently and selflessly not in pursuit of material gains. Admittedly, they are relatively few and far apart. There has not been a congregation or confluence of them in politics and/or in governance to be desirably impactful.

Indeed, it can be asserted without fear of contradiction that, in the contemporary era, i.e. since the commencement of the Fourth Republic in May 1999, the extent and quality of selfless leadership in governance has deteriorated and degenerated. Greed and avarice have become the pivots of governance. The prevailing tendency is increasingly that of accessing leadership positions in governance, at all levels, by hook or by crook, for personal and particularistic gainful preoccupations. Leadership positions are accessed by corrupt, illegal and unwholesome ways and means and, increasingly, people who assume leadership positions, proceed to lead the pack in kleptocratic emptying of the public treasury and other public properties. Or if they themselves do not steal at all, they look the other way as their clients and cronies steal public coffers with impunity. As a consequence, governance become bad, extremely so, citizens become disillusioned and angry due to crises of expectations and mis-governance or bad governance; and the rapacious elite engaged in do or die competition for political power and access to state resources, divide the citizens on the basis "us" versus "them", through the mobilization of ethno religious and other primordial identities, fanning the embers of conflagration and igniting violent conflicts and crises, destructive of the ephemeral fabric which loosely binds the nation.

Summary and conclusion

There is no doubt that the almost total absence of selfless leadership in governance is a major contributor to the appalling state of affairs in governance in contemporary Nigeria. However, the enormous challenges which Nigeria currently faces, cannot be successfully addressed by a leadership that is merely selfless. It would rather require selfless, plus visionary, forthright, patriotic and people oriented leadership, with focused policies and vigorously executed programmes and projects in accord with the carefully articulated vision of what the future represents. Anything short of this kind of desirable leadership would not be remarkably constrained, in taking Nigeria out of the woods of the wilderness, which it is currently.

This can be brought about by mobilizing people with competence, ability, and requisite qualities of selflessness in leadership, to organize and become very actively involved in politics. Many of these have been distant from politics, sitting on the fence and watching things get dirtier and messier, because they don't want to get dirty in the murky waters of Nigerian politics. Now things have gotten to a stage that reckless politicians are not just

playing and muddling through in the murky political terrain, they are now busily spraying the mud around, messing up virtually every body and, to boot, blinding many of us! So, anybody with any semblance of integrity need to be encouraged, mobilized and prodded, to pull their bootstraps and guard their loins and enter politics to help and all aspects at all levels of politics, to help clean up the mess, before it buries all of us. In addition, we need to pay attention to imbibing and utilizing the values of selflessness and ethical conduct, as well as sensitizing, cultivating and indoctrinating these among the youth who whether we like it or not, would have the future of this country in their hands, to make or mar. many of us are already in the "departure lounge". We should not allow the present trend to continue unabated, with youth being taught 'entrepreneurship' and other business notions of 'survival of the fittest, without any infusion of values of ethical conduct and selflessness or the organized pursuit of collective aspirations.

Source:WhatsApp

Dealing with Stereotyping Associated with Waste Recycling Activities

By
Ahmed Sabo

Introduction

Background Information

Effective waste management is essential to safeguarding public health and sanitation, protecting the environment, and improving resource efficiency. In Nigeria like many other developing countries, solid waste management is almost always the responsibility of constituted government authorities and is often their single largest budget item. However, effective waste management remains a big challenge due to limited financial, physical and human resources. In cities where formal waste management systems are underdeveloped, the informal waste management system has long played a key role in collecting, sorting, and recycling wastes.

