

## Challenges of Development in Post Colonial Africa: A Study on Problems of Survival in Nigeria

**Baba Yahaya**

*Department of History and International Studies Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University Lapai*

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**Abstract**

*The Nigeria society has been undergoing changes at an unprecedented rate. These changes occur in the political, economic and social life of the nation. Sometimes, these changes occur so rapidly, that most Nigerians have found it very difficult to keep pace. In the last twenty years, Nigerians has witnessed the most traumatic changes especially in the economic and social life of the nation under democratic dispensation. Some individuals within the nation have found it difficult to survive the hardships that have come with these changes. In fact, the situation has reached a point which threatening the survival of the country as a nation. It is on this background that this paper attempt to discuss some issues that stood as bottle neck to development in the post colonial Africa with a focus on Nigeria. It's hoped that Africa countries with similar situation can take the path for their nation. Therefore this discusses the problems of survival and to suggest possible ways through which Nigerians and indeed Africa countries with similar situation may survive.*

## **Introduction**

In the light of this paper, development is seen in the word of Ezema who sees development as the national process of organizing and carrying out prudently conceived and staffed programmes or projects as one will organize and carry out military and engineering operations. For this reason it can be said that development is conceived as an aspect of change that is desirable, broadly predicted or planned and administered or at least influenced by government action. Thus, development can be describe as a process associated with a continuous improvement in the capacity of the people and their society to control and manipulate their physical environment as well as themselves for their own benefit and those of the humanity. It is then inappropriate to see development as massive importation of manufactured products from Britain, U.S.A, Germany or any other countries of the world.

It is obvious that even natural endowments are not evenly distributed but a stable government is expected to set standards that will review and reduce the gap between the have and have not. Thus, national development and planning is usually initiated by government for the economic, social, cultural, educational and political development of a nation or a state. Therefore, government is to allocate the country's aggregate resources in a way that will yield the nation maximum return.

A country like Nigeria needs to focus on national development that will improve the quality of life of its citizens but practically this becomes difficult because of introduction of certain government policies which has worsened the plight of the average Nigerians. Today, salaries can no longer sustain families for adequate feeding. There are no drugs in government hospitals, even where citizens have funds to pay for the drugs. Poor agricultural output, unemployment, social unrest, industrial unrest, low productivity leading to closure of industries have become common scenes. Faced with these problems, Nigerians have to tolerate surviving the present state of life against their will.

## **THE PROBLEMS OF SURVIVAL IN NIGERIA**

In practical terms, issues of survival in a country revolved around solving the many problems facing her population.- these include; ill-health, illiteracy, hunger, inadequate shelter, as well as public utilities. Some other more of such

problems are poor industrial and communication infrastructure, pollution and general security of life and properties. When all these come from individuals, collective groups or government itself hinder development by making the people less capable for making meaningful contribution to national development. Therefore, issues of nation's survival is highly enshrined in its ability to overcome many problems related to self-reliance, so as to survive politically, economically and socially, while for a country to be self-reliant means it is self-sufficient in its economic survival. This means that it should be able to produce enough food/resources to support its population and even export to another country. It also means that, the country is socially, politically, and economically stable.

Survival or self-reliance does not mean isolation from the rest of the world. There is no country in the world that can survive without relating to another. Man lives in a local and international community and must relate with others in order to survive. In the midst of the world economic depression being experienced today, many countries especially countries of the third world are finding it difficult to survive. This problem is more in Africa and Latin America where most countries are debt-ridden and have to introduce programs detrimental to their Economic growth. The western conspiracy and propaganda have further worsened the economy of third world countries which resorted them to merely trying to copy the mode of production and social life of the west. This can never form Africa survival, because it was meant for them to copy. Just as Patrick Lumunba asserted that "African Problem deserves an Africa solution"

### **CHALLENGES OF DEVELOPMENT IN SURVIVAL OF NIGERIA**

We cannot isolate the problems which now threatened the existence of life and development in Nigeria from economic problems facing third world countries. The degree of these problems however varies from country to country. However, Nigeria has been rated a very buoyant country in time past and has become the official spokesman of the Black race in the world. Whether we like it or not, the western world cannot sit hand folded and watch us take over the political, economic and social leadership of the black race in the world. Neither will they allow another super power to emerge either in Africa or the black race.

They will do and have done all they could to ensure that we remain underdeveloped so as not to take on this leadership. Our problems of survival therefore include the following: Agriculture, industry, energy, transport and communication, education, health services, income distribution and national security.

