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Department of Philosophy, Imo State University, Owerri, Nigeria

National Rebirth: Implications from Philosophy and Technology

Samuel Ugochukwu Obasi

*Philosophy Unit,
Directorate of General Studies
Federal University of Technology, Owerri, Nigeria
lordugosamuel@gmail.com*

Christian Sunday Agama

*Philosophy Unit,
Directorate of General Studies
Federal University of Technology, Owerri, Nigeria
christianagama19@gmail.com*

Abstract

The amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates in 1914 by British colonialists led to the creation of a new entity called Nigeria. This heterogeneously constituted country has faced the arduous task of integrating diverse and divergent cultures, values, and interests into a generally accepted belief system that promotes unity, peace, and progress. For decades, since political independence, Nigeria has been grappling with issues ranging from identity crisis, power sharing and management, lack of infrastructural improvement, social disorder, and violence. A nation endowed with enormous human and natural resources is now on the verge of collapse, mainly due to mismanagement and corruption. The major problem holding the country back, as identified by this paper, is the varying and conflicting interpretation of a political integration theory, in which one group sees it as their right to hold on to power, while other groups are, at times, even violently seeking a negotiated social contract. This has significantly hindered the national drive towards progress and development. This paper contends that there is a need for a national rebirth. Adopting historical and contextual approaches, the paper argues that Nigeria should pursue technological development as part of its quest for progress, while factoring in the philosophical and humane conditions that will foster peace and the survival of its citizens. It is believed that if this positive measure is adopted, the current and prevailing problems plaguing the country's progress will be alleviated or reduced to a minimum.

Keywords: National rebirth, Reform, Good governance, Science, Technology, Philosophy.

Introduction

Our country, Nigeria, is at a perilous crossroads, and it is no longer as it was claimed. It is staggering, wobbling, and fumbling, making it very obvious that those concrete and direct efforts towards a realization of a strong nation are important. The amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates by the British in 1914, aimed at creating a large nation, is now a mirage, given the numerous unresolved problems and crises that persist. The clarion call for real Nationhood is needed, which refers to the status of belonging to a nation (state) or a national identity¹. It is the coming together of the various component units of a country with the purpose of achieving a common interest while putting aside their differences. The problem of disunity in Nigeria has been attributed to many issues, both external (influences from Britain, America, etc) and internal (hence ethnicity, bad governance, etc) influences. Nigeria is a vast country with diverse ethnic groups, differences, and interests, all united as one. Restoring unity within it is an arduous task that requires patience and endurance in the face of her internal problems. Many believe that the problem is structural, while others attribute it to attitudinal and behavioural elements, given the high rate of indiscipline among citizens. External and internal problems are inherent in almost all countries of the world. What matters is their management toward reaching mature nationhood. This is the main distinguishing factor in the determination of countries that are worthy to be called real nations. It is against this backdrop that attempts are made here to treat the internal problems that militate against real national rebirth, which, if solved, the external influences may not have much to do in terms of disintegrating the nation, as the country will be a hard nut to crack. Here, the Nigerian situation is examined to address its problems and foster the creation of a new nation of unity and peace. The pertinent question is, is Nigeria facing some challenges? Is there a need to create a new face for the country? If so, which remedial steps are needed towards the rectification of these anomalies to achieve a national rebirth? The solutions to these and some other pertinent questions form the thrust of this paper.

The Challenges of the Nigerian State

A state may be defined as a form of human association distinguished from other social groups by its purpose, the establishment of order and security, its methods, the laws and their enforcement, its territory, the area of jurisdiction or geographical boundaries, and finally, by its sovereignty. It consists, most broadly, of the means whereby disputes are settled in the form of laws.²

Our nation, Nigeria, is a multi-state entity with the existence of different nationalities, even kingdoms, and empires, hence the availability of the Igbo nation, Ijaw nation, Benin kingdom, Hausa-Fulani kingdom, etc. Among these nationalities, there is a significant lack of commonality in psychological perception as well as social integrative infrastructures, including language, customs, culture, and other essential elements of national consciousness and identity. This is why the country faces endless problems and challenges today, due to the inability of various social entities (states) in Nigeria to see themselves as one. The weapon of amalgamation used by the British colonial authorities to construct Nigeria as a geographical place to make their administration easier could be seen as the foundation of the problems and challenges faced by the country today. The country has failed to integrate; northerners always remain suspicious of the southerners, and vice versa.

