



FAMILY VALUES, HUMAN RIGHTS AND CHALLENGES OF MODERNIZATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract: The abundant human and natural resources makes Nigeria an economic hob particularly in Sub-Sahara Africa. Today, Nigeria glory is fast fading; there is high insecurity, as the country seems to be seating on a time bomb. The family remains the recipient of the pressure from the above. The family has had to be relatively dislocated, unstable and, by way of letting go some pressures, become highly lax in values. This paper is an attempt, therefore, to examine the impact of modernization on human rights on the one hand, and on family values on the other. Such an examination would lay bare for our conclusion the points for consideration on whether or not, modernization and human rights, or vice-versa, have posed a challenge on the Nigerian family values or whether or not family values and human rights are strong enough to confront the challenges posed by modernization.

Keywords: *Family, Values, Human Rights, Modernization, Nigeria*

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is our country. It is blessed by God with both human and natural resources. It is a plural country with a multiplicity of ethnic nationalities and languages. These ethnic nationalities clustered into regions and states have a distinct cultural practice which give Nigeria a unique blend of cultural identity and makes it a center of attraction. The abundant human and natural resources makes Nigeria an economic hob particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa. Being the largest black populated country with a rich deposit of natural resources and human capital, Nigeria came to be seen and reckoned with as the giant of Africa.

Today, Nigeria's glory is fast fading as economic indices presents a gloomy picture. Nigeria's economy drifted into recession and is still battling with a seeming unworkable strategy to come out of it. Inflation rate has gone above a single digit, so have all development indices drifted abysmally. There is high insecurity, as the country seems to be seating on a time bomb. There is a renewed resurgence of Boko Haram in

the North East, intensified agitation for independent republic of Biafra, in the south East, increased agitation for the split of the country by the Niger Deltans and Oodudua people in the South/South and South West respectively. There is a renewed wave of agitation for restructuring of the country as well as an un-reseeding wave of kidnapping, vandalism, hate speeches and aggression.

The incidence of all these, have a toll on the Nigerian family. The family remains the recipient of the pressure from all the above. The family has had to be relatively dislocated, unstable and by way of letting go some pressures, become highly lax in values. This laxity, paradoxically reinforces and strengthens the pressure giving conditions, abnitio. The challenge of crime (transnational and national) militancy, agitation, terrorism, Boko Haram, religious fanaticism and most recently hate speeches in Nigeria suggests an undoubted laxity in family values, (ethnics and morals) occasioned by the craze for modernization and reinforced by a plurality of human rights. A family as the primary agent

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of socialization plays a vital role in character formation, ethical and moral upbringing of their children/members in addition to all other equally important economic and political functions. A well socialized child internalizes the norms of the family and bears the image of the family and society in general. Thus, a good family upbringing offers a genuine anti-dote for the myriad of social ills in the society. The pluralization of human rights, occasioned by increasing globalization which itself is a function of modernization exerts a pull pressure on families, thereby altering significantly its form, structure and functioning with a concomitant bastardization of values. This condition reduces developing countries, such as Nigeria, to mere shadow-chasing entities with little or no control of the forces which sets them perpetually apart from developed countries.

MEANING AND TYPES OF FAMILY VALUES

A value is an expression of worth. It specifies what a person desires and cherishes. Family values, therefore, represents the cherished desires and expectations of a family. They are the family's expressed worth. Family values are traditional, cultural worth/ideals that pertain to the family structure, functions, roles, beliefs and attitudes. They are the moral and ethical principles, traditionally upheld and transmitted within a family. They are the rules or ideas that a family has agreed to live by and stay true to. Every family, no doubt desires good and greatness for her members. Family values are many. For ease of outlining, we can categorize family values as social, political, religious, work, moral and recreational values.

Social values: These are values which pertain to such things as peace, justice, freedom, equity and of bettering communities. Such actions as not hurting others, being respectful and courteous in interactions, volunteering time and skills in the community, being generous, honest and participating in teamwork, whenever possible, are examples of social values. For sure, every family values these attributes.