Recycling has been identified as one of the key factors in the sustainable and efficient use of resources. Despite the essential nature of recycling for the efficient and sustainable use of resources, the formal waste management system in most Nigerian cities lacks the technologies, strategies and infrastructure. Amidst the absence of recycling in the formal waste management system, there exists an informal system of recycling which contributes to waste management (Fahmi and Su on 2006, Wilson et al. 2009). Recycling is done by the informal waste scavengers who earn a living through informal waste collection and recycling strategies (Wilson et al., 2009). Available literature reveals that informal waste pickers have recorded remarkable success in the recycling of waste and in some cities, they constitute the only source of recyclable materials for local manufacturing industries (Wilson et al. 2009; Fahmi and Su on, 2006). Despite the economic, environmental, and public health benefits which societies enjoy from waste picking activities, waste pickers are usually marginalized and stereotyped. Despite the economic, environmental, and public health benefits which societies enjoy from waste picking activities, waste pickers are usually marginalized and stereotyped. Despite the economic, environmental, and public health benefits which societies enjoy from waste picking activities, waste pickers are usually marginalized and stereotyped. This review is aimed at identifying the major causes of stereotyping and other

Contribution of Informal Sector

It is estimated that the informal waste recycling sector provides employment to the marginal groups in urban centers of many developing countries. At least 2 percent of the total urban population are engaged in waste scavenging for their livelihood (Medina, 2000) supporting nearly 15 million people for income generation and survival (Porras and Climent-sanjuan, 2018).

The activities of informal recycling grossly reduce the overall cost of Municipal Solid Waste Management. In a study conducted by the World Bank in collaboration with the Swiss Center for Development Corporation (World Bank/SKAT, 2009), it was discovered that the informal sector helps conserve resources, provides secondary raw material, and protect the environment. The informal sector, therefore, achieves a net benefit value while the formal sector has a net loss value as shown in Figure 1.

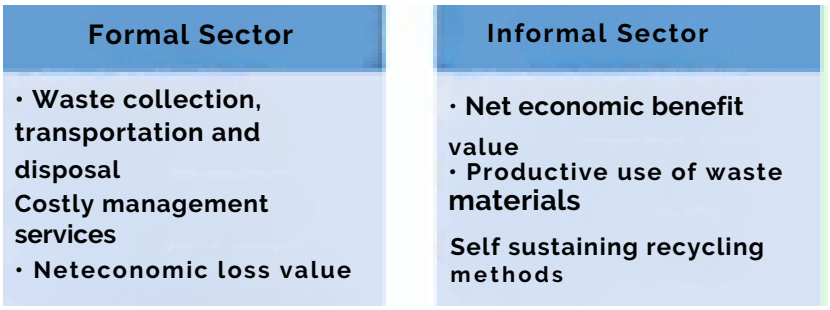


Figure 2. Comparison between formal and informal sectors in developing countries Source: World Bank/STAK, 2009

The informal sector uses self-sustaining methods while the formal sector engages in costly waste management services. Typical informal waste workers' lives are driven to work due to lack of employment opportunities and economic security which makes them self-motivated. The informal sector is mostly made up of locals and marginal social groups who engaged in waste services for survival.

Waste Scavengers

In general terms, waste scavengers are workers who seek, collect, select, transport, and sell materials and objects outside the formal waste collection system (Porras and Climent, 2018). Waste pickers range from people rummaging through garbage in search of food, clothing, and other basic daily needs to informal private collectors of recyclables for sale to middlemen or businesses, as well as organized collectors and sorters of recyclables. The majority of waste pickers deal with municipal solid waste. In recent years, waste pickers have also started to recover electrical and electronic waste (e-waste) as an additional source of recyclable material (ILO, 2014). Due to the informal nature of their work, statistics on waste pickers are still limited. In 2013, the International Labour Office (ILO) estimated that, only one-fifth of workers in the waste management and recycling industry is in formal employment. Although little solid data exists, a significant number of workers involved in recycling and waste management are women, often working as waste pickers at the lower end of the informal economy (ILO, 2013).

Environmental Contributions of the Waste Pickers

Most authors agree with the need to highlight the environmental dimension of waste picking. If goods are reused, then the production of new items (providing the same function) can be avoided, which results in a major reduction of waste impact on the environment (Ramusch, et. al., 2015). Additionally, waste pickers enhance the quality of life in the areas where they work by reducing pollution, maintaining city cleanliness, and preventing the spread of diseases, even at a risk to themselves. They also contribute to

increasing the lifespan of landfills by lowering the quantity of disposable waste. In developed countries, this activity contributes to advancing recycling objectives established by political programmes and legislation (Dias, 2016).