One of the challenges of the Nigerian state is the issue of ethnicity. The country of Nigeria is regarded as Africa's colossus and the most populous among its peers. With a population of

around 180 million people, it has over 250 ethnic groups. The disadvantages of this multi-ethnic character greatly outweigh the advantages, owing to a lack of love, which poses a lot of problems in the country, like violence.

The problem of inequality, wherein the government and its agencies favour some people or regions belonging to one tribe or the other, sometimes results in violence. The unmentionable belief that the ethnic majority is a determinant factor in the affairs of the country has been there. This imbalance has led to a feeling of inferiority by the minority groups who see themselves as second-class citizens in a country that is theirs, which by no means is their fault, only because of their number. This shouldn't be the case.

The preceding has boiled down to poor governance. The country is poorly governed, as the ruling section continues to perpetuate its position in power without maintaining equity and justice. This is one of the major problems of the country, as it has affected every sector. Taking economic factors as an example, the country's economic situation has deteriorated significantly, affecting its population as a result. The inflation rate is very high, while the salaries of workers remain the same.

Resource Management is another problem. The resources of the country are poorly managed, which has led to the emergence of many ethnic groups struggling for control of the resources located in their land, such as the Movement for the Actualization of the Niger Delta (MEND). They filed a lawsuit against the Federal Government, seeking control of the money made from the sale of crude oil produced in their territory. Their reason is due to the underdeveloped nature of their land, although they are considered the golden egg-laying chicken. Militants from that area used weapons to express their grievances, demanding many oil pipelines and abducting oil employees³.

Many of these problems came to birth through corruption. It has infiltrated every nook and cranny of society, both political and economic organizations, as it manifests itself in numerous ways. It is disheartening when a government takes from its citizens instead of strengthening the country as it should. Government officials do not live up to expectations; they do not combat evil, nor do they care. Power is abused, and there is no hope for a better future. The present government is not helping matters equally.

Another major area of concern is terrorism. There are daily bombings of many places, kidnappings, etc., carried out by Boko Haram in the north and other unknown gangs. The evil deeds and atrocities done by these people have made it impossible for students to complete their studies in the areas affected. It is a very popular terrorist organization that needs urgent attention if the country is to become habitable.

Furthermore, the country has a high rate of unemployment. Many youths are unemployed, many do not study well, and some abandon their studies only to regret it. Some with certificates are masters of nothing and cannot perform. Many of our youths have become pessimistic and depressed, and the resultant effect is engagement in nefarious activities out of frustration. Many parents who are politicians tend to influence the proper education of their children by embarking on examination malpractice, which hinders the proper education and performance of their children after graduating from school.

Infrastructure is another great concern in the country today. Bad road networks in the country today pose a threat and danger, as businesses also suffer. This is due to corruption and misappropriation of funds. There is no steady power and water supply, and no good railway network. All means of transportation are affected in one way or another, and nothing works. These are problems.

Good governance and the electoral process have been altered. Political patronage remains a bane to the political and economic processes in the country. Some corrupt electoral officers are appointed with the intention of manipulating the elections to favour the selected candidate. Even the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), established to curb financial excesses, does not operate independently of the presidency and is not subject to the rule of law.