Political values: These values pertain to how governance should be political philosophy and authority

structure. Example of political values include; value for limitless opportunities (exceptionalism); value for private ownership of property (capitalism), value of patriotism, fairness, being open minded; working for success and following the law.

Religious values: These are values which center on the expectation that people have about themselves and others based on the belief of their faith. Such values as: compassion, living and growing both spiritually and intellectually, modesty, non-violent, love and treating others as one would like to be treated are examples of religious values.

Work values: Work values pertain to work philosophy, finance, hard work etc such actions as: always doing your best work; working in a team; saving a portion of your salary income, finding opportunities to express your ideals and creativity; being proud of your achievement, making education a priority, treating co-workers with respect etc are examples of work family values.

Moral values: These are values which pertain to individuals' thinking about right and wrong. Being honest and trustworthy, courageous, never give up, adding value to the world, being patient and taking personal responsibility are examples of moral values.

Recreational values: These are values which have to do with fun and play; providing unstructured play time; having family games/nights, allowing and encouraging each family member to pursue his/her interest and vacation or spending time together outside playing.

Generally, family values are numerous. Every family desires acceptance, care, charity, creativity, education, employment, compassion, integrity, honesty, generosity, humility, commitment, tradition, love, respect, responsibility, communication, hard work, etc. should all families, as primary places of induction, indoctrination and/or socialization instill these values to their children/members, the society, no doubt would be a peaceful and lovely one.

MEANING AND NATURE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

A right is a legal or moral entitlement. Human rights are the basic legal or moral entitlements that



everybody should have. They are the basic entitlements and freedom which all human beings should have or be entitled to. The concept of human rights paint a mind's picture of a Scottish philosopher, (John Locke 1632-1704) who was one of the first to be burdened in conscience by the inhuman treatment of a majority by a privileged few at the time. Driven by this, he among others espoused the concept of absolute moral claim or entitlements of life, liberty and property. These moral claims according to Locke are inherently and intrinsically tied to every human being. Every individual, according to him, is by nature endowed with these innate potentials and would strive in all circumstances to exercise and protectively defend same.

Human rights as legal entitlements are therefore inherent in individuals and tied to human biology. At endowment, upon fertilization, all individuals have the potentials of seeking good, protection and freedom.

This philosophy gained momentum and by 1776 it was elaborated, redefined and put forth as a declaration of rights in Virginia- the Virginia declaration of rights. The Virginia declaration held that: "All men are by nature equally free and independent and have certain inherent rights of which, when they enter a state of society, they cannot by any compact deprive or divest their posterity". The above lean credence to the fact that exist, inherent rights, entitlements or claims in every individual such inherent claims are fundamental to the existence of the individual and cannot therefore be abrogated. Human rights therefore are fundamental entitlements of all individuals which are neither created nor can be abrogated. In recognition of the 1776 declaration and the many treaties thereafter, all with a view to deepening consciousness on the need for peaceful coexistence of individuals, the United Nations in 1948 came up with the universal declaration of human rights. This declaration, which has become the ideal or measure and basis for all nations and discussions, categorized human rights into two broad categories civic and political rights as well as socio-cultural and economic rights. Under the civil and political rights, the 1948 UN declaration listed, among others such as: rights

to life and liberty; rights to free speeches, freedom of speech; Rights of equality of all before the law; freedom from discrimination; freedom of association; freedom of movement and nationality.

Under the socio-cultural and economic rights, the 1948 UN declaration identified among others the following; rights to participate in culture; rights to work; rights to adequate standard of living; rights to education; rights to hold ones opinion belief; rights to information; rights to practice one's religion etc. Although this typology/categorization is made for ease of understanding, the 1948 declaration merely enumerated the rights as fundamental human rights. Of importance in the enumeration is the underlying understanding that, a human being is a complete living, political, social, economic and cultural being, who has innate desire to express his/herself to understand and be understood, to give life and be given life, appropriate/apportion and to receive, speak and to be listened to play/work and take rest etc. The human being desires his/her essence of life in living out his/her life, in the outpouring of life and in the context of the social, political, economic and cultural mix within which he/she lives and interacts.

