

POOR HUMAN CONDITION IN NIGERIA: THE SOCIO-POLITICAL FOUNDATION AND ROLE OF PHILOSOPHY

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Abstract

Human condition in Nigeria is deteriorating. This is propelled by poor socio-political practices which direly affect every aspect of Nigerian existence as well as the interiority of the human person. Poor socio-political practices in Nigeria have indeed made human life precarious, nasty and brutish, thereby reflecting the country as a failing state. Consequently, this paper analytically investigates poor human condition in Nigeria, its socio-political foundation and the role of philosophy. The study finds that socio-political practices and system underscore the prevalent poor human condition in Nigerian state. And based on the interconnectedness of cosmic realities, the spate of poor human condition in Nigeria also shapes socio-political practices, systems and institutions. In the midst of these, the study concedes that present Nigerian philosophers play a role in advancing and alleviating poor human condition. Consequently, the study posits axiological solutions to the problem, and concludes that there is need to overhaul Nigerian socio-political system in order to pave way for quality education as well as pragmatic philosophical thought that in other places guarantee sustainable development and good life for the citizenry.

Key Words: *Human; Condition; Socio-political; Foundation; Role; Philosophy*

Introduction

Human condition is a product of unfolding events shaped by socio-political practices in a place. This is why H-G Gadamer taught that nobody acts from nowhere or exists in a vacuum, but from a particular socio-political context.¹ Since human existence happens in socio-political context, it means that the forces behind it emanate from the socio-political context within which it occurs. This however implies that human condition has socio-political explanations, evident in socio-political systems, institutions, practices and interactions which act as catalysts of social

¹Hans-Georg, G. Kleine Schriften 1. Tuebingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1967, 107.

existence in human societies.² When these political systems and institutions avail unequal opportunities and incentives in favour of the few, the result is poor human condition amidst little affluence. The result too is struggle for survival in which practical philosophy is jettisoned and poor philosophy becomes a survival tool.

At the center of civil society is therefore politics, which sets the limits of human condition, implementation of philosophical postulations, existence, nature and mode of operation of other human institutions as well as the socio-economic arrangements that affect economic incentives and opportunities. Along this line, politics is the catalyst behind power distribution, poor/quality education, security/insecurity, stability/lawlessness, conducive/ uncondusive environment, economic opportunities, market incentives, and socio-economic space that determine actualization of economic objectives, dream projects, means of livelihood and self-reliance. It shapes the entire market economy in which the citizenry produce, buy and sell any product or render any service.³

Sadly, the Nigerian context is where government policies are shaped by utopic and pragmatic philosophies. Yet, the pragmatic aspects of the philosophical contents of these policies are poorly or largely not implemented. The trouble with Nigeria is therefore not lack of intellectuals or philosophical policies but lack of pragmatic formulation and the will to implement national policies by the leadership amidst socio-political forces within the system. For, surrounding the often intellectual deficient leadership or government are also academics with quality education. Despite these, responses to economic crisis and poor human conditions still come from poor intellectual lenses of political and economic policy advisers, stakeholders and interest groups who have less commitment to public interest.⁴ More so, some of the intellectual ideas and blueprints of these academics are recycles of old ideas which are not in terms with modern existential and dynamic changes. Consequently, agents and representative of Nigerian government remain largely “philosophers in principle” and not in practice despite their enormous education. This is why Plato and Aristotle earlier nursed fear that poor human condition often

²Gregory, E. C. “Migration and Conflict in Nigeria: The Socio-Political Nexus.” In *Fundamentals of Peace and Conflict Management*, edited by Ezeugwu Evaristus and Udabah Cordelia, 63. Enugu: His Glory Publications, 2019.

³Daron, A and James, R. *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty*. London: Profile Books, 2013, 64.