The Need for a National Rebirth

For McLean and McMillan, a nation is defined by the population within a territory, sharing a common culture, language, and ethnicity, with a strong historical continuity. It is evident from recent and current events in the country that it is now impossible for the three regions (Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo) to effectively coexist in a closely-knit federation, as defined by the current Nigerian Constitution.⁴ Attention has been drawn to the national question based on a surge in the constant clamour for a reconfiguration of Nigeria's extant political arrangement. The national question questions the current federalism and challenges all to make positive changes. It draws attention to the flawed approach of running a multi-ethnic state like Nigeria, which is bound to fail due to inadequate methods.

Nigeria is made up of several ethnic nationalities with distinct and separate identities. Secondly, these ethnic groups were forced and brought together under a single system by the British colonialists. The different ethnic groups lumped together by the colonialists were separated by language, culture, religion, politics, and social orientation. They were brought together under a faulty government that was volatile, with the generation of endless inter-ethnic strife. What is currently witnessed in terms of instability has been a recurring decimal in the history of the country.

Currently and in recent times, a series of problems in the country, like bad governance, economic problems, insecurity, etc, have necessitated a national rebirth by putting an end to all those problems.

Areas of the Reform

There has been a recurrent and sustained argument that the Nigerian state is at the lowest ebb of performance with regard to the modern and contemporary complexities of governance. Things are not moving properly, giving rise to endless problems. The problems are hydra-headed, and to put a stop to them, they must, in the first instance, be identified and pinned down. One such area that needs reform is the constitution.

Constitutional Reform

The Nigerian constitution is in dire need of reform, owing to the numerous anomalies inherent in it. A constitution that supports, protects, and favours some people, groups of persons, or geographical locations to the detriment of others is not a good one and should be replaced, if not reformed. A constitution that makes provisions for the welfare of leaders, allocating millions of naira to them while people experience poverty, is flawed.

In any true democratic nation, the constitution is the ground norm, whether written or unwritten. It should logically and reasonably stipulate the will of the people, the balance and boundaries of the rights and responsibilities outlined in the social contract between the elected government and the people, the well-being of the people, and the governance model, among other key aspects. These specifications must be followed. When all these are not observed and maintained, there is a need for amendment and reform.

Section 14 (20) q of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution stipulates that sovereignty belongs to the people of Nigeria, from whom the government derives its authority. Subsection 14 (2) b of the same provision establishes that the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of the government. It is now apparent that several issues have been raised by these constitutional provisions, such as: why is there a very high rate of insecurity and terrorism in the country if the overriding and primary duty of the government is the safety and well-being of its citizens? With all the human and natural resources in Nigeria, why is the country still among the poorest countries in Africa? There is no solution to these problems, for which reform is necessary, by at least looking at the advanced countries like America and employing some of their best systems.⁵

Structural Reform

This is an area that needs proper attention in our country. Structural reform tackles obstacles to the fundamental drivers of growth by liberalizing labour, product, and service markets, thereby encouraging job creation, investment, and productivity. It is designed to boost the economy's competitiveness, growth potential, and adjustment capacity. Major structural reforms include policies that:

1. Make labour markets more adaptable and responsive.
2. Liberalize service sectors, boost competition in product and service markets, specific sectors, or improve the overall business environment.
3. Encourage innovation.
4. Improve the quality of taxation systems.
5. Address the challenges of population ageing in the welfare state.

A serious structural reform is needed in order to improve our domestic business climate and enhance competitiveness, deregulate and reduce government activity in various economic sectors, and reduce various structural constraints to growth. Three major areas under this will be treated here, though there are many. They are the civil service, banking sector, and trade policy.

a. Civil Service

The Nigerian service is oversized and poorly remunerated, which has led to poor service delivery. Civil servants are not well treated, which is not suitable for them as citizens of the country. There is a weak incentive structure that doesn't foster good performance. This is one of the causes of weak work ethic and poor service delivery by the workers, which gives rise to some hidden or outright corrupt behaviour. There is also the problem of ghost workers, which should not be. This needs to be re-professionalized and enhanced in its focus on good service delivery. Wages should be increased. Public sector benefits and allowances should be well-maintained and regularly updated.

b. Banking Sector

Several reforms should be implemented in this sector, and the high rate of currency devaluation requires urgent attention. This has led to a high inflation rate. If it remains uncontrolled, obtaining daily meals, building houses, and providing clothing, among other necessities, will be difficult for many Nigerians.

