

UNDERSTANDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CULTURES AND SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Africa, the cradle of human civilization has been described by scholars of history as a cultural wasteland. Meaning that, there is a negative correlation between it cultures and sustainable national development at the moment as opposed to the past. This paper therefore attempt an understanding of the significance of culture to national development citing reference with history and other developed part of world for countries. Through a content analysis of relevant literatures the study findings show a deliberate and forceful enforcement of exotic cultures as in respect to politics, economy, and the socio-cultural dynamics of Nigeria. This situation created series of clashes of civilization, politics of identity, and economic underdevelopment in Nigerian history. On the basis of these findings, the research emphasized the need to adopt indigenous political and economic system via conduit of the diverse cultures tapping from different part of the country for the purpose of sustainable national development.

Keywords: Understanding, Relationship, Cultures, Sustainable, National development

Introductions

Just like in the differences of geographical climates around the world, there exist different cultures and civilizations doted on the map of the world. In fact, the beauty of the world civilizations is imbedded in the mosaic of cultures designed around the globe. Culture is so important that, there is no any existences on the face of the earth whether animate or inanimate which exist without a culture. Cultures give individual human beings, communities and countries a specific means of identifications. The specific means of identifications to individuals and communities is attributed to the characters, values, ways of communications, movements, and approach to development and as premised or consequence upon the cultures. Thus individuals, communities and countries at large are embodiments of cultures.

We have seen in historical sciences and other social science discipline the classifications of different stages of human advancements in material and nonmaterial cultures. The most common example is the socioeconomic economic advancement in the following stages:

1. Hunting
2. Food gathering
3. Slavery
4. Feudalism
5. Capitalism

And most recently, economic liberalization. At every stage of these human developments, there exists a propelling culture which kept advancing to a desired stage of human needs. This therefore can be

contextualized within the thinking of Ali M (2009), where he maintained that: cultures serves as a means of production and consumption not just a means for perception, cognition, criterion for evaluation, and basis for identity.

Similarly the collapse of Islamic civilization in Europe and other part of the globe in 15th century lead to the discovery of new methods and approach to knowledge(European Renaissance) which transformed the Western world economy from preindustrial to industrial, and post industrial stages was driven by a powerful progressive cultures . However, these stages of human development where also characterized with catastrophic events of destructions of human life's and properties during the First and Second World Wars driven by retrogressive cultures. Although, Marxist Karl Marx claimed that crisis is integral to survival of the society.

Nigeria is therefore not an exception, long before the intrusion of the colonial masters, powerful cultures moved and shaped the developments of various parts of the countries, there were the Nok cultures in western and central part of Nigeria which flourish between 500 BC and AD 200, a splendid political administrative system of administration in the northern Nigeria, a democratic system of administration in south eastern Nigeria, and other forms of useful crafts driven by powerful cultures. The modern day Nigeria is however modeled after the British cultures in all ramifications ranging from dressing, eating habits, language, system of education, politics, music, arts and above all adopting their models and approach in the industrialization process. However, the earliest parts of the modern day Nigerian journey also witnessed a clash of cultures and civilizations culminating into a civil war (1967-70) and other religious and communal clashes leading to destruction of human lives and properties. Interestingly, cultural positivism ended the war and continued a process of nation building and national development to extend that Nigeria is described as the strongest state in Africa due to it cultural positivism.

With regards to sustainable national development Nigeria first adopted the principle of planed national development policies in the following order

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|---|------------|
| 1. First national development plan - | 1962-68-70 |
| 2. Second national development plan- | 1970-74 |
| 3. Third national development plan- | 1975-80 |
| 4. Fourth national development plan- | 1981-85 |
| 5. Fifth national development plan (SAP)- | 1986-88-90 |

Due to superior cultural pressure from the western world Nigeria abandon and adopted new methods of planning called the National Rolling Plans from 1990 to 2003 as a panacea. It however again dropped the Rolling Plans in 2003 for Fixed Medium Development Plans till today.

Despite the changes in policies approach the present status or the position of Nigeria looking at different sector of the economy can be judged from the perspective of a culture approach it adopted in its attempt to achieve sustainable national development.

Therefore this paper intends to examine the relationship between culture and sustainable national development in Nigeria because most studies of political economy focus more on the relationship between politics and economy given less attention to cultures.