⁴Shair, A. O. *Privatization and Development*. Palgrave Publisher Ltd, 1997, 29. Owolabi, B. M. *International Financial Corporation’s Neo-Liberal Privatization Policy Meets Privatization Drives of the New Post Military Nigerian Neo-Colonial Capitalist Elites.*” In *The Humanities and Sustainable Development*, edited by Chiegboka, A. B. C., Utoh-Eaeajugh and Ogene, M. S., 25-26. Nimo: Rex Charles and Patrick, 2011.

emerges in democracy due to its socio-political forces that largely neglects public opinion, quality education and paves way for oligarchy and tyranny.⁵ This unfortunate condition however propels the larger population of Nigerians towards illegal and illegitimate means to ensure survival. As such, self-control, social control and patriotism are fast becoming past virtues, and the Nigerian state is gradually retrogressing to statelessness.

Conceptual Analysis

Unexplained concepts are largely misnomers that obstruct understanding and knowledge. But analysis sets the limit of concepts, clarifies them, creates better insight into the imports of words and explicitly unveils the meanings lurking in them. Here then lies the need to analyze poor human condition and socio-politics which are outstanding concepts in this discourse. Poor human condition is a state within the society, characterized by unpalatable existence that results from absence of human basic needs. Poor human condition therefore reflects a state of poverty. This abhorrible state largely stem from government's inability or unwillingness to undertake public socio-economic measures necessary to eradicate poverty.⁶ This condition indeed prevails in present Nigeria. This is as the greater population of the citizenry still lives below poverty line which is one dollar per day. As such, the former head of European Commission to Nigeria, Leonidas Tezapsidis, reports that "Nigeria is ranked the third country with the highest number of poor people in the world".⁷ It therefore stands that 'poor human condition' is an inclusive expression that depicts the population within the society as having none, little or meager income, or not enjoying affordable existence, social and basic amenities.

On the other hand, socio-politics is a word that incorporates all the interactions and deliberations that has to do with governance among inhabitants of a political state. The term revolves around public opinion and decision-making regarding what a society should do; when, how and why as

⁵Fidelis, A and Emmanuel, A. Francis Fukuyama on Democracy and the End of History. In *The Humanities and Nigeria's Democratic Experience*, edited by Chiegboka, A. B. C., Nwadiuwe, C. E and Umezina, E. C., 95.

Nimo: Rex Charles & Patrick, 2009.

⁶Daron, A and James, R. 50.

⁷Owolabi, M. B. "International Financial Corporation's Neo-Liberal Privatization Policy Meets Privatization Drives of the New Post Military Nigerian Neo-Colonial Capitalist Elites." In *The Humanities and Sustainable Development*, edited by Chiegboka, A. B. C., Utoh-Eaeajugh and Ogene, M. S., 39. Nimo: Rex Charles and Patrick, 2011.

well as who should determine what is done.⁸ Seen in this light, socio-politics involves struggle for power which enables the possessor to determine what policies a group or state should carry out.⁹ As such, socio-politics corroborates the entire tussle which precedes and surrounds any decision of the state or government.¹⁰ This means that socio-politics is a human activity within the political state, associated with running a government, an organization or a movement. In these activities, differing interests within a given unit of rule are conciliated by giving people a share in power in proportion to their importance to the welfare and survival of the community and the state.¹¹ Consequently, socio-politics refers to how human beings govern and are governed hence the activities involve who gets what, when, how and the authoritative allocation of values.¹² The term “socio-politics” also extends to all the analysis of government and its workings which meddle with every sector of the civil society.¹³

Cradle of poor human condition in Nigeria

With its character of mass suffering, poor human condition began in pre-colonial epoch. This was the era of monarchical system in which human welfare was understood as the privilege of monarchs, royals and stakeholders. As such, revenue was solely for the maintenance of this class of people whose welfare the masses largely work for. Consequently, exploitative taxation, forced and free labour were in place, and deviants were brutally punished, with their possessions often expropriated by these monarchs to deter dissidents. In this era, life in many tribes that became Nigeria in 1914 was evidently based on masters-servants relationship which hampered socio-economic development of the larger population.