Additionally, fraudulent activities have not been effectively controlled. The introduction of Biometric Verification Numbers (BVN) and other regulatory policies has not helped matters. This is why much still needs to be done by our leaders.

c. Trade policy Reform

Since 1978, the government has introduced policies on import prohibitions that ban products deemed strategic for the economy or those requiring infant industry protection. However, what is evident on the ground is the practice of allowing some individuals to freely import prohibited goods into the country, while others are not. The importation of Cement is a typical example. Ibeto Cement was banned, but Dangote Cement has been allowed to dominate the market. Such a thing should be addressed and reformed.⁶

Leadership Reform

This is a major problem in Nigeria, to which adequate attention should be given for rectification. The quest for power by unqualified individuals, leading to the emergence of incompetent leaders, engagement in dirty politics, a distorted view of leadership, and the like, are among the problems to be addressed.

To know what to reform and when to begin, one needs to know what leadership is all about. Leadership is the ability of an individual or a group of individuals to influence and guide followers or other members of an organization. It involves making sound and sometimes difficult decisions, creating and articulating a clear vision, establishing achievable goals, and providing followers with the knowledge and tools necessary to achieve these goals.

Leadership is a major problem in Nigeria. The inability to set in place transparent and accountable institutions that are capable of securing economic progress and the protection of citizens is amplified by recourse to authoritarianism and repression. The worsening economic decline is somehow precipitated by indiscriminate corruption and the adoption of purely exclusive (ethnic) policies to assure self-succession tendencies.

Issues like inefficiency in government, political instability, and lack of proper accountability in the country are among the problems that have impeded the ability of successive governments to actually push good economic policies ahead for the good of the masses. This has led to a serious lack of basic amenities for the general citizens. Adejimi (2005), cited in Ejimabo (2013), indicated that in Nigeria, most of the policymakers, as well as those involved in decision-making, are engaged in bribery, egoism, power, and trade liberalisation⁸. Equally, Fagbadebo (2007) noted that the Nigerian state is a victim of high-level corruption, bad governance, political instability, and a cyclical legitimacy crisis. The country's authoritarian leadership faced a legitimacy crisis and political intrigues in an ethically differentiated polity, where ethnic competition for real resources drove much of the pervasive corruption and profligacy.⁹

Failure of leadership is the main problem in Nigeria. This is so because leadership failed to harness the resources and the ingenuity of the people for proper national development. This failure led to the undue scramble for state resources to suit their desires.

Economic Problems of Corruption

Economic problems caused by corruption are numerous and endemic. As a cankerworm, it has eaten deep into the fabric of the nation and has stunted the economic growth of the nation in almost all spheres. In itself, corruption is dishonest or illegal behaviour, especially by powerful people (such as government officials), or inducement to wrong by improper or unlawful means (such as bribery).

Corruption involves securing wealth or power through illegal and unjust means to make a private gain at the expense of the public, or the willful misuse of public power for selfish gain. It manifests itself in the country in the form of abuse of office or positions and privileges. Lack of transparency and accountability, inflation of contracts, bribery and kickbacks, misappropriation or diversion of funds, under- or over-invoicing, false declarations, advance fee fraud, and other deceptive schemes, commonly referred to as "419" scams, have become the norm.

It is evident that Nigeria remains mired in corruption, crime, and poverty, despite the numerous laws already promulgated over the years to combat corruption. The Criminal Code, Code of Conduct Bureau, the Recovery of Public Property Act of 1984, and most recently, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Independent Corrupt Practices and other related Offence Commission (ICPC), are among the legal instruments used to fight corruption in the country, all to no avail. This failure to curb corruption has adverse effects on the nation's economic growth.