Agriculture has been the mainstay of the economy in most countries of Africa with Nigerian inclusive. But this sector in Nigeria has been neglected and it is faced with many problems. There came a time when Government policy has not been favourable for Agricultural production. In fact, there has been little or no participation of government in Agriculture and now that government of the day is giving the section a due attention, it is faced with both internal and external fight back. And where there might have been efforts at that time, they were too ambitious to realize in a short time. A good point in mind is the River Basin development authorities and the Agricultural development projects scattered all over the country. In the first place, these projects are financed by the world bank which is fully western tool used to underdeveloped the so called third world countries. It is unthinkable to believe that the person who enslaved and dehumanized you less than hundred years ago will turn out to wish you well now, but unfortunately Nigerians both the leaders and the led failed to understand that, they (West) cannot allow African countries to develop and become just like them. The land tenure system is also serious problem to Agricultural development. Farm implements, inputs in term of fertilizer, chemicals introduced by them (west) are sold at prizes beyond the reach of the real farmers. This is blind folded to look like helping Africans to have improved agriculture but it's rather denying Nigerians and Africans at large to think of how to improve their indigenous farm methods. The results have been a decline in Agricultural output leading to hunger and starvation in the society. With this over dependent, it is obvious to say; a nation that cannot feed its population cannot be a master of its destiny. However, the efforts by the present government on operation go back to land has not gone beyond subsistence farming yet.

Industry: As with Agriculture, the industrial sector has also suffered neglect. The essential foundation for the creation of a productive and self-sustaining agricultural sector in Nigeria are large scale modern industries to improve the

indigenous methods of good yield of farm produce or if by imitation the country has decided to abandoned it for father's talents, then it needs a lot of reforms on the fertilizers, chemical, pumps, equipment machinery etc. and other products necessary for the advancement of agriculture. Dogma is injurious to us at this 21st century. Industrialization means the process of developing the capacity of a country to a master location, within its borders, the whole resources and how these resources can be put to use for survival. This will involve the production of raw materials; production of intermediate products for other industries, fabrication of the machines, and tools required for the manufacture of the desired products and of other machines, skills to arrange factories and to organize the production process by ourselves (Nigerians) For this reason, we can see that assemblage factories are not needed. The above situation settles the question of whether Nigeria is industrializing or not. For instance, in early 1980s. Contributions of the manufacturing sector to the GDP rose from 4.8% a few years after independence merely 6.7% an insignificant contribution after 23years of political independence then. Even the few industries are foreign controlled by multinational corporations. This menace still ties down the growth of industries in the democratic governance of Nigeria.

Energy is an aspect that forms a sound industrial base for development, where there is no good and consistent source of energy to sustain industries. There cannot be a significant development. In Nigeria when less than 25% of Nigeria is served by electricity. Most towns and villages do not enjoy electricity supply. Despite the efforts of the government to supply electricity to major towns and villages the communities are still in short supply. In some cases, where light is available it is bedeviled by constant power cuts leading to damage to machinery and low production. Subsequently; certain governments hide under the canopy of improving power in the country to squander the nation fund, some politicians used this also to asked for votes in their various communities yet it all turned out to be mirage, the situation now is that for a company to function smoothly, it cannot rely on Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) which some few Nigerians have hi-jacked in the name of privatization of the economy. It is established that for a company to survive in Nigeria it must have the ability to substitute its own source of energy. This problem has led to rural-urban drift because of the lack of industries in the rural areas.

Transport and Communications is a great problem to survival in Nigeria; A look at our major cities explains this point where people wait sometimes for longer than necessary to join transport. The Mass Transit Programme introduced by the Federal Government has not in any way solved the problems of transportation. This sector of the economy has virtually died. At a point the trains are no longer moving, railway workers do not get salaries sometimes for more than four months. Transport prices are very high beyond the reach of most Nigerians. The result today is that most people either resort to trekking to avoid some humiliations. There are all sorts of scraps called vehicles on our roads which constitute hazards. Road accidents have increased due to poor conditions of our roads and lack of spare parts to maintain the existing vehicles plying our routes. In fact, more than 50% of the vehicles now plying our roads are not road-worthy and are owned by vast majority (masses). Meanwhile, with the revival of rail lines now certain hope has been raised to solve problem of transportation but still suffer much population to be served. All these problems threaten both man's life and his economic survival in Nigeria. Communication is worst, the telephones were not working, letters hardly reach their destinations let alone arriving in time. Air traffic is only for the rich and the privileged in the society, while citizens are expecting improvement on this menace the sector was also faced with air craft accidents here and there. Air traffic was exposed to the hazards of bad weather due to lack of good landing facilities. No nation can survive economically without a good transport and communication system.