Following the monarchical system was the colonial exploitation of the native population. In republican places without kings like Igbo land; warrant chiefs were installed for effective implementation of colonial socio-political and economic policies. Testifying to this, Achebe documents that the welfare and good condition of the Nigerian native population was jeopardized as most of the colonial kings and warrant chiefs were upstarts and ruffians in the

⁸Okon, J. E & Emmanuel E.E. “Political Education and the Sustainability of Democracy in Nigeria.” *Sapientia Journal of Philosophy* 9 (2018): 25.

⁹Eminue, O. *Introduction to Political Science*. Calabar: Clear Lines Publications, 2001, 10.

¹⁰Jouvenel, Bethrand. *Sovereignty: An Inquiry into the Political Good*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957, 15

¹¹Crick, B. *In Defence of Politics*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964, 21.

¹²Thomas, M. M. *Understanding Politics, Ideas, Institutions, and Issues*. Belmont: Wadsworth, 2009, 4.

¹³Appadorai, A. *The Substance of Politics*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004, 4.

community, installed to uphold colonial policies at the expense of the people.¹⁴ Consequently, a great number of the natives suffered long years of economic stunt, impoverishment and poor conditions. However, post-independence Nigeria absorbed the monarchical and colonial predatory systems with their egoistic capitalism; visible in exploitation, spoil system and impoverishment of the masses. Today, the larger population of Nigerians counts their losses, and only hopes for an end to the present poor human condition.

Socio-political foundation of poor human condition in Nigeria

Since politics shapes every sector of human society, human condition derives from the forces of politics. For, politics dialectically impacts on societal institutions and forms the fulcrum of human condition. As a social force, politics necessarily evolves and meddles with societal institutions; shaping, guiding and driving them to an end. More so, societal institutions such as economic, education, security, social, legal, etc, all derive from politics, and their continuous existence and dynamic contents, directions and mode of operation are synthesis of their dialectics with politics.¹⁵ Thus, economic opportunities, social amenities, social welfare, quality philosophical or academic activities, patterns of human existence in the society, cost and condition of living, dynamism of market prices; goods and services are all consequences of the dialectics of politics with societal institutions.

Recognizing this inevitable dialectics, the British Prime Minister Gordon Brown in 2007 observes that politics meddles with every sector of human society including individual utilization of talents, public services and happenings in the market giving rise to human conditions and societal practices.¹⁶ These practices range from social norms, philosophical enterprises, human behaviours, actions, to institutional and market operations within the society. Thus, political institution not only generates and implements the necessary policies that underscore the existence of state institutions; it also meddles with these institutions to produce the patterns of life prevalent in the society. As such, socio-political milieu affects the existence of the citizenry. And in reality, all the aspects of human existence in a civil society are connected to and controlled by politics. Based on this, politics everywhere shapes, checks and controls socio-economic and academic systems as well as the life and general existence of the people within the state.

¹⁴ Chinua, A. *The Trouble with Nigeria*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishing Co., 1998, 60-61.

¹⁵ Daron, A and James, R. 42.

¹⁶ Iain, M. *Politics: Key Concepts in Philosophy*. New York: Continuum International Publishers, 2009, 1.

This happens through exercise of power; decision making and policy implementation.