Some researchers argue against the dominant consensus on the negative impact of corruption on economic growth. For them, corruption is context-specific and also goes with some factors like the country's legal and institutional frameworks, quality of governance, and political regime. They posit the argument that in highly regulated countries devoid of good government institutions and systems of good governance, corruption tends to compensate for red tape and institutional weaknesses and equally grease the wheels of the economy. However, this position can't withstand proper scrutiny, especially when considering the long-term corrosive impact of corruption on economic growth, equality, and the institutional environment. It has been noticed that corruption has adverse effects on long-term economic growth through its impact on investment, public expenditures, taxation, and even human development. The regulatory environment and the efficiency of state institutions are also undermined by corruption because rent-seeking equally distorts incentives and decision-making processes.

Furthermore, the equitable distribution of goods and resources within a given population is influenced by corruption. It accelerates income inequalities and disrupts the effectiveness of social welfare activities and programs, which dwarfs the expected level of human development. These corrupt practices slammed the door on Nigeria's efforts towards national economic growth. Many foreign countries have folded their businesses and migrated to other countries. Even some of our indigenous companies and factories have folded owing to unjust heavy taxation and policies. Some unjust leaders use some remaining ones to perpetuate their evil agenda and exploitation. It has a bad effect, leading to income inequality.¹¹

Social Problems of Inequality

Many social problems with the rule of law in Nigeria generate unending questions from citizens about why some people seem to be above the law and whether the rule of law is used to oppress certain individuals. The Nigerian situation has deteriorated to the point where one begins to wonder if there is no rule of law, given its sheer neglect by all and sundry. The rule of law is the mechanism, process, institution, practice, or norm that supports the equality of citizens before the law, secures a nonarbitrary form of government, and, more generally, prevents the arbitrary use of power. Generally, the implication of the rule of law entails that the creation of laws, their enforcement, and relationships among legal rules are themselves legally regulated so that no one is above the law. Legal constraints on rulers mean that the government and citizens are subject to existing laws. This entails equality before the law¹².

It is disheartening that the principles of the rule of law are not strictly adhered to in Nigeria. From the president to the last person in authority in this country, they neglect the rule of law. The pertinent question is, if they are not above the law, why do they embezzle public funds and go free? Who among the leaders who embezzled the money allocated for work at various levels of government (Federal, State, local, and other agencies) for projects and infrastructural developments were punished for misuse of the funds or diversions of such funds? The EFCC has recovered millions of Naira from our leaders, both past and present. To what use has such money been put? What explanations can be proffered for the situation where some leaders who embezzled some funds were left untouched? What of the incessant killings and kidnappings going on in the country, sometimes reported to have been championed by those in power? Have any of them been prosecuted? Do they demonstrate that a rule of law is in operation? Arbitrariness is in place.

The rule of law has been dethroned by despotism, absolutism, authoritarianism, totalitarianism, etc. The application and adjudication of legal rules by various governing officials must be impartial and consistent across equivalent cases, regardless of class, status, or relative power among disputants. The legal framework for compelling officials to adhere to the rule of law must be in place and functional for any of these good ideas for compliance with the rule of law to have any real impact.

Some of the problems with the rule of law include an inefficient judicial system, corruption, a lack of true separation of powers, political interference, immunity, defiance of court orders, and tribalism. These anomalies should be corrected for the judiciary to really be the hope of the commoner and for real national rebirth to be a reality.¹³

Absence of Infrastructure

For several decades, Nigeria has been plagued by infrastructural challenges. Nigeria has been unable to align its policies with the ability to implement policies that could address infrastructural deficits. This problem emanated from the 1950s when successive governments started diverting the funds set aside for projects into their pockets and those of their cronies. Before this time, the civilian administration that took over the reins of leadership in 1960 from Britain went about developing the infrastructure that would drive development. This sheer neglect from our bad leaders led to the worsened state of infrastructure we have at the moment.