The type of educational system we inherited from the colonialist cannot promote development. The system was meant to produce clerks and administrators which Nigerians are also not helping matters by using the knowledge negatively to pen rob public funds. No real effort was made to encourage science and technology in our schools practically other than the theory, the later inclusion of science and technology in our school curriculum during military regimes and subsequent government turned out to be a mirage as it did not live to realize the dream it is set for. The teaching of classic Latin, philosophy etc. was encouraged to smoothened the colonial motives not to develop Nigeria. The result today had been lacking basic manpower in science and technology. After fifty-nine years of independence the system was maintained. Most governments merely paid lip service to education. Education

is underfunded and the little funds sent in were side funded. No teaching materials both in the Arts and science. Teachers' salaries are hardly paid in spite of the fact that they are poorly remunerated. Students sit under the shade in some places without benches to read. There is overcrowding in classrooms of most public schools in the country, sometimes up to 100 students in a classroom meant for forty students. No provision is made for research funds allocation, the TET fund's effort meant to finance certain education programmes are frustrated one way or the other, even where researches are conducted the results are not utilized. Reason advanced for recent ASUU strike of 2019 in Nigeria is a living example of problem education faced. The result today is that the educational plans need careful implementation; this is because education lays a solid foundation and remains the back bone for any economic development.

**Health Service:** Health is an essential wealth to human survival. An unhealthy population shall remain unproductive. Without a sound mind, physically fit body and the absence of epidemics, there will be no proper economic development. Our hospitals today have been turned into mere consultation clinics. Many people are dying from one form of disease or the other because they cannot afford the exorbitant charges either in private hospitals or the teaching and specialist hospitals. Not much has been done in the area of preventive medicine. The slogan Health for all by the year 2000 is merely a political jinx, it has not manifested in the nation health up to date. The average family can barely survive sicknesses and turned out to be beggars at one public spot to the others seeking for assistance to purchase drugs, this is obvious when people walk around markets, terminus and other public places showing cards of the drugs they couldn't afford due to financial quagmire. This transcends to what people eat; they are merely eating anything to survive, all these have led to malnutrition and the consequences that follow it, all these are disastrous. Not much has been done in this sector by government. The result is that the quality of life has reduced and life expectancy in Nigeria has decline. The situation calls for serious concern on the part of individual and the government.

**Income Distribution:** The gap between the rich and the poor has continued to widen. While the rich can afford luxury cars, luxury houses, satellite disc and all that go to make them live luxurious live, the poor can hardly afford his transport fare to and fro to his working place. In addition, the average worker

can hardly maintain his family, inequality exists among individuals, sectors, states and social groups. Inequality is manifested even among professional groups. HRH Sanusi Lamido (Emir of Kano) said while he was central Bank Governor, that twenty-five per cent (25%) of national budget goes to national assembly but the both chambers of legislatures have found it difficult to support the present government (President Muhammadu Buhari regime) on harmonized states salary scale of thirty thousand naira (30000.00) minimum wage until Labour union have to fight vehemently. This unequal distribution has made several applicants rushing the juicy parastatals like paramilitary, oil companies, federal government civil services and others. Even these services are only attainable by children of influential people as for the children of the poor, they mostly pay for employment.

National Security is highly threatened by socio-religious crisis which have now become part of our National life. The security of both individuals and the nation generally is in shamble. The issue of security is related to inequality. More people are now prone to violence because they claimed they do not get justice either from the government or the law courts. Western world is worsening the situation by hiding under the skirmishes to perpetrate their evils of making life uncomfortable for Nigerians. The external and internal forces have succeeded in instigating hurt headed youths in the name of making the country ungovernable. In the northeastern part of the country Boko Haram attacks still refuse to end up till now, all of a sudden another insecurity problem set in, in the middle belt; it is faced with Fulani Herdsmen/Farmers crises where many lives were lost. In the south - south; the country is faced with pipeline vandals, terrorists/rebels and the worst of all is the Biafra agitators, while in the north west and some part of north central there emerged the bandits founts of kidnapping people, cow robbery and other robbery activities. The security of lives and property cannot longer be guaranteed as the police are not adequately equipped to handle crisis of this great magnitude. All these threaten the survival of man since a breakdown of law and order normally brings the economic life to a halt.