Since politics underscores governance that controls human affairs in every civil society, it logically means that socio-political practices and institutions are the bedrock of poor human condition in Nigeria. This is as Nigerian politics is monopolized by cabals, disgruntled politicians and their loyalists who view the poor condition of the country as tool of breaking the resolve of the greater population and rendering them vulnerable to domination. This dominating class and her foreign allies monetize politics in Nigeria to the highest bidder. Within this scenario, Nigerian politicians have no permanent enemy, friend, party or ideology but a permanent private financial interest. Hence the prevalent “do or die” politics, incessant party defections, permanent hold on political offices and corrupt enrichment from public treasury. The implication of these is that Nigerian politics/governance largely exhibits predatory character. This is a situation where state administrators; their agents and cronies apply their expertise mainly in extracting resources and rents from the rest of the society and diverting them to their private uses.¹⁷ Such expertise are today visible in hiking of fuel pump price, value added taxes (VAT), electricity tariffs, bank charges, unnecessary humongous borrowings, misappropriation of public funds, padding of government budgets, etc. Sadly, none of these huge borrowings, state incomes and budgets are significantly felt anywhere in Nigerian society, giving clue to the reality that these funds are gradually looted into private pockets. This is so because politics in Nigeria is not viewed as service to the people. It is rather a means of accumulating personal wealth by appropriating public fund. This is why Forsyth observes that in Nigeria and Africa in general, political power means success and prosperity, not only for the man who holds it but for his family, his birth place and even his region of origin. As a result, there are many who will go any length to get it, will surpass themselves in order to get it.¹⁸

Based on this reality, Odey describes Nigerian governments as not for the people or from the people, but by an organized clique, cabal, political jobbers, looters and robbery consortium that collaborate with imperialists and convert leadership into breeding ground for unemployment, insecurity, hunger and hopelessness.¹⁹ Oladepo agrees with this description and documents that in Nigeria, politics/governance is replete with lootings, exploitation, breach of

¹⁷Francis, F. *The Origins of Political Order*. London: Profile Books, 2012, 210. Evans, P. B. “Predatory, Developmental, and other Apparatuses: A Comparative Analysis of the Third World State.” *Sociological Forum* 4, no. 4(1989): 561-82.

¹⁸Fredrick, F. *The Biafran Story*. London: Hudahuda Publishers, 1982, 15.

¹⁹John, O. *Democracy: Our Lofty Dreams and Crazy Ambitions*. Enugu: Snaap Press, 2002, 14-15.

rule of law, discrimination, imbalance socio-political and economic structure, visionlessness, poor management, insecurity, irresponsiveness, nepotism, clannishness and unaccountability.²⁰

With this trend, political system in Nigeria largely ignores pragmatic ideas necessary in enhancing the condition of the greater population. Hence, there is apparently a gross disconnection of the larger political class with practical intellectualism and fundamental philosophical values. Based on this vacuum, Nigerian national vision lacks contemporary world economic order and trade philosophy that benefit the masses, but harbour those trends that mainly favour political office holders and enable their hurling millions of Naira away from the national treasury. Sadly, these loots are again used to establish private businesses that become another avenue of exploiting and impoverishing the masses. In reference to this, Bakare asserts:

It is only in Nigeria (that) people in power can have access to public funds to run their private business and the business of governance at the same time. Nigerian rulers have enough latitude and unlimited access to public funds to set up newspapers, shipping lines, airlines, mechanized farms, universities, etc., and run them openly while they are in power. In Nigeria, public officers build or buy hundreds of millions worth of landed property even while in office. Public officers bid openly for hundreds of millions worth of government property without fearing any consequences.²¹

Evidently therefore, Nigerian politics stunts economic opportunities, frustrates prosperity of the masses, neglects education sector, jeopardizes philosophical reconstruction of the country and sustainable development. Haven rejected rational processes and socio-political trajectory of progressive societies such as referendum, restructuring, people inclusiveness, public opinion, rule of law, justice, equity, security, etc it has become obvious that Nigerian kind of politics is a conscious effort towards renegeing the social contract and creating poor human condition.

Reality of poor human condition in Nigeria

At the centre of poor human condition in Nigeria is absence of recognition; which is the fundamental human longing, the fulcrum of liberal democracy

²⁰Oladapo, F. A. "The Structure of Nigeria's Restructuring Rhetoric". SSRN Electronic Journal, 2017, 6. doi:10.2139/ssrn.3035520.