It is worth noting that infrastructural development is a key driver of progress and a critical enabler of productivity and sustainable economic growth. Good infrastructures contribute significantly towards human development, poverty reduction, and the realization of sustainable development goals. The current problems in the country, such as perennial power shortages, housing issues, inadequate roads, and water supply problems, have made the country unlivable and in a state of disrepair. It is affecting the flow of business and the lives of the citizens. Without good infrastructure, enterprise and movement will be seriously hampered.

The Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria (FMBN) noted that Nigeria needs 720,000 units of houses per annum to close our housing gap. Electricity, rail systems, airports, and seaports all require equal financial attention. The Director General of the Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission (ICRC), Mr. Chidi Izuwah, disclosed that about \$60 billion would be required for the oil and gas sector, \$20 billion to revamp the power sector, \$14 billion for road and between \$8 and \$17 billion for rail tracks. He equally noted that between 2009 and 2013, Nigeria invested a mere \$664 per capita per annum in infrastructure or three percent of GDP, compared with an average of \$3,060 or five percent of GDP in developed countries¹⁴.

However, for there to be a genuine national rebirth, the Nigerian government must address infrastructural development to foster good economic and human development. The developed countries should be emulated.¹⁵ All these anomalies and their attendant evils in our country have necessitated the need to make some moves toward a national rebirth for normalcy to return.

The Science and Technology Drive

The word "Science" (from *scientia*, which means knowledge) is an important tool that enhances national progress. Its importance in the development of a nation is unquantifiable. It helps developing countries leapfrog from the dismally low level of development to a higher pedestal.

Science and Technology (from the two Greek words, *techne* and *logos*, which means the study or knowledge of art, skill, or craft, especially in the fabrication of things) go hand in glove. The duos are inseparable and play a crucial role in the development of nations. The use of the word "science" in this paper denotes or embraces the impacts of science and technology, owing to their slim difference.

The usefulness of science and technology in revamping the Nigerian situation in this context will create a different scenario. It may not embark on the research model that led to the scientific enterprise as observed in developed countries like the United States, etc. Rather, there is the need to adapt and develop technologies that will be appropriate and suitable to our local situations, aid in the strengthening of education, and the expansion of our roles as advisers in both government and industry. This will forestall the brain drain resulting from the inability to be in touch with the problems of home countries' scientists, or when they are confronted by indifference and financial support from their government. Nigeria needs modern agricultural and industrial systems, as well as qualitative education, to revamp the series of collapsed states of things going towards decay.

José Goldemberg unveiled in an article titled "What is the Role of Science in Developing Countries?" how the Brazilian indigenous scientists were able to produce ethanol from sugarcane, which they now use as fuel. Through this means, their government has been able to

replace half of the gasoline used by automobiles in their country (about 200,000 barrels per day) with a renewable energy source. Through this means, Brazil became a pioneer in one particular area being overlooked by the industrialized countries of the world. Their local scientists and technologists developed all the technology from the agricultural to the industrialized phase.

This is one of the ways through which science and technology can help in revamping our collapsed country towards a national rebirth that will be all-embracing. This is of utmost importance for our nation. In our country, there is a lack of government goals. Universities and research centers are normally isolated from the rest of the country in an ivory tower. The budgets for science and technology do not receive enough support from the private sector and solely depend on the national treasury. We sit down and expect miracles to happen here, and expect the country to be like the developed countries.

Talent is everywhere. Many indigenous scientists have made significant contributions to the advancement of science in their respective countries. Discussing the importance of science and technology in the development of our nation is to acknowledge how our sons and daughters, who are scientists, can contribute to our country's scientific and technological advancements and rebirth. The adaptation of technology to local circumstances is one of the major ways. Research is necessary to make imported technologies work in our case. There may be an overemphasis on the development of indigenous technologies in the midst of many available, well-proven alternatives. What the scientists need to do in this case is to look for the available raw materials, consider the local environment, choose the right technology, and study how to use them. Green revolution, for instance, can be put to good use despite its shortcomings in order to eradicate hunger.

