

## TRANSFORMATION AGENDA, ELECTION AND STRUCTURAL CHALLENGES IN ACHIEVING GOOD GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

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### Abstract

*The presupposed aim of Transformation Agenda is to change the ways of doing things in Nigeria and give the country a new sense of direction. Thus, the general expectation from the agenda is to correct defects or distortions in previous development plans or programmes in growing the economy, generating of employment, reducing of poverty, developing of basic infrastructure, etc. This paper noted that the basic issues that are very fundamental for the transformation to take place have not been addressed. To generate data for this paper the author relied on qualitative method of data collection and on content analysis. The paper recommended among others attitudinal change that is the ability to recreate our value system as a nation.*

**Keywords:** Transformation Agenda, Election, Good Governance, Poverty, Development Plan

### Introduction

Immediately after political independence development strategies have been anchored on Developmental Rolling Plans. These development plans stipulated what the nation intends to achieve within a period of time. Also, political parties have different ideologies or/and manifestoes to accomplish their plans. There were the 1962-68 developmental plans, then the 1970-1974 Plan, the 1975-1980 Plan, and the 1981-1985 Plan. Often, these plans went beyond mere economic prescriptions to address social, human and political goals. Thus, for instance, the 1970-74 Plan defined the national objectives to be the building of:

- a) a united, strong and self-reliant nation;
- b) a great and dynamic economy;
- c) a just and egalitarian society;
- d) a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens; and,
- e) a free and democratic society.

In implementation, these plans hardly involved any fundamental political or national economy restructuring. They were in the main, monetarist prescriptions that did little or nothing to address the structural and fundamental distortions in the economic, social and political life of the nation. Alhaji Shehu Shagari, tagged his developmental policy as the Green Revolution; General Muhammadu Buhari War Against Indiscipline; General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida hinged his administrative policy package largely on the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). This he did by opening up the domestic economy to International market forces and institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) to play key roles with the hope of using the benefits to transform the whole economy. General Sani Abacha introduced Vision 2010, radically de-emphasized the influence of International institutions and shifted economic relationship from industrialised Western Europe and America to China and emerging industrial nations in Far East. In 1999, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo concentrated on economic reforms based on repackaging of neoliberal policies. His economic reforms were essentially old win (that is SAP) re-bottled in new bottle. Alhaji Umaru Yar'adua administrative policy was tagged at 7-Point Agenda where he identified seven sectors of the economy as the engine room to the transformation of the entire economy. President Jonathan christened his administrative development strategy as Transformation Agenda.

### **Transformation Agenda**

The transformation Agenda is a 5-year development plan from 2011-2015. The transformation agenda is based on philosophy that there is the need for a radical change in development plan that will guarantee inclusiveness as opposed to exclusiveness growth. Gyong (2012) noted that governance transformation itself is a development strategy aimed at complete or radical change in the life of an individual, organization, community or even the nation at large. Transformation in the life of a person connotes radical attitudinal change from bad to good. Institutionally, it depicts changes that torch on every components of the institution. It is a mandate for a radical, structural and fundamental re-arrangement and re-ordering of the building blocks of the nation. It portends a fundamental reappraisal of the basic assumptions that underlie the nation's reforms and developmental efforts that will and should alter the essence and substance of the national life. Herbert (2012) captures transformational leadership most poignantly as follows:

With transformational leadership, a landlocked country can create coastal waters and become a powerful State like Israel. With transformational leadership, Japan, a country devastated by World War II and devoid of natural resources can become a leading industrialized nation. With transformational leadership, a country can convert its desert into an oasis, like United Arab Emirate that is now a world-class tourist destination and international financial centre. With transformational leadership, a country can transit from Third World to First within 20 to 30 years, like Singapore under Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew. With transformational leadership, a country can transform from a backwater, commodity exporting country to become one of Asia Tiger's economies, like Malaysia under Prime Minister Mahathir bin Mohamad.

Again, he noted further that in the life of a nation, transformation involves structural changes in the major institutions of governance and the society at large. It should guarantee improved living standard, Per Capital Income, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and other basic Socio-economic indicators such as food, shelter, clothing and health for the substantial majority of the citizenry. Thus, on the whole, transformation can be said to be a total package that involves every facet of the individual, organization or society. It is meant to be a vehicle for a better society where virtually everyone will be reasonably comfortable. As observed by Itah (2012), the transformation Agenda of Goodluck Jonathan is a policy package that proposes to reposition the economy by addressing issues of poverty, unemployment, insecurity and most particularly, the diversification of the entire economy from total dependence on oil to a significant reliance on non-oil driven economy.