²¹Owolabi, M. B., 36.

and civil society.²² This is direly exacerbated by devaluation of human life and right. Hence, every political dispensation is characterized by murder of innocent citizens and abuse of human rights. This condition is exacerbated by great deprivation of social justice, incentives and atmosphere necessary for economic activities and self-discovery to thrive. Along with these is deep breach of rule of law and renegeing of social contract. Hence poverty and corruption are soaring high in the whole country. In the midst of these, the increasing Nigerian population largely faces uphill challenges of purposefully being ignored by security institutions in their quest for security rights, legal institutions in their quest for justice, educational institutions in their quest for quality knowledge, financial institutions in their quest for funding, communication institutions in their efforts to bring their goods and services to the public and other public institutions in their efforts to access necessary services needed for socio-economic emancipation. The increasing Nigerian population also faces the challenges of exploitation by state actors and government agents. These exploitations range from multiple taxation of their outputs, movements, needs, services, transactions to political expropriation of their goods, sealing of their places of services or withdrawal of their licenses for noncompliance. Hence, in the “power to the people”, “change” and “next level” tantrum of the past and present administrations; value added taxes (VAT), rates, bills, tariffs, pump price, banking charges, market prices, etc., remain on the hike. This condition is however exacerbated by unlawful arrests, security agents’ brutality, insecurity, intimidations of the public, especially the rivals, or non-supporters of present political trend.²³

Due to the exploitative nature of Nigerian politics, economic recession remains unabated. Consequently, majority of the populace barely afford the daily meals. Worst, education sector is in comatose with incessant strike action, government neglect, inadequate funding and low quality. And not everybody can even afford the high tuition which now largely makes education the privilege of the rich. Unemployment on the other hand remains high as there are factually no enhanced infrastructures, job opportunities and enabling environment in which entrepreneurship can thrive. To be true, successive Nigerian governments and present politics are characterized by institutionalizing patterns inimical to the growth and survival of the masses. For through politics, those in government only foster patterns that favour them, the elites and their loyalists. And these patterns as well deprive the

²²Francis, F. *The End of History and the Last Man*. New York: Penguin Books, 1992, 288.

²³Gregory, E. C. “Politics: The Dialectical Base of Poverty and Prosperity in Nigeria.” *Nnamdi Azikiwe Journal of Philosophy* 11, no. 2 (2019): 39.

masses of adequate basic amenities, means of livelihood, opportunities and enabling environment to actualize or benefit from their ideas and invention. Indeed, poor human condition in Nigeria is also visible in poor living conditions seen in increasing ghetto and squalor settlements/poor housing, deprived welfare services and uncomfortable life around the country. It as well reflects in poor road network, communication system, legal system, transportation system, incessant fatal accidents, poor social, public and medical services as well as inadequate basic amenities.

Present role of philosophy in advancing and alleviating poor human condition in Nigeria

Philosophy is like a double-edged sword that can be applied in any direction. In Nigerian context, it has been applied in advancing and alleviating poor human condition. The application of philosophical thoughts to national questions has indeed polarized Nigerian thinkers. Some of these thinkers reason along Socrates, Plato and Aristotle towards ensuring actualization of the goal of political state, which is good life for the greatest number of people. These intellectuals are indeed propelled by the relevance of indigenous worldview and philosophy to development process and nation building.²⁴As such, they hold that Nigeria needs epistemic, metaphysical and rational choices to surmount her problems. These thinkers therefore view the relevance of philosophy as consisting in its role in stimulating rational and critical inquiry towards evolving, discovering and formulating ultimate ideas, values, policies and implementation mode on which society and human life should be ordered. They also view the importance of philosophy as consisting in its role in evolving quality analysis, interpretation and clarification of state policies towards the benefit of greater population of the citizenry. Based on these, philosophy is a dynamic activity that can stir reason in Nigerian state managers towards implementation of rational pragmatic values or policies that drive better human condition.