Stereotyping and other Challenges Faced by Informal Waste Recyclers

Waste recycling procedures especially waste scavenging has been stereotyped such that, most people especially households and shop owners see them as a nuisance and almost always label them as thieves. This is a clear indication that, informal waste pickers in the metropolis are neither recognized nor socially protected. Waste scavengers are hardly seen as people making active choices, but as people that are hopeless, and associated with depression (Mumini, 2016).

The waste retailers also face similar humiliation in the society and many of them faced several wrong accusations of conniving with thieves get apprehended by the constituted authority and unjustly extorted. Occupational health and safety are major concerns of the informal waste scavengers. As they roam about on the dumpsites to salvage the waste items, they get pierced by sharp objects or bitten by predators. This is in addition to the inhalation of various noxious gaseous substances that emanates from the decomposition of organic waste which makes them fall sick more frequently compared to others in other jobs. The situation is further compounded by the fact that the scavengers are not covered by any form of health insurance scheme for the work they do (Cambridge, M. A., 2013; ILO and WIEGO, 2017). Most of the waste scavengers and to some extent, the retailers do not have any organized structure or association and this poses a challenge to them in terms of pricing and welfare. Usually, such prices of waste items come from recycling industries and they as informal waste pickers do not have a voice in determining the prices of the items. They attribute the pushing down of prices in their throats to a lack of organisational structures or association within the metropolis. Looking at the hierarchy of waste recycling, waste scavengers occupied the bottom least position in the waste commodity chain. They do the most tedious part of the job and get the least value for it (Figure 2.)

They are unable to resist these exploitative tendencies because they lack organized association/unions. Thus, the exploitative relationship between informal waste pickers at the bottom of the pyramid on one hand and the recycling industries and middlemen on the other signals power relations and sheer inequality in the waste recycling business within the informal sector.

Figure 2. Hierarchy of plastic recycling. Source: Barford and Ahmad (2021).

Dealing with Stereotyping Associated with Recycling

Reports from various authors reaffirmed the situation where discrimination and stereotyping are labelled against waste scavengers. In fact, the concept of waste scavenging in itself, seems to contaminate the person engaged in such activity. A report by Wittmer and Parizeau (2018),

revealed that many waste scavengers interviewed regularly experienced negative reactions while working, due to their association with garbage. The following are some of the major ways through which stereotyping associated with waste recycling, and in particular waste scavenging can be addressed:

Integrating the Waste Recyclers into the Formal Waste Management System

Since the management of Municipal Solid Waste is the sole responsibility of the government, through the respective constituted authorities and given the fact that, these responsible agencies fall short of their responsibilities; there is the need for them to integrate informal sectors into their activities and provide the enabling environment for them to operate. This will give the informal sector especially the waste scavenger a sense of belonging and self-esteem, and consequently earn them more respect from the public who hitherto look down upon them. Integrating the waste recyclers into the government sector also means that, waste scavenging is now recognized as an occupation and legal identity is provided to the scavengers. The scavengers and other stakeholders in the waste recycling, should be encouraged to participate in policy making process.

Policy on Waste Scavenging

At a global level, the International Labour Organization recognized waste scavenging as a 'decent work' (ILO, 2003). The scavengers are also portrayed as important in achieving the United Nation Sustainable Development Goals. Therefore, the individual state should learn from the international organization, and come up with a deliberate policy on waste scavenging. Such policies should especially address the issue of marginalization against the scavengers, thus protecting them from the stereotypic inhumane treatment by the society.

Formation of Waste Scavengers Association

By getting organized, waste pickers can strengthen their bargaining position with industry and government, become actors in the development process, and overcome poverty through grassroots development. Working together, they can gain stability, higher income, and legalization of their activities. They can obtain better prices by circumventing middlemen, and adding value to materials sold. By being organized into cooperatives, they can enter into contracts with industry or grant agreements. Being organized generally means a rise in their social status and self-esteem, debunking the stereotyping associated with their jobs (Martins, 2008).