Statement of Problems

Issues of sustainable national developments in many countries of the world especially Nigeria is treated with contempt because it is moved more by socio-cultural ideologies than socio-economic ideologies. Socio-cultural ideologies appeal to cultural forces as ethnicity, religion, race-consciousness and regional allegiance. Right from the start of the journey to modern day Nigeria, It is glaring in the events of the moves by Northern Nigeria to attain independence separate from the south, the violence-marred election of 1964, the first military coup in January 1966, the counter coup in july 1966,the three years civil war between 1967-70. Other dimensions of the problems include government decisions in citing of government infrastructural projects, like roads, hospitals, schools, and industries in irrelevant locations. Going forward even the political configuration in the areas of political appointments are marred with such appeals.

In addition to these Nigerians are more inclined to the influence of western culture to the extent that we see our traditional cultures as feudalistic and evil incapable of propelling any meaningful development. Worst still, is Corruption in all spheres of individual and government life making matters worse than ever in Nigeria. Poverty, hunger, insecurity, illiteracy, premature death etc characterize the state of the nation.

Objectives of the Study

In the light of these problems this study intends to look at the following objective with a view to proper solutions for the problems.

1. Understand the meanings of cultures and its types
2. Unstinting the meaning of sustainable national development
3. Understands how cultures impacted changes in Nigeria and other countries
4. Understand which cultures is best for Nigeria

Significance

This study will go a long way in providing insight on the importance and relevance of culture to individual groups and government and the need to mobilize the abundant resources of culture in attaining sustainable national development. By this, the dynamism of human civilization as it contributes to knowledge of solving fundamental societal problems will be understood. As such, creating an atmosphere of tolerance and trust among Nigerians. By understanding the dialectics of human cultures a space for the innovations and creativity of better ideas of sustainable national development will evolve, thus moving the country to greater heights.

Literatures Review

This section of the study deals with the review of literatures on the conceptual definition of cultures, sustainable developments, types of cultures and other related aspect dealing with the subject matter. The section ends with a discussion of the theory adopted for the purpose of this study.

In anthropology, culture is seen as the patterns of behavior and thinking that people living in social groups learn, create, and share. A people's culture entails their beliefs, rules of behavior, language, rituals, art, and technology, styles of dress, ways of producing and cooking food, religion, and political and economic systems (Microsoft Encarta 2009).

Culture according to Flake (2002) is a socially transmitted or socially constructed constellations, consisting of such things as practiced, competencies, ideas, schemes, symbols, values, norms, institutions, goals, constitutive rules, artifacts, and modification of the physical environments. Culture is thus, that complex whole which includes knowledge belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.

Based on this assertions culture has components which includes, behaviors, religion, literatures, ethics, educational and recreational institutions, socio-economic and political institutions, commerce industries and transport. From these perspectives culture can be divided into non-material and material types. The non-material culture is abstract which is personal to individuals while the material cultures is universal and affects the generality of persons in a country. Best it can be described as a confederations of cultures shared by all. For example, Nationalism, knowledge in all aspects, and other manmade objects can be categorized as such. By extension the material aspect of knowledge adequately fits into the concerns of sustainable national development and more importantly the United Nation education, scientific and cultural organization (UNESCO). According to Ouyang (2014) the ultimate goal of UNESCO is that, the action development plan of a country should be defined within the context of its cultures. But then, the current trend of globalization is homogenizing the world diverse cultures reducing the world in a smaller entity. Some cultures will therefore be communicated, clashed, and transform to evolved a global cultural approach. By all standard of the United Nations (UN) a sustainable national development revolves around how to solve the problems of hunger, poverty, education, disease, employments, infrastructures such as electricity, road housing etc.

Therefore according to Global Dictionary (2018) sustainable national development is the development that is geared towards the enhancement of individuals in the economy and which would also enhance the development of the nation and such development should be sustainable over time.

It is also opined that, Sustainable national development is the **organizing principle** for meeting **human development** goals while simultaneously **sustaining** the ability of natural systems to provide the **natural resources** and **ecosystem services** on which the economy and society depend. The desired result is a state of society where living conditions and resources are used to continue to meet human needs without undermining the **integrity** and stability of the natural system. Sustainable development can be defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

In general terms It is that process which seeks to enhance the quality of individuals through various means for the effective future utilizations of their scarce resources.

Theoretical framework

Theory is a combination of hypothetical statement which seeks to explain relationship of events or give reasons for the existence of circumstances. Understanding the relationship between culture and sustainable national development can be explained in the context of many theories like, the ignorant theory, geography theory, institution theory and culture theory. The most suitable theory to be used here is the theory of culture. The geography hypothesis claimed that the great divide between rich and poor or developments of countries is created by geographical difference. That many poor countries such as Africa, Central America and South Asia, are between the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn while rich countries tend to be in the temperate latitudes. It is criticized on the ground that it contradicts the recent rapid economic advancement of countries like Singapore, Malaysia and other countries with similar climates.