The “how” of importance of philosophical role is however visible in the way it induces reasoning faculties, inspires logical and critical thinking, and produces results that are universally valid and sound in the realm of experience and beyond. This means that philosophy propels rationality in the

²⁴J. C. A. Agbakoba. “Philosophy, Traditional African Ethical Outlook and the Problems of Economic Development,” A paper Presented at the 9th Annual Conference of the International Society for African Philosophy and Studies, University of Dares Salam, Tanzania, 9th to 11th April, 2003. J.C.A. Agbakoba. “Philosophy and Development: Meta theoretical and Methodological Considerations,” UCHE Journal of the Department of Philosophy, University of Nigeria, Nsukka 11 (2005):41.

willing state actors towards practical application of knowledge of nature that manifests via combination of mathematical calculations and empirical observations that stand as the catalyst of socio-political, technological and economic advancement of the west.²⁵ It again means that philosophy propels state actors towards encouraging creativity and enterprise among the citizens and galvanizing available means and resources towards the common good. Along this lane, philosophy checks bias, prejudice, phobia, dogma, societal militarism and political frailty that hamper right decisions and choices of better policies and their implementation.

With these convictions, proponents of philosophy evolve enormous ideas and reliable philosophical knowledge in diverse journals, projects and books. This knowledge in all ramifications reflect score philosophical values of criticality, consistency, logicity, comprehensiveness, profundity and coherence, as well as dynamism of Nigerian society and forces of societal sustainable development that will result to reconstruction of the Nigerian state. Indeed, the ideas radiated in the works of these thinkers would have put Nigeria on sustainable development trajectory if not the conscious disconnection of the ruling class and their cronies with the vigor of positive intellectualism. As such, Nigerian state is not short of pragmatic rational ideas that can better human condition but the good political will to implement them. Despite this, the rational activities of these thinkers lend credence to the conventional view that philosophy affects social milieu just as social milieu propels people's philosophy and thought process.

Unlike the above philosophical current however, are thinkers with the view that philosophy is not relevant to development process and nation building. For these thinkers, Nigerian predicament is deeply rooted in the unfavourable geography, climatic conditions, biogeography and history.²⁶ Despite these views, the minor application of philosophy in governance; agriculture, transportation, solid mineral, etc., sectors exposes the weakness of these arguments. Moreover, the present internet advancement and information and communication technology (ICT) unites the world as a global village. This encourages transfer of learning, knowledge, skills and technical know-how. As such, Nigerian predicament stems more from inadequate application of philosophy (reason) in the development process and nation building.

Unlike the proponents of philosophy are also thinkers that are Machiavellian in thought. And like the sophists, these intellectuals apply

²⁵J.C.A. Agbakoba. "Philosophy and Development: Metatheoretical and Methodological Considerations". Ibid.

²⁶ Josephat, Obi Oguejiofor. "Is African Worldview Responsible for African Predicament?," *UCHE*, 15 (2009): 1 &9.

philosophy for personal gain.²⁷ Hence, they justify present poor politics and governance to gain personal advantage. These intellectuals provide state managers with flawed philosophy, manipulative ideas and blueprints that are neither *in tandem* with modern existential and dynamic changes nor with public interest.²⁸ Rather, it is replete with duplicity that jeopardizes government policies, implementation processes, principles of governance, social order, justice and equity. With all kinds of absurdities, sophistries, fallacies and praise singing, their influences extend to swerving successive governments to renege the social contract, justifying every governments' ineptitude; unaccountability, corruption, poor performance and suppression of oppositions. With morally unsound mind, some of these intellectuals surround the ruling class as advisers, ministers, directors, ambassadors, diplomats, secretaries, personal assistants (PA), stakeholders and friends. Their likes are the intellectuals that sychophantly serve as returning officers at the polls where they rig elections for their preferred politicians. With this "gangster and predatory" kind of philosophy, whatever action the government takes which is not detrimental to the people in government irrespective of the drastic consequences on the governed is defended by these thinkers as moral, good and just.²⁹