Educational Programs

Educational anti-stigma interventions present factual information about the stigmatized condition with the goal of correcting misinformation or contradicting negative attitudes and beliefs. They counter inaccurate stereotypes or myths by replacing them with factual information. Therefore, there should be a campaign to counter the idea that waste scavengers as a people, are hopeless, and thieves. Although generally aimed at combating

public stigma, educational interventions have been found to be effective in reducing self-stigma, improving stress management, and boosting self-esteem (Cook et al., 2014; Heijinders and Van der Meji, 2006)

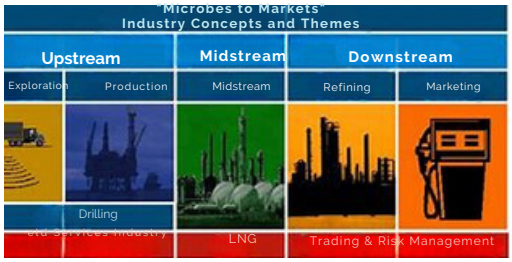
Conclusion

Waste scavengers enhance the quality of life in the areas where they work by reducing pollution, maintaining city cleanliness, and preventing the spread of diseases, even at a risk to themselves. They also contribute to increasing the lifespan of landfills by lowering the quantity of disposable waste. However, various reports reaffirm the situation where discrimination and stereotyping are labelled against the waste scavengers. Stereotyping associated with waste scavenging can be addressed through formulation of policy on waste scavenging; integrating the waste scavenging into the formal waste management system; forma on of Waste Scavengers Association and educational programs.

Preparing the Youths in Bauchi State for the Upcoming Oil Industry

BY
MM Ahmed

The oil industry is an extensive venture; ranging from exploration, extraction, refining, to transportation and marketing of petroleum products. It is divided into upstream; exploration and production, midstream; transportation and storage and downstream; refining and marketing.



Crude oil deposit was first discovered in Nigeria in 1956 at Oloibiri, Bayelsa State, and the first oil field, with a production capacity of 5100 bpd came on stream 2 years later.

Exploration activities expanded in the 1960s/70s, substantially as a result of the oil boom, and subsequently, production level attained the 2 million bpd mark. Nigeria soon became a major player in the global oil industry, and to consolidate on this new status, the country joined the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in 1971.

Oil today is the mainstay of Nigeria's economy; accounting for over 5 percent of the GDP, over 90 percent of export earnings, and generating about 80 percent of government revenue. The industry creates over 60,000 direct and 250,000 indirect employments. Revenue derived from both oil and non-oil sources is shared among the 3 tiers of government; federal, states and local governments at the ratio of 56, 24, and 20 percent respectively. The oil producing states earn an additional 13 percent based on the principle of derivation which provides that a state is given a certain portion of the revenue accruing from the exploitation and extraction of oil resources in its territory. The 13 percent derivation fund is quite huge compared to what non-oil producing states get. For instance, in the Feb 2023 FAAC disbursement to the 3 tiers of government, Akwa Ibom state got

In November 2022, President Muhammadu Buhari commissioned the Kolmani oil fields in Alkaleri Local Government Area of the state. According to the NNPC, the oil field has about 1-billion-barrel crude oil reserve and 500 billion cubic feet of gas deposit. No doubt this significant milestone is a blessing to Bauchi State with the anticipated phenomenal rise in revenue.

But beyond the perks of 13 percent derivation fund the state should maximise all the expected economic gains of the oil industry. The oil industry is renowned for its potential to drive economic growth, create job opportunities and attract investments. Already the NNPC intends to build a refinery, a gas processing plant and a fertilizer plant as well as a 300-megawatt power plant in the area. Definitely more oil companies in the upstream, midstream and downstream sectors along with others that service them are expected to spring up in the state. This raises the need for the youths in Bauchi State to effectively leverage this avalanche of opportunities. Fortunately, the Local Content Act 2010 seeks to mobilise and harness indigenous capacity in manpower and manufacturing in the oil industry without compromising quality and standards. The aim is to improve the economic and social well-being of oil producing communities. Hence, Bauchi State should take advantage of the provisions of the Act to promote the full participation of its people in the oil industry.