Human rights seek to ensure coherence, instill discipline (self-control and self-restrain) rekindle hope, foster peace, justice, mutual co-existence and upholds individuals' dignity and integrity. Human rights seek to ensure that human beings derive the essence of life their financial, political, religious and social status notwithstanding.

MEANING AND NATURE OF MODERNIZATION

The use of the concept of modernization conjure a mental image of a process of a transition or transformation from a lower, less, semi-developed to a more complex, sophisticated and developed state. It is used to refer to a model of progressive transformation from a pre-modern or traditional to a modern society. Smelser Neil (in Faroq 2014) defines modernization as fact that technical, economic and ecological change ramify through the whole social and cultural fabric. Moore Wilbert (in Faroq 2014) sees modernization as a tool transformation of a traditional or pre-modern society



into the types of technology and associated social organization that characterize the advanced economically prosperous and relatively politically stable nations of the western world. Faroq (2014) sees it as a process of change towards those of development in social, economic and political systems in the 17th to 19th century in Western Europe and North America and follow 20th in Eastern Europe, Latin America, Asia and Africa.

From the above, we can define modernization as a process of social, economic, political and cultural change, transformation or transition from traditional, rural, agrarian state to a more secular, urban, industrial and postindustrial state. Modernization as a process of progressive transformation can be social, economic and political. Social modernization entails the progressive changes in social life. Such changes manifested in modern way of living; communication pattern, form and structure, (mass media), residence patterns, urbanization, literacy, education demographics, ramified profession, speech pattern, dressing and hygiene have become valued and internalized.

Economic aspects of modernization include such changes in economic life as marketing, wage system, technology, production, distribution, and consumption pattern while such changes as rationalization of authority, differentiation of structure and expansion of political, exemplify political modernization. Modernization therefore entails a new way of life, a new type of attitude and a complex blend of culture, civilization and technology.

MODERNIZATION AND FAMILY VALUES

The impact of modernization on human society is felt most in the family. The family as the primary place of socialization serves also as the nucleus of the society. The society is a conglomerate of families, thus family values are miniature of society's values. Modernization or put it more crudely, new way of life is manifested in (a) attitude, most of which tend to be greatly a departure from convention. Modernization brings with it a creative and liberating attitude, a sense of independence at the individual and familiar level and a complete departure

from traditional and family values. Modernization alienates the individual from traditional values and set him/her apart from his family. Little wonder that, children refer to their parents and their values as "Old school".

In dress codes: Suits, caftans, Niger-Delta wares replacing the bongus, Ikengas etc while sagging, bumb shorts, sleeveless and braceless dresses have come to replace the traditional dress codes of most societies.

Hair style: Weavons, punks, Rihanna etc have come also to replace the traditional hairstyle characteristics of African cultures.

Lifestyle: Modern lifestyle entails the utilization of modern utensil in the kitchen, electronics at homes, pipe borne water and beautiful wares. Modernization manifest in eating habit, range of choice, diet, social relationships, form and nature and schooling/education, form of worship, form and nature of health care facilities and services, transportation and every aspect of social living.

These aspects have social political and economic implications on the family. Such family values as discipline, respect, humility, togetherness and hard work have had to be greatly and negatively affected by modernization. Such attitudinal display of children as early independence, craze for wealth, substance use and abuse, laziness, secret cultism, sexual promiscuity, homosexuality, and all other forms of sexual abnormality have no doubt, become a somewhat akin to modernity.

Modernization of communication culminated in globalization with a concomitant high rate of cultural diffusion, aculturalization, imitation and change. These attitudes and behavior are for sure, having a toll on families as most families have become almost irreparably isolated, dislocated and completely helpless in exercising authority and discipline. What hitherto was valued by the family have completely become old fashioned and old school.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND MODERNIZATION

All societies are always evolving; they are, not static but constantly changing. As societies change, and



in order not to dislocate some structures, the society's inbuilt mechanisms strive to maintain a moving balance of equilibrium. One of such areas where society strives to maintain a balance is social order. In maintaining social order, modifications and re-modification of the normative system has to be undertaken. Such a venture culminates in a multiplicity of rights hence the plurality of human rights. Modernization therefore entails a holistic shift in every gamut of social existence. It entails a modernization of attitudes, and behaviour, strengthened and reinforced by a modernization of the normative system.