Aftermath of poor human condition and its influences on Nigerian politics

Poor human condition breeds every kind of social dysfunction in the masses such as the urge for corrupt practices in order to survive. This is as it stirs the deep rooted need in humans which bothers on feeling at home in this universe.³⁰ From this irrational urge and need therefore springs crime and corruption which are presently endemic in Nigeria. Hence, the spate of kidnapping, armed robbery, cyber fraud, drug peddling, drug abuse, prostitution, theft, bribery, dishonesty and hypocrisy in Nigeria. Along this line, every human relationship in the country has virtually become an occasion to gain fraudulent material advantage. Based on this, people are daily robbed of their wealth, valuables and means of livelihood. And now, local, national and international fraud in the country has reached epidemic proportions with no sign of it abating. As such, Nigeria is recently ranked by Transparency

²⁷ Samuel, E. S. *Philosophy History & Problems*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994, 31.

²⁸ Shair, A. O., 29; Owolabi, M. B., 25-26

²⁹ Areji, A. C. "Ethical Subjectivism and the Problem of Governance in Reply to Civil Society: A Critical Reflection on Nigeria's Third Republic." *UCHE Journal of the Department of Philosophy University of Nigeria, Nsukka* 12 (2005): 57.

³⁰ Edwin, A. B. *Religion in an Age of Sciences*. London: William and Norgate, 1970, 2.

International reports among the most corrupt countries in the world.³¹ With poverty, hunger, malnutrition, disease and death characterizing human condition in Nigeria, the result is general frustration, moral bankruptcy, aggressiveness and restiveness which culminate in present hate speeches, violence, terrorism, militancy, agitation and secession movements. These not only mar the image of Nigeria among the international community, it as well scares investors.

Worst still, poor human condition in Nigeria truncates the interiority of the being of the individual and consequently breeds social monsters. These are people without humanity; ready to kill or maim anybody standing between them and their material objective. Along this line, the perception of average Nigerians has direly changed. Thus, politics is now synonymous with being smartly dishonest, and is popularly understood as a sure means of accumulating the much needed capital based on the often unchecked access it gives to public treasury.³² Similarly, political manifesto is largely viewed by the public as ruse philosophically articulated for the mere purpose of garnering people's support. And campaign promises are taken as mere means of winning elections and not to be fulfilled.³³ On another note, inadequate or non-implementation of good policies, abandoning of projects, abuse of mandate/power and office, election rigging, breaching the rule of law/electoral processes, bigotry, tribalism, inflation/under-execution of contracts and blaming of past administrations for failures are fast becoming a norm among the Nigerian larger population. These, indeed explains people's apathy during elections, towards politics and governance. In these conditions, the rational functioning of the psyche of greater Nigerians is affected. With this mental dysfunction, the greater population is now deprived of critical therapeutic and renovative act as well as right judgment that ought to occupy the mind in order to purge it of inferiority and pessimism.³⁴ Consequently, the worst of characters in Nigerian politics that is ready to offer money have no short supply of army of supporters from the downtrodden masses. And it seems average Nigerians wish to embrace such legacy; as within their minds, they patiently wish for turns to acquire political power in order to replicate the same

³¹Emmanuel, I. A. Corruption and Culture in Nigeria: Between Institutionalism and Moral Individualism. *UCHE*, 15 (2009): 70-71.

³²Chukwudi, E. E and Obiora, A. "The Electoral Process and the Survival of Democracy in Nigeria." In *Nigerian Democracy & Global Democracy*, edited by Ike Odimegwu, 77. Awka: Fab Educational Books, 2008.

³³Joe, A. *A Nation at Crossroads: The Way Forward*. Enugu: Catholic Diocesan Printing Press, 2018, 23.

³⁴Kalu, O. Tradition in Revolutionary Change. *Ikenga Journal of African Studies*, 3, no.1 & 2 (1975): 55.

predatory trend for personal aggrandizement. These explain the present mad rush into politics in Nigeria as well as the tremendous sycophancy, hypocrisy and praise singing of corrupt politicians by the greater population. In these ways, the Nigerian social milieu tends to shape and strengthen the poor Nigerian politics. But based on these, the international community now views Nigeria as an unjust state where human rights, welfare and freedom are non-existent. But amidst these, brain drain has increased as citizens with means and connection are leaving the country in droves.