But participation in the oil industry requires a skilled and knowledgeable work force. This entails investing in the education and training of the youth. Primary focus in the state should be on technical and vocational training. Currently, there are less than 10 technical colleges in Bauchi State, which is inadequate for a population of over 5 million people. Therefore, the state government should establish additional technical colleges and fine-tune the curricula to meet the specific needs of the oil industry. Further to this, the learning of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects should be vigorously pursued at pre-tertiary level across the state. This should be supported by a robust career guidance and counselling that provides useful information on available opportunities, career paths and industry trends thereby helping the youth to make informed decisions.

At the tertiary level the state government had delivered on its promise to establish a petroleum institute in the state. What is needed now is adequate staffing and funding. The state should complement this with seeking for special admission slots for qualified candidates of the state in higher institutions that offer industry-related courses, within and outside Nigeria, as well as collaborate with such institutions to establish satellite campuses in Bauchi State. This would enable the youths to pursue degrees and certifications in various oil related fields without leaving their home states. Scholarships, grants and financial aid should also be made available to deserving students who demonstrate the potential to excel in oil industry related courses.

In addition to formal education, practical experience is crucial for young individuals seeking to enter the oil industry. Bauchi State should collaborate with oil companies that would operate in the region to create internships and apprenticeship programmes. This initiative would allow the youths to gain hands-on-experience, familiarize themselves with industry practices, and develop relevant skills. Additionally, mentorship programmes where experienced professionals guide and support young talents, can provide valuable guidance and insights.

Beyond technical skills, emphasis should also be placed on cultivating the right mindset and values among the youth. The oil industry demands integrity, professionalism, and a strong work ethics. Entrepreneurial and leadership skills should also be fostered to encourage the youth to explore opportunities beyond traditional employment and become future industry

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Beyond technical skills, emphasis should also be placed on cultivating the right mindset and values among the youth. The oil industry demands integrity, professionalism, and a strong work ethics. Entrepreneurial and leadership skills should also be fostered to encourage the youth to explore opportunities beyond traditional employment and become future industry leaders.

The State government should likewise prioritize infrastructure development to support the growth of the oil industry. This includes the construction and maintenance of roads, power supply, housing, facilities and healthcare services. Adequate infrastructure will attract more investments, create an enabling environment for businesses, and improve the overall quality of life for the youth and the entire population.

As Bauchi state prepares for the upcoming oil industry, the focus must be on empowering the youth and ensuring their active participation. By investing in their education, providing practical experience, promoting local content, and fostering the right values, the State can secure a prosperous future for its young population and maximize the potential benefit that the oil industry offers. With the right strategies and collective efforts, Bauchi state can transform into a thriving hub of opportunity and innovation in Nigeria’s oil sector.

Girls in Tertiary Education: Surmounting the Prejudices

By
Jummai Bappa

Introduction

Education is key to the development of any community, society or nation. Education of the girl-child is the bedrock of this development process. Nigeria's problems of development can be partly attributed to lack of adequate attention to the education of its youth. In Bauchi State, the problem is compounded by the low enrolment and completion of young people in tertiary education. The abysmally low percentage of girls in tertiary institutions of learning in the state is an additional cause for concern. The Bauchi State Gender Policy (2013) states that government has made many attempts to address the gender gap in education and it has prioritized increased access to education for girls in the state. However, this is still work in progress.

The Savannah Institute for Sustainable Development (SISDev) is implementing an experimental project on the education of girls – with particular focus on the tertiary level. The impetus for this came from the Bauchi State Ministry of Education that wanted to go into partnership with SISDev on girls' education at tertiary level. Unfortunately, the partnership did not take off. But SISDev went ahead to work on its own. To this effect it signed a Memorandum for Collaboration with the Bauchi State University Gadau (BASUG). SISDev set out to undertake advocacy and other engagement activities to help increase the number of Bauchi girls in tertiary institutions of learning. The project was tagged Girls in Tertiary Education – GiTE.