### **ANY HOPE FOR SURVIVAL?**

Having looked at the problems of survival you might be tempted to think that there is no solution in sight. Fortunately, history is full of answers to the problems of the past in present for the betterment of future, as for the structure

of the Nigerian economy we discovered that our colonial history has affected the structure of the economy from its cradle and diverted it to suit the colonial structure which was purely exploitation. For a man to survive especially in Nigeria, certain steps have to be taken as viz.

**Structural Changes:** Since imperialism or colonialism interfered with or distorted the normal process of production that would have set development at our pace in Africa, the role of those new leading African countries, is to redirect those who have direct hands on the national development plans to remove all influences of imperialism that Africa do not need in our economy. They should create conditions for development based on the African experience. In doing this, Nigeria must not wish to be a replica of Europe and America and the old colonial structures must not be used as vehicles of development. Self-help seems to be the key to the problems of Nigeria's transformation from a backward to a modern country. The idea of using foreign capital to develop Nigeria i.e. taking loans to develop the country should be discarded. We must stop emulating the consumption pattern of Europe and America. Leaders must carefully list our priority projects and resolve to keep a carefully and clearly defined development time-table based on the determined desires of the masses. Nigeria and indeed Africa can through a coordinated effort generate a popular force that can counter the dominance of foreign finance. This can be done through: Youth brigades and student task force working to improve the villages by building roads and planting crops.

Soldiers must be used productively and must become part of an indeed indistinguishable from the population at large. They should be involved in communal work, farming, construction of roads and bridges especially in times of peace.

People should be encouraged to form corporative societies and these societies must be removed from the bureaucratic re-tapism of the civil service. Local industries and even large ones based on local raw materials should flourish everywhere. Every community must be involved in self-improvement programs in order to achieve self-reliance through hard work. The people banks, people business and the community banks should be allowed to function properly in order to assist the local entrepreneur in commerce and industry. Nigerians must take their destinies in their hands and engage in any legal economic ventures

that will bring about self-reliance. For example, the National Opened Apprenticeship program should be encouraged.

Psychological Independence is paramount in the struggle for nationhood and economic self-reliance. This entails mental decolonization- meaning, discouraging colonially imposed value system. And developing self-confidence, at this juncture, we must cherish our own culture and historical roots without closing our minds to the fact that culture is affected by the forces of change and are not static.

Jealousy should be guarding our cultural and social ideas from the west, so that while we tolerate ideas from others' cultures we do not lose our identity. Let's then develop the mind of becoming aware of major global issues in order to contribute to the global welfare. To ensure the above point, our education system as well as the value system of the recent past must be completely fashioned to suit the needs of our nation without distorting our traditional corporate existence.

Nigeria cannot continue to run away from an ideological learning. Neither the so-called mixed economy nor the capitalist mode of production can enhance the survival of Nigeria as an entity and the individuals that dwelled within it. The system is what has plagued us into the present economic chaos. We must face the reality of the day and change to the Africa socialist ideological learning which enhances development and reduces the inequalities in our society. Therefore It is not an over statement to say that the socialist ideology tallies more with the African mode of production and way of life.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the survival of Nigeria and indeed all of us in the country solemnly lies in our hands. We either swim to survive together or get drown and die together. The leadership must set the pace for the masses to follow in any concerted efforts to reconstruct and revamp the Nigerian economy for the survival of the present and future generation. This paper has concentrated mainly on the problems and solutions to the economic survival of man in Nigeria. Problems that include; Poor state of Agriculture, the state of industrial development, energy, transport and communication, education, health services, income distribution, national security are discussed. Furthermore, Prospects of

survival that were discussed under Structural changes include; the use of youth brigade and student task forces, soldiers working to improve the economy, formation of co-operative societies, establishment of indigenous industries based on local raw materials, community self-improvement programmes, Peoples Bank, peoples Business and community Banks to encourage self-reliance, taking our destiny in our hands. It was also made clear on the Psychological Independence needed is mental decolonization, developing self-confidence, cherishing our culture, guarding our social and cultural ideas jealously, having an open mind towards changes as well as taking an ideological decision and discarding the old system we have been operating.

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