Additionally, new science should be incorporated into education. A qualified and well-trained workforce is essential for development. This, therefore, entails the facilitation of high-quality education early in our system. The ongoing strikes in our educational system will be a strong barrier to this. Active scientists who utilise current literature and are qualified and capable of applying the latest advances to train their students should be engaged in teaching modern science in engineering and medical schools. It should not be restricted to archaic and old classical textbooks.

Furthermore, scientists should be involved in governance. This is essential because they will have a better chance of influencing the decision-making body and suggesting ways to ensure better progress. Through this means, imported technologies will be localized and easily worked upon by the indigenous scientists in order to make them useful for the nation. National development and progress will be facilitated from that place.

Science greatly accelerates progress. This is why our government should take steps to facilitate quality education in our schools, particularly in science education. Science is not something that is studied in one's father's house, as our students are often on strike due to the lack of government support for our tertiary institutions. Everything will regress to **Stonehenge** when man's development is at the crude stage, and suffering is the order of the day. It doesn't mean that science has eliminated all suffering, but at least there is a high rate of its reduction, making human life more pleasant.¹⁷

The United States Agency for International Development noted in 2006 that science and technology capabilities are fundamental to social and economic progress in developing countries and often serve as the keystones for successful projects. The agency corroborated the points stated above by noting that many poor and developing countries in Africa (like ours) do not have enough human resources, physical and economic infrastructure, and access to capital to take full advantage of the science and technology expertise and achievements of the United States and other industrialized countries¹⁸. Countries at all levels of development have a strong desire for more robust science and technology capabilities. The capability to understand the potential and limitations of science and technology in order to select and effectively utilize suitable foreign technologies and to develop local innovations is needed in every country.

The above is akin to the point that science and technology will play a significant role in facilitating our national development and rebirth. Sadly enough, our country lacks the interest and ability to sponsor many Nigerians who are naturally inclined toward science or those who are scientifically talented. This is with particular reference to many little children who have produced a series of things like flying cars, airplanes, etc., that can fly and land as directed through their remotes. If they can achieve such results on their own, it is evident that they will do even better when sponsored by the government and exposed to higher technologies. They can be mass-produced, which will be beneficial to the country as a source of income when sold to other countries. But these talents are left to die naturally in those children¹⁹.

Implications from Philosophy

The importance of philosophy, the queen of all sciences, is enormous. It is always at the base of any national development. No nation can have real progress without the impact of philosophy. Philosophy helps individuals develop sound morality through the study of ethics and sound reasoning. When morality is lacking in people in any nation, it is heading towards evil and doom. If people are morally regressive and lack sound reasoning, achieving meaningful development will be challenging. Philosophy is, therefore, a critical tool in the development of good morals for sustainable development. It is thus necessary in our country to reshape people towards proper ways of thinking and behaving. It will help restore proper epistemic attitudes among our citizens, which will, in turn, redirect them. What are the implications of the Socratic dictum, "Man know thyself," if not the provision of a road map with emphasis on human development? Man is at the centre of the universe, and as such, to talk of national rebirth is to speak of human development. Infrastructure and any areas that need development are essential to fostering the well-being and comfort of humans. In the same vein, to talk of bad leadership is to talk of the marginalization of man or the practice of a system that leads to the impoverishment of man.

Philosophy should be allowed to do its work of acting as a gadfly in checkmating excesses among the citizens and leaders. To achieve this, philosophers need to take their place in the civil service, teaching people the virtuous ways of leadership through their upright actions. They should lead by example. And those in authority should equally be philosophers because no one can give what they do not have. It should equally be studied in the primary and secondary schools. Philosophers should equally help people learn how to speak the truth and live by it. The ability to hold good beliefs and just grounds for justifying many assumptions should be upheld by all.