Context

National data indicate that the North East is the most educationally backward region in Nigeria. According to the 2015 Nigeria Education Data Survey (NEDS), the highest basic literacy rates for children aged 5–16 was in the South West while the North East had the lowest level. The NE too had the lowest numeracy rate of 27 percent compared to other geopolitical zones of the country. The survey also confirmed that parents and guardians recognized benefits of education to both girls and boys. These include literacy, numeracy and critical or analytical thinking. Life skills and the development of moral values were also listed as benefits of education. Particularly for girls, some parents and guardians also listed educated girls as making better marriages as well as being better mothers.

The national data by gender is however more encouraging. It shows that once enrolled, girls tend to do well. This suggests that since girls are succeeding at basic education level, supporting them to go to a higher level should be fairly straight forward. According to the Nigeria DHS EdData Survey 2010, most parents and guardians across all geopolitical zones in Nigeria support boys and girls to have primary school education although preference is given to the boys. However, people in urban areas were more likely to support a girl to

complete primary school than those in rural areas. Equally, the more economically advantaged a family is, the more likely it supports schooling for girls. The conclusion is that parents support girls' education albeit at lower levels. SISDev therefore set out to advocate with various stakeholders in the state, to help increase enrolment and retention of girls in tertiary institutions of learning, up to completion.

Influencing Factors

The development and implementation of interventions to reduce prejudices towards girls' schooling and enhance equity and social inclusion are influenced by aspects of context at local level, including religious and socio-cultural factors. Equally important is the fact that for many families, the cost of educating a girl is much more than educating a boy. Families feel compelled to provide as much as possible, all that girls would need in school so that the girls would not be lured away from their studies by philanderers who destroy the future of girls. Families that are unable to afford the full costs may choose for the girls to remain at home. This is a fundamental prejudice and discriminatory factor. Some of the factors militating against female education include (but not limited to) the following:

- Lack of awareness/knowledge of the value to society of girls' education
- Poverty/lack of financial means
- Lack of moral support from families and communities
- Negative parental attitude to girls' education
- Low self-esteem among girls especially due to lack of role models
- Cultural beliefs and practices that see and keep girls at a lower social status
- Unhelpful/unfavourable teacher-learner relationship particularly towards girls
- Unsafe schools/unsafe school routes with girls being more at risk
- Lack of essential facilities (water, separate toilets for girls at classroom areas, accommodation on campus,etc.)

These factors have their roots in the prejudices that the general public has on the education of girls – particularly at a higher level. It is the prejudice that is behind the actions and inactions.

Multi-pronged Approach

There is no magic bullet to solve the issues associated with prejudices on the education of girls. There is no one approach to resolving the multiple issues. There is also no one organisation, working on its own that would be able to bring about the desired results. The issues require a multi-pronged approach–not just tackling the various issues simultaneously, but also working with various stakeholders at the same time. These stakeholders have to have the expertise and/or are in the best position to take the required actions effectively. Approaches to improve the education of girls would have to address the various issues, some of which are listed above. Looking at the list, it is obvious that governments at the various levels would not be able to achieve the desired results on their own. The private sector, civil society, individual philanthropists and ordinary citizens all have to be involved. Some of the stakeholders across the sectors (not in any order) include:

- Parents, guardians, spouses, male relations

- Tertiary institutions of learning
- Teachers and Lecturers
- Relevant Departments (and Units) of the Ministry of Education
- Relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies (identified as of particular relevance to the education of girls – Ministry of Women Affairs; Agency for Mass Education)
- Religious leaders
- Community Based and Faith Based Organisations
- The organized private sector
- Traditional and community leaders
- Students and prospective students of institutions of higher education
- Individual philanthropists
- Identified Role Models

Stakeholders have various roles that could be overlapping as well as complementary. It is more helpful for stakeholders to lead in the roles and/or take actions in the areas where they will make the most impact. This could be areas where they have the most expertise or most influence. Changing biases, prejudices and other negative attitude towards girls going on for tertiary education would require stakeholders working in tandem; each concentrating on where they will make the most impact and providing the right synergy. Processes of social change associated with building an enabling environment for and changes in social norms towards creating and providing opportunities for girls and young women to enrol and complete tertiary education will go a long way in paving the way for meaningful development in the society.