Osioma (2012) observed that transformation is a strong word that portends a radical, structural and fundamental reappraisal of the basic assumptions that underlie reforms and developmental efforts. The challenge before government is how to move the nation away from an oil-dominated economy, institute the basics for a private-sector driven economy, build the

local economy on international best practices, transform a passive oil industry to a more pro-active one, and restructure the country along the lines of a more decentralized federalism. The Transformation Agenda Final Report defines the goal of the reform exercise in these words:

During 2011-2015, the policies and programmes directed at addressing governance will focus on the public service, security, law and order, the legislature, anti-corruption measures and institutions, the judiciary, economic coordination, and support for private investment... These will be addressed through the implementation of the recommendations ... in the areas of public service reforms, judicial reform, anti-corruption initiative, electoral reform, land use reform, fiscal management reforms, power sector reform, police reform, financial sector reform, infra-structural development reform, and information and communication technology (p. 51; Cited by Asobie, 2012).

Also, Osisioma (2012) pointed out that the dream is for a bold and audacious transformation programme that will radically, fundamentally, structurally and massively transforms the national economy, reinvent the politics of the nation, secure the polity, care for the underprivileged, and provide responsible, responsive and credible leadership to Africa's largest and most promising economy. Nevertheless, he noted that there are a number of threats and challenges to the realization of the Transformation Agenda. These include, one, absence of good governance and accountability; two, ineffective public service; three, lack of synergy between political office holders and holders of public office; four, the incessant problem of insecurity; five, corruption; six, bankrupt leadership; and seven, a faulty development agenda that is currently driving the individual, organization or society.

### **Nexus between Election, Good Governance and National Transformation Agenda**

It is widely acknowledged by Nigeria's opinion leaders as well as by outside observers that getting electoral legitimacy right has been a challenge for the country since 1999. In essence Nigeria will not achieve economic

growth until she gets its electoral processes right. Despite of the fact that in November 2010 Nigeria ratified the African Charter on Elections and Good Governance, bad governance still persist. According to Gyog (2012) Olusegun Aganga, has described the Transformation Agenda as a policy that resolves around good governance. A major challenge to the success of the Transformation Agenda is the near absence of a purposeful, trusted, respected and focused leadership in Nigeria. There is a general agreement among Nigerians that the nation lacks the desired leadership to pull the country out of its present predicament in spite of its abundant human and material resources. Unfortunately, the electoral processes have continuously thrown up bad leadership. Good governance starts with electing quality leadership.

Election is a democratic process of putting people to positions of control of the nation's resources for the good of the people. Good governance requires people with good intentions who are sincere in what to do to better the lives of ordinary Nigerians. Election must produce right people to power who understand the need and importance of working for the poor majority. Elections could be seen as institutionalized procedures for the choosing of office holders by some or all the recognized members of a society. For an electoral system to be democratic, it must provide for equal electorate and the freedom by that electorate to make a real and meaningful choice devoid of coercion or intimidation (Eminue, 2001). In effect election would be deemed to be democratic-and hence good if it is free and fair and not based on patronage of any kind. Kukah (1998) has clearly stated that good governance meant governance that is responsible, accountable and transparent in policy formulation and implementation. .

Ovwasa (2014) asserted that good governance is based on the tenets and practice of democracy. A government that enjoys the trust and support of the majority of the people must be a legitimate one. Legitimacy engenders trust and support of the people to government policies and reform agenda. There is a universal consensus around the idea that elected government through credible and regular elections are the foundation of any emerging democratic process. Abraham Lincoln suggested that "No man is good enough to govern another man without that other's consent". He argued that governance by consent and not coercion, are more prosperous, they are more stable, and more successful than governments that do not. But in Nigeria, money politics, 'godfatherism' lack of internal democracy, imposition of candidates and vote-buying erode this very important attribute of

democratic government. This is because, it is the conviction among the people that those who rule do so, on the basis of popular consent, freely expressed, is the tonic required to make the people make material and self sacrifices that, social, political or economic reform agenda inevitably demand. The truth is that, without legitimacy, there is no trust, and without trust there can be no genuine political support. It logically follows that without strong support of government policies by majority of the people no Transformation Agenda or reform programme, including electoral reform programme can be successfully carried through and ultimately sustained.