The ignorant hypothesis held by many economists like Lionel Robbins claim that both Rulers and Followers are poor because they lack the necessary knowledge of implementing government policies especially that of a market led economy or neo-liberalist. It is also criticized on the grounds that many countries get poorer despite the adoption of the principles of market economy.

Therefore the most suitable theory to adopt for the purpose of this study is the culture hypothesis or theory because it relates development to culture. Advocate of this theory are Max Weber and more recently Ali A. Mazrui. The theory stresses the importance of belief system, values, religion, and ethics, motivation drive, curiosity etc. Max Weber claimed that the protestant reformation and the Protestants ethics played a key role in facilitating the rise of modern industrial society in Western Europe. Ali A.Mazrui claimed that human productivity is dependent on the cultures. The theory maintained that the production of skilled human power of a country depends on the precise configuration of the traditions and cultures of those countries. For examples a lot of poverty stricken countries in Africa and Latin America and other part of the world have untapped natural resources in their environments due to lack of cultural curiosity the resources remain to be discovered and harnessed by more superior cultures coming from USA,CHINA,ENGLAND . The theory further argued that Africans have a lot of highly intelligent people who dint use their intelligence to tap either the mineral for production or minerals for gems for exchange purpose etc. due to lack of cultural orientations of acquisitiveness, accumulation, desire to posses, individual drive, and achievements motives.

In the whole of it, the theory sees economic development as a consequence of cultures.

Methodology

The method used for this research is a survey research focusing on qualitative technique. The survey drafted various references from around the globe for the purpose of relevant examples. The study has no specified population and sampling frame, rather a sample of materials around national development in Nigeria and other countries form a convenient basis for data collections. Therefore the study adopted a content analysis of the literatures generated in line with the objectives of the study.

Analysis/Discussion

Following from the discussions and focus of the major aspects of sustainable national development on education, healthcare, poverty, hunger, electricity, climate change etc. The seventeen elements of sustainable national goals can be summarized in around the problems of plaguing Nigeria in.

a. Politics:

The political configuration of the country endowed Nigeria with great political resource from different cultures where it doesn't exist anywhere in Africa. The endowed culture of politics in many quotas is responsible for the stability and survival of the unity of the country. This is in spite of the fact that is a borrowed concept from the western world. However the exotic nature of the system based on foreign culture is making it difficult for a perfect practice, therefore affecting the development of the country.

b. Economy:

The economic sphere has all it takes to move forward looking at the abundant resources and business opportunities. The culture adopted in managing the economy produced instead backwardness in national development. With constant decline in gross domestic product, gross national product, rising rate of inflations etc, the country deeps further into poverty, unemployment, leading to high rate of crime in all aspects.

c. Educations

Blessed with human resources and large number of public and private Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges of educations, and other forms of higher education, with good number of qualified teachers, these institutions are however modeled after a foreign culture. None of these higher institutions is modeled after the Nigerian indigenous culture in all aspects. The expectations are to produce productive labour forces in order to attain sustainable cultures. But the decay is much that it is now compulsory for all students of higher education to study entrepreneurship skills before graduations. Worst still the governments find it's difficult to fund education in the country and they even prefer certificates foreign countries.

d. Culture and tourism:

Nigeria is the most fortunate countries in Africa blessed with abundance of cultures due to 1914 amalgamation and the effort of the military in restoring the break of the country during the civil war. The abundances cut across every human endeavor; in contrast, a brief survey in the thirty-six state of the federation will produce not up to ten standard existing museums in the country. So where is our history? Even if it exists, it exist in the books written by foreign writers in form of 'fairy tales" which do not reflect our true history.

e. Corruption:

It pervades every aspect of the Nigerian cultures to the extent that Nigerians are given an extra careful attention in foreign countries for the fear of unleashing their best known cultures of perverting what is originally good. Thus corruption is a perverted culture which is retrogressive in nature and must be gotten rid of or else it kills the progressive cultures.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The study looked at a brief history of Nigeria before and after independence focusing on the positive and negative impact of culture by citing references to world wars, the Nigerian civil war and the reconstruction efforts of the devastations. The study adopted theory of culture and discussed it within the context of the problems in Nigeria.

The study thus concluded that Nigeria needs a paradigm shift by evolving new political, economic and social institutions compatible with our cultures.

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