Strategies to improve female education will have to identify and reduce the barriers in access to tertiary education for them. Expanded education opportunities for girls and women are beginning to be seen as the panacea to socio-economic development. Interventions that will enhance the capacity of women and girls to participate in discussing school practices and reflecting on their experiences are to be considered especially that there is a link between the expansion of girls' education and social change. Obviously, adequate resourcing (financial, time, skills, support and critical reflection) must be allocated to support implementation.

SISDev started off with basic research and consultations with some of the stakeholders listed earlier. These initial preparations were to help critically examine what the stakeholders were doing already and determine how to build on that and decide the best approach for an effective project. SISDev then chose to concentrate on activities that would complement each other - school visits, engaging a tertiary institution and establishing short term and more long-term collaborations with some of the civil society stakeholders. The SISDev GiTE project is still work in progress. However, based on the experience this far, combined with what the literature says, there are clear indications that the desired result will be achieved in the long run. It is a marathon, not a sprint.

Recommendations

Probably the most important recommendation to make is that it is fundamental to

understand that surmounting the prejudices around girls in tertiary education is a long haul. Surmounting prejudices has to do mainly with changing people's mindsets, attitudes and practices. Changing these take time. In this regard, care must be taken to clearly define the milestones that a project on the issue wants to achieve in the short, medium and long terms. This way, the little successes would encourage more commitment to work and sustain interest of stakeholders. For any intervention on girls' education to succeed, there is need to work with a mix of stakeholders and a mix of approaches. The roles of parents, husbands and male relations are crucial. There is therefore need to have them buy into the idea from the very beginning and stick to the cause throughout the journey.

Charity begins at home – the family is the first point where prejudices are born and nurtured. Traditional and religious leaders and institutions are key in changing mindsets and for sensitization and mobilization purposes. There is need to have them onboard at the onset. All other stakeholders, as listed already need to have their roles defined, understood and activated. The media, government institutions and civil society must play the roles assigned to them by their mandates. Budgets have to be allocated, released and utilized in a timely fashion. The hiring, retention and proper deployment of qualified female lecturers/instructors is essential. They serve as role models to the girls as well as help ease the minds of parents and husbands. Organisations working on the issues around girls in tertiary education need to work together in a concerted effort for a combined effect.

Tertiary institutions need to address religious and cultural concerns of the environment in which they are situated. This include providing the basic facilities required for female students to learn and thrive in a tertiary institution. Safeguarding is a huge issue for parents and female students. Gender based physical and emotional violence, including harassment of girls by male teachers and fellow students is an important safeguarding issue. Safety and security are also of great concern to parents and female students.Generally, there is a great need for a more gender-sensitive environment in tertiary institutions of learning. The prejudices around girls' education are part of the reasons why some of these provisions are not made for female students. Providing the required facilities, amenities and a generally more female-friendly learning environment would go a long way in encouraging girls' enrolment, retention and completion of their education.

For any intervention on surmounting the prejudices around girls in tertiary education, there is need to set up a close monitoring and reporting mechanism, establishing the use of learning (from challenges as well as successes) to make the necessary improvements. As stated earlier, surmounting the prejudices around girls in tertiary education is a marathon, will take time and a lot of other resources. Understanding this at the onset is fundamental.

GUEST WRITER

Fuel Subsidy Removal and its Perceived Socio-Economic Implications on Nigerians

Hammayo Abubakar
December 12th, 2023

Subsidies are a form of transferred funds from the government to an entity for the purpose of keeping the prices of essential goods and services low and affordable to the citizens. It is also a form of government incentives targeted towards individuals and households including businesses with the aim of keeping the economy stable. The history of subsidies in Nigeria could be traced back to the mid-1970s when the Nigerian government introduced it on some essential goods and services such as petroleum products in order to make them easily accessible and affordable to Nigerians. Since then, subsidy regime has significantly impacted positively on the lives of the citizens.