Again, he asserted that the significance of electoral legitimacy is that the government that emerges through free, fair and credible elections is expected to be accountable to the citizens that have entrusted the exercise of political authority to it. In turn, the citizens who, through their votes, have determined who governs them (this includes using their votes to remove non-performing governments) are also expected to demand accountability from their rulers. The combination of rulers who are accountable to their citizens and citizens that demand accountability from their rulers is generally considered conducive for achieving well-performing governments. In other words, the rulers who did not consider themselves obliged to observe the norm of being accountable to the citizens and the citizens whose votes did not count, did not bother to demand accountability. If office-holders do not believe they will be held accountable by the electorate for how they perform, then all the self-serving practices will be manifested. The aspirations of Nigerians have not been matched by what politicians actually do once they are elected. Democracy and governance should not be compressed into a voting act performed every four or five years. It is also what happens between elections. Capable, reliable, and transparent institutions are the key to success and to governance - strong parliaments, truly electoral body, honest police forces, independent judges, a vibrant private sector, a civil society. These are the things that give life to democracy and governance, because that is what matters in people's everyday lives. No country is going to create wealth if its leaders exploit the economy to enrich themselves. No person want to live where the rule of law give away to the rule of brutality and bribery. If elected officials do not really owe their positions to the electorate, they are unlikely to regard public service as the main reason for holding office.

## **Transformation Agenda and National Development**

The Transformation Agenda's policies on good governance are motivated by Nigeria's inability to decisively tackle most development challenges. Priorities of the Transformation Agenda in the next five years are to focus on Good Governance (security of lives and property, law and order, and providing enabling environment); Human Development (education, healthcare, skill acquisition, and capacity building); Real Sector (agriculture, manufacturing, mining, oil and gas); and Infrastructure (power, roads, rails, aviation, information and communication technology, water for drinking, domestic use, irrigation and industries), more premium is also being placed on funding of infrastructure projects to impact positively on the realization of the other priorities. Infrastructure is a common denominator for the other three priorities and vital to the success of the transformation agenda of the Federal Government.

Even though, the Transformation Agenda is meant to touch on every aspect of the socio-economic and political life of the citizenry, certain key areas have however been selected as spring board of the entire exercise. These key areas focus on job creation, economic growth, infrastructural development, attitudinal change, etc.

### **Job Creation**

The transformation agenda intends to assiduously pursue policies that will promote youth employment programme in both public and private sectors. This include vocational training; development of industrial clusters; reviewing of university curriculum with industry job requirements and promotion of apprenticeship/work experience programmes and joint ventures; enforcement of compulsory sub-contracting and partnering with locals by foreign construction companies and implementation of skill transfer to Nigerians by foreign owned enterprises.

### **Education**

The agenda focused on educating Nigerians to develop appropriate or relevant human resources as the only way of securing the desire development of the country. Also, the Transformation Agenda is geared to political education for attitudinal change.

## **Health**

Health is wealth and as such the Agenda intends to invest greatly on health care to reduce infant and maternal mortality. It is based on this that the health policy is to achieve human capital development goal of the vision 20:2020 strategy which is captured in the National Strategic Health Development Plan (NSHDP).

## **Infrastructure Development**

Infrastructure stock in Nigeria today is far from being adequate. Researchers have traced the development of infrastructure in Africa and concluded that there is an urgent need for transformation. This has necessitated National Integrated Infrastructure Master Plan by President Ebele Jonathan to guide the nation's investment in key infrastructure in the next 30 years, from 2014 to 2043. Infrastructure development and economic growth are mutually reinforcing, as infrastructure development plays a vital role in wealth creation. Onolememen (2012) remarked that the Transformation Agenda aimed at providing adequate and sustainable power, intensifying rural electrification to reduce rural-urban drift and achieving optimal energy mix using the most appropriate technology. The power policy is also targeted at deregulating the sector in order to promote and attract foreign and local investment to bring about competitiveness. The importance of infrastructure to national development cannot be overemphasized. It is at the core of good governance.

## **Assessment of Transformation Agenda**

Transformation implies a complete change or a break away from old ways of doing things. It connotes structural defects that need restructuring that would lead to complete revolution and rapid development. The challenge is whether Jonathan's transformation agenda implies a complete change or cosmetic reforms or political gimmick to achieve popularity. The basic questions are: has the transformation Agenda led to correction of these structural defects or break away from old ways of doing things in Nigeria? Are the goals of transformation Agenda achievable within natural laws of global Capitalist mode of production? Okolie (2007) noted that the present structure of global economy promotes competitiveness and un-competitiveness economies are bound to be marginalised. Has the transformation Agenda as been implemented has the capacity of enunciating the requisite policies and creating the essential skills and conditions to transform Nigeria's competitive



drive to the level of attaining a 20th position in the operating World Economic Order. Has infrastructure decay, corruption, negative attitude, ethnic chauvinism etc that held back the wheel of progress in Nigeria been addressed by Transformation Agenda? These should be the basis of assessing the Transformation Agenda.