A strong moral base instilled in our citizens will help eradicate, to a greater degree, some of the negative habits in people, such as embezzlement of funds, tribalism, selfishness, deceit, bribery, and corruption. When the mind is put in place, all other things in man will be in alignment. Philosophers should, therefore, pose serious questions about the wrong things going on in the country and rise to fight them as erudite scholars and men of integrity to help pave the way for uprightness to reign. All these positive ideas, if implemented, will contribute to the re-establishment of a strong nation, one that is just and good for coexistence.

To achieve a genuine national rebirth, bad governance must be halted and honest and upright leaders put into power. Bad leadership is the main cause of all our problems, as leaders steer the wheel of every country or organization toward progress. Nigeria should, therefore, replace bad leaders with patriotic ones.

Equally, ruling a country with weak constitutional and legal systems that cannot uphold justice and equality among citizens should be eradicated and replaced with effective systems. In traditional societies, ancient people coexisted and governed themselves effectively, even without written laws and established legal luminaries. In this modern world, the implementation of written laws through our legal practitioners is very challenging, owing to corruption at high levels. This shows the sheer neglect of virtuous living and a lack of reverence for the divine. Our corrupt ways of living, which have taken deep root in our marrow, must end.

The government should also make efforts to enact effective economic and trade policies that replace outdated ones. They should implement effective economic reforms that will foster a better business environment for all. The banking sector, the civil service, and all other sectors should be rid of corrupt practices, and the working class should be adequately paid and taken care of. Incentives and allowances should be made available to them, which will encourage them to put in their best.

Additionally, the various anti-corruption agencies operating in our country, such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), should be corruption-free and conduct their business with integrity by avoiding partiality and fraud. They should be just in the execution of their duties; otherwise, they should be abolished and replaced with efficient ones.

Infrastructure development is another area that requires urgent attention for improvement. Its unimproved and devastated state poses a problem for the country's development. It hampers every sector of the country. The roads are in poor condition, and there are no good housing facilities, as well as inadequate access to light, water, and other essential amenities. Many lives and businesses have been destroyed as a result of accidents and loss of lives. The lives of the rest of the citizens are, therefore, impoverished. This is why the country needs good leaders, those who should adhere strictly to the provisions of the law. They are to be monitored and not be above the law.

Conclusion

To talk of national rebirth is to speak of nation-building, which summarily means creating a country that functions out of a non-functioning one. It has been the dream of every well-meaning individual (especially in our country, Nigeria) to live happily in a peaceful and secure environment, in places with adequate infrastructure, water, electricity, and other essential amenities. Countries with efficient systems of government, such as America and the developed

countries of the world, view these amenities as a way of life. Having found ourselves in a challenging situation in our country, Nigeria, this is the time for genuine, honest work by all. To this end, properly educated, honest, and moral citizens with vision should be allowed to emerge as leaders in the country. The leadership should be rooted in respect, justice, service, and community. Transparency and accountability should be their watchword when elected to office. They should be creative indeed and help to arouse the citizens' sense of uniqueness and potential innovation, thereby enhancing more effective problem-solving characteristics without direct intervention from leaders. Additionally, decision-makers at all levels of government should be accountable to both the public and stakeholders. If there is transparency in government decision-making and public policy implementation, there will be a drastic reduction in uncertainty, which will help inhibit corruption among public officials.

The government should, more so, maintain the security of the lives and properties of its citizens. All men and women should have a voice in decision-making, whether directly or indirectly, through legitimate intermediate organizations or institutions that represent the people's interests. Leaders should attend to the needs and concerns of the citizens and not be self-centred.

All these recommendations, classified as long-term, are proffered here to address these challenges to national rebirth. The enthronement of a system of government like this, which ensures the safety and well-being of citizens through the proper application of philosophy and technology (science), will lead to a genuine national rebirth, where citizens will be free and comfortable.

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