Put differently, as the society experiences modernization, the norms of the society are also modernized to support the changing trend. As many animals are going extinct, for instance, the society has to make laws to ban open hunting and killing of these extinction-prone animals. As modernization sets in, societies become more differentiated and complex; solidarity becomes organic, relationship becomes based, more on qualification, division of labour and compartmentalization inevitable. These complexities and differentiation breeds an inexcusable problem of social organization and order. In curbing these inexcusable challenges, the rights have to be multiplied, expanded or enacted. Thus human rights are both a consequence of modernization as well as the igniting force of modernization. The wave of enlightenment occasioned by the consciousness of rights enhanced predominantly by globalization as inertia for modernization in most third world countries including Nigeria. Human rights on the other hand also evolve to sustain social order in a modernizing society.

HUMAN RIGHTS AS A CHALLENGE TO FAMILY VALUES

The plurality of rights has made caricature the whole essence of it. A few months ago a group of women in USA striped themselves nude to protest the rights f pets and animals. To these young ladies, the cruelty with which the animals were slaughtered in the abattoir was saddening. This was just as the society was battling with the rights of gay and infant homosexuality. The universal

declaration for the rights of the child which was domesticated in Cross River State in the last regime is no doubt one of such conglomerate of rights that serve to restraint parents' use of the rod to control/discipline the child. In most developed societies, evidence abounds of children who sue their parents and quite often get them find or imprisoned as they infringe on any of the rights.

In traditional African society/family, a child could be flogged for refusing to greet his parents in the morning. This cannot be done now without infringing on the child's rights. The saying that you spare the rod and spoil the child no longer holds or perhaps, to the contrary as families is now spoiling their children by sparing the rods. The Beijing (China) declaration of the rights of women is another variant of the force of modernization which altered very significantly the value and structure of most families. Most families became dislocated and separated; authority structure of most families was altered not in peace but with much resistance from the male folk. A lot of male chauvinists banned their wives from partaking on women activities in order to protect their homes. This twist, no doubt has implication to the child upbringing and the consequences are living with us now.

The rights of celibacy and/or contract marriage are fast robbing on us in our country. This right allows a male/female to contract marriage within agreed upon conditions after which the marriage is annulled. The right of celibacy gives the man or woman the right not to be discriminated on account of marital status. A man/woman may choose to remain unmarried. This right, for sure, affects the affectionate relationship which should characterize marriage. It legitimize single parenthood, its detrimental consequences notwithstanding.

FAMILY VALUES, HUMAN RIGHTS AND MODERNIZATION

So far we have attempted to showcase what family values are, human rights and modernization. We have tried to juxtapose family values with modernization in the one hand and family values with human rights on the other. We have also tried to juxtapose human rights



with modernization. From the exposition above, it can be argued that, modernization as a transformation is a desirable phenomenon. Desirable as it is, it has several consequences on the family and its value.

Modernization affects all aspects of human existence including rights and family values. The values have tended to undermine the authority structure of families with a corresponding lax in social order at the familial level. The urge to be like the others, imitate and imbibe, hook and sinker, other cultures, have served to greatly erode traditional social control methods. Unfortunately, these other cultures seen as modern and fashionable are strengthened by new norms codified as rights. Everything has rights, thus, self-expression and disciplined are limited by the rights of the other party. Modernization and human rights have served collectively to alienate the social man/woman from this very object of creation. Man has become a slave to his rights and has now become dignifiedly dependent on forces perceived and seen as being beyond his control. The social stage of dramatization has become more and more broadened with the advent of modernization and its supportive and strengthening rights.

CONCLUSION

Human rights and modernization are human forces made by man and for man. Man should not, and must not, for the craze of imitation gulp, hook and sinker, what obtains in other countries. In the pre consecration prayer to the immaculate heart of Mary, Nigerians have become missionaries to themselves and other countries. This should apply to modernization. Rights are society's specific and reflects the peculiar aspirations of the society, borrowing such and domesticating same breeds a conflict of culture and identity thus reducing man to a more puppet of controllable forces of modernization and human rights.

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