Huge government budget allocation under the Transformation Agenda is still been made yearly to power sector which has not translated into adequate electricity supply. This development is not different from the previous administrations. Again, Nigeria's power sector had operated for several decades as a state monopoly. Privatisation of Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) has not changed the situation. For instance, Jonathan's government has failed to stop increase in tariff and fixed charges by the new owners in spite of irregular power supply making the country's cost of electricity consumption one of the highest in the world and this hinders industrialisation. Ohwofasa<sup>1</sup> and Kumapayi (2013) pointed out that:

Nigeria has the biggest gap in the world between electricity demand and supply, providing its population of over 160 million with less than 4000 megawatts of electricity. In contrast, South Africa with a population of less than 50 million people generates more than 40,000 megawatts while Brazil, an emerging economy like Nigeria, generates over 100,000 megawatts for its 201 million citizens (FG, 2013). Indeed, the gap in the power sector has far reaching implications for improving the business climate, sustaining economic growth and the social wellbeing of Nigerians. About 45 percent of the population has access to electricity, with only about 30 percent of their demand for power being met. The power sector is plagued by recurrent outages to the extent that some 90 percent of industrial customers and a significant number of residential and other non-residential customers provide their own power at a huge cost to themselves and to the Nigerian economy.

In the same vein Echewofun (2014) noted that the current available statistic on grid power is 4,200mw peak generation but Nigeria electricity demand is at 12,000mw. This implies that over 7,000mw is still needed to tackle this perennial blackout being experienced in the country.

### **Unemployment**

The Nigerian economy is experiencing growth without employment as the rate of growth of the labour force exceeds the employment opportunities that are being created. The unemployed population is at present, dominated by the youth who are mostly school leavers with senior secondary school qualifications and graduates of tertiary institutions; majority of unemployed find employment in the informal sector of the economy, where adverse employment conditions rather take the form of increased underemployment, casual employment or informal self employment which are scarcely registered.

**Table 1: Nigeria's Unemployment and GDP Growth Rates (2000-2009)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>*Unemployment Rate (%)</b>	<b>** GDP Growth Rate (%)</b>
2000	13.1	5.4
2001	13.6	3.1
2002	12.6	1.5
2003	14.8	10.3
2004	13.4	10.6
2005	11.9	5.4
2006	12.3	6.2
2007	12.7	6.4
2008	14.9	6.0
2009	19.7	5.6
2010	21.4	7.4
2011	23.9	7.8

**Sources: \*NBS Labour Force Survey (2010); \*\*World Bank (2010)**

Oyewale and Adeyemo (2013) observed that:

Nigeria economy grew strongly at an average annual growth rate in excess of 6.6%, making the country the 5th fastest growing economy in the World in 2010 at 7.87% real growth rate. The above represents the

paradox of growth in the face of poverty and inequality. It conflicts rational economic and social theories as well as historical trends. It highlights vividly the structural disequilibrium in the Nigerian economy which has sustained the key productive and high employment sectors below potential while supporting consumerism and rent-seeking.

There is no doubt that higher economic growth is the first condition to fight poverty but pattern of economic growth affects employment opportunities generated. High rate of economic growth is not sufficient. The issue is whether economic growth has opened new avenues of employment with higher productivity. In effect economic growth should lead to high employment generation. Statistics above indicated that economic growth has not been linked with employment generation in Nigeria. Under the transformation Agenda, in 2014 Nigeria economy has been declared as the fastest in Africa while unemployment is growing every day. It is irony that Transformation Agenda has not address this disconnect.

The author of this paper want to assert that a **meaningfully** transformation should imply that those who control state power are expected to represent the interest of the majority of Nigerians; a change that will define production relationship in favour of the poor. That is putting people before capital. However, how are the goals of transformation Agenda achievable within natural laws of global Capitalist mode of production? Okolie (2007) noted that the present structure of global economy promotes competitiveness and un-competiveness economies are bound to be marginalised. In such a competition, success is achieved through the quality of goods produced and efficiency of services rendered. Nigeria cannot be complete with epileptic power supply and decay infrastructure. The question one may rationally ask is this – has the transformation Agenda capacity of enunciating the requisite policies and creating the essential skills and conditions to transform Nigeria's competitive drive to the level of attaining a 20th position in the operating World Economic Order.