Petroleum products, among other goods and services subsidized, has economic multiplier effects on numerous macro-economic variables, thereby making it the most significant of all other subsidized products in the Nigerian economy. The impression of most governments in Nigeria is that fuel subsidy has failed in its primary purpose of ensuring affordability of the product to common masses, rather, it serves as an avenue of enriching few privileged individuals to the detriment of majority of Nigerians. Hence, the need to remove the subsidy and channel the funds to other critical sectors of the economy became the goal of successive regimes in the country. However, the government is always faced with some delicate questions: when should petroleum subsidies be completely removed from the annual national budget, what are the possible negative effects of subsidy removal on Nigerians, what are the measures to mitigate such negative effects, and how can these measures be sustained?

In his inaugural speech of Monday May 29th, 2023, President Bola Ahmad Tinubu announced the complete abolition of petroleum subsidy, suggesting that it no longer justify its ever-increasing cost in the wake of dwindling government revenue. He reiterated that funds allocated for subsidies will instead be diverted to other important sectors such as infrastructure, education, healthcare and unemployment which, will materially improve the livelihood of millions of Nigerians. Prior to this pronouncement by Mr President the Nigerian government spent about ₦400billion (about $500 million) monthly to subsidize petroleum products. This expenditure was aimed at filling the gap between the projected open market price and the pump price. Hence, to make up for the market shortfall, the government issued it as a direct or indirect payment to companies and individuals engaged in the importation of refined petroleum products.

The total withdrawal of petroleum subsidy resulted to an exponential rise in the Petroleum Pump Price (PPP) from ₦ 191.65 to ₦ 617 per litre, indicating a significant increase of about 69 percent. Also, commodity prices and services skyrocketed in almost all sectors of the economy due to the multiplier effects of petroleum products on numerous aspects of business

and engagements, thereby significantly affecting the socio-economic lives of majority of Nigerians.

Reacting to this phenomenon, the Nigerian government immediately began to implement earlier planned measures as a way of curtailing the unfavourable short-term effects of petroleum subsidy removal. Labour leaders from the Trade Union Congress and Nigeria Labor Congress vehemently rejected the removal of subsidy and demanded for an immediate reversal. Subsequently, they met with government officials on ways to address the attendant hardship Nigerians were likely to experience, however, this was without reaching any common ground. The trade unions had to embark on a strike action nationwide, and eventually an agreement was reached with the government on short and long-term measures to be taken to alleviate the indescribable suffering Nigerians were facing. These measures include; the provision of ₦100 billion for the acquisition of 3000 units of 20-seater Compressed Natural Gas (CNG)-fuelled buses, ₦200 billion to enhance agriculture production, ₦75 billion for manufacturers, ₦125 billion for Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and the informal sector, ₦50 billion as palliative to the states and ₦1 trillion for student loans and other programs. Others included ₦315 billion to pay federal government employees the sum of ₦35,000 allowance each, for six consecutive months, ₦1.13 trillion to go to 15 million households for a period of three months, ₦70 billion as palliative to lawmakers and ₦75 billion loan facility to 1.5 million market women amongst others.

Today, six months after fuel subsidy removal, regrettably, these measures were yet to fully take effect. The palliatives have only been implemented halfway. Domestic refineries are yet to be fully functional and petroleum products are still being imported, which continue to keep prices high. Currently, petroleum pump price ranges between ₦630 to ₦710 depending on certain variables across the nation. The palliative measures have been partially implemented, and so there is no substantial improvement in the welfare of the masses as promised. There has been so much public outcry, debates and suggestions by concerned citizens mostly on the inappropriate timing of fuel subsidy removal, the unrealistic palliative measures and the long-term negative effects it may have on the economy as a whole.

In conclusion, the government cannot afford to continue with subsidising petroleum products to the benefit of some few individuals and corporate bodies. This is justifiable given the economic predicament facing the country. The nation must therefore align itself with the rising technology and fix its faulty refineries.

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