Real transformation of Nigeria should hinge on attitudinal change. Restructuring alone cannot lead to desire transformation. Possessing mere potentials seem to be inadequate for transformation to greatness. Good leadership is critical as it provides the required governance that can exploit all the potentials for the good of the citizenry" (Obi, 2009). Good visionary

leadership can only be produced through free and fair election. Perhaps the most challenging task in transformational management and leadership is the need to recreate values that will re-order and re-direct the citizenry. Our national problem is thus, not primarily that of poor infrastructure, nor poor human resource development, nor even our mono-crop economy with its over-dependence on oil. Our problem is zero values and ethical bankruptcy in national life. If our infrastructures became the best on the African continent, with our upside-down values, they would soon become decrepit and run-down, monuments to crass inefficiency. Corruption, negative attitude to work, ethnic chauvinism, rent seeking, primitive accumulation, electoral fraud, politisation and manipulation of religion and ethnic factors, higher cost of governance etc that have held back the wheel of progress in Nigeria have not been addressed by Transformation Agenda? Beetseh (2012) pointed out that a recent revelation by the former Central Bank of Nigeria Governor Sanusi Lamido confirms that 25% of the Nations budget is spent on the national Assembly alone. How has legislative functions impacted on the poor to justify this huge expenses amounting to all most a quarter of Nigeria's annual budget is the question the legislative arm need to answer. The implication of this development indicated higher cost of governance which makes proceeds from growth not trickle down to the poor.

Today the world is evolving rapidly into a post-industrial, knowledge-based society, a shift in culture and technology. Industrial production is steadily shifting from material- and labour-intensive products and processes to knowledge-intensive products. A radically new system for creating wealth has evolved that depends upon the creation and application of new knowledge. In a very real sense, we are entering a new age; an age of knowledge, in which the key strategic resource necessary for prosperity has become knowledge itself—educated people and their ideas (Bloch, 1988). Unlike natural resources, such as iron and oil, that have driven earlier economic transformations, knowledge is inexhaustible. The more it is used, the more it multiplies and expands. Knowledge can be created, absorbed, and applied only by the educated individuals and the level of individual's competiveness in the labour market is one of the main factors that decide his/her employability. The driving force behind the 21st Century is the development of human capital, the best way to ensure prosperity. Technology is no doubt a major instrument for global trade and competiveness and prime engine for development. Nations across the globe are devising new strategies of boosting innovation. Nearly, 90% of

technologies consumed in Nigeria are foreign and has financial implication on the economy. No nation is prepared to sell her technology at any marketable price. The Transformation Agenda should have gradually moved the nation from resource based economy to a diversified knowledge-based one with science and technology playing a crucial role. The economy is yet to neither experience serious diversification nor do Nigeria education system has serious linked with industrial needs. The ruling class is now seriously thinking of diversification of the economy with the drop in world oil price.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made:

- Nigeria needs to solve her identity crisis problem which has been a major obstacle to any transformation agenda. No transformation would take place in a divided nation. Perhaps, the best gift any Nigerian leader can bequeath to his countrymen today is to forge one united nation and people out of the disparate peoples of Nigeria
- The most enduring national transformation is the ability to recreate our value system as a nation; institute internal democracy in political parties; elections where votes will count; replacing patronage appointment with an insistence on merit, and restoring the moral tone of our public officers; placement of staff on merit rather than on nepotism and ethnic considerations; we need leadership who knows the way, go the way, and show the way.
- Nigeria requires Transformational leadership that has the ability to inspire and motivate followers to achieve results greater than originally contemplated; leaders who will dream dreams and mobilise fellow Nigerians to buy into that dream; leaders with a clear mission that all citizens will commit themselves to. Against this backdrop, electoral processes must credible, transparent to guarantee free and fair election that would produce quality leadership.
- Socio-economic and political institutions should be restructured.

### **Conclusion**

The study explored the nexus between National Transformation Agenda, election and good governance in Nigeria. Good governance and accountability cannot be achieved without free and fair election. However elections in Nigeria have continue to throw up bad leadership because political parties lack internal democracy and elections are not free and fair.

Having a credible electoral process is bane of Transformation leadership in Nigeria. Supply of electricity is still epileptic, corruption is still endemic, the nation is wallowing in insecurity, bank interest rates are still not affordable, poverty rate is still high, curriculum in higher institutions are not related to industrial needs, unemployment continue to be a major problem.

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