Nevertheless, the poor condition of Nigerian citizenry hinders their socio-economic trajectory depriving them of growth in agriculture and industry. Thus, it is now difficult for the greater population to actualize themselves. The implication is that initiatives, ambitions, talents, investments, inventions, innovations and long term productivity of the greater population of Nigerians hardly materialize or endure. As such, there exists spate of defunctness in businesses as well as economic loss. In addition to these are victimization, dehumanization and abuse of rights by government agencies or state actors. Some of these; like the police, army, etc no longer see the poor masses as humans; hence their high level of oppression and innumerable extrajudicial killings. The despicable condition of Nigerians today is truly devastating, and has rendered many as veritable cannon fodders for escalating restiveness existent in the country.

The philosophical base of the argument

The fact that human condition depends on politics dominates the thoughts of thinkers. To enhance human living condition and achieve common good, philosophers have indeed propounded political theories. Among these theories are those of Plato and Aristotle which are replete with essential political qualities necessary for improving human condition in contemporary societies. Politics, according to Plato and Aristotle is meant to achieve human needs and good life.³⁵ As such, the end of politics in human society is the provision of best life for the greatest number of the citizenry.³⁶ Thus the best state is that whose politics promotes the quality of human condition.³⁷ To actualize this objective, Plato argues that politicians has to acquire intellectual capacity that enhances the understanding of the distinction between the visible and intelligible world, realm of opinion and knowledge, appearance and reality as well as effective management of the state towards provision of good life for

³⁵Samuel, E. S., 70.

³⁶Appadorai, A., 39.

³⁷Mathew, I. N. *Basic World Political Theories*. Owerri: Claretian Institute of Philosophy, 1988, 28.

the larger population. Thus, Plato was convinced that good human condition comes through quality politics. This is as good politics implants good constitutions and effective implementations that positively enhance the wellbeing of the citizens. In line with this opinion, Aristotle cited that good human condition enjoyed by Athenians in ancient period was courtesy of good politics played by Pericles, Euripides and their contemporaries.³⁸ And based on his view that the end of politics is achievement of good life for the citizenry, Aristotle got the historic privilege of being recruited to inculcate best qualities of politics in Alexander the great, son of king Philip of Macedonia.³⁹

In his *Two Treatises of Government*, John Locke echoes the connection between poor politics and poor human condition as he reflects on natural right to private property. Locke stresses that the duty of the state to protect life, liberty and property happens through reasonable politics played for the general good of the citizens.⁴⁰ On the other hand, Karl Marx's dislike of the bourgeoisie was based on their politics of exclusion, oppression and exploitation which is similar to that existing in present Nigeria. Marx declares that such politics alienates the people and impoverishes them. In other words, Marx views politics as a superstructure that shapes economic substructure and human condition in the society.⁴¹ Hence for him, socio-economic inequality and poor human conditions are more of social creation brought about by capitalist egoistic and predatory politics.⁴² This underscores Marx's conclusion that the existence of poor human condition in societies like Nigeria results from the exploitation and oppression of the larger population by the political class.⁴³

Axiological solution to poor human condition in Nigeria

Human poor condition in Nigeria will change when politics is positively redirected. But this change will not come because those in government are benefiting from the rotten political system. Thus, the situation of politics in Nigeria at the moment makes revolution a desideratum. This is more so as

³⁸Aristotle. *The Art of Rhetoric*. (Trans.) Lawson-Tancred, H. C. London: Penguin Books, 2004, 4. Bethrand, R. *History of Western Philosophy*. New York: Routledge classics, 2007, 68.

³⁹Arinze, A. "The Need for Philosophy in the Quest for Sustainable Development." In *The Humanities and Sustainable Development*, edited by Chiegboka, A. B. C., Utoh-Ezeajugh and Ogene, M. S., 82. Nimo: Rex Charles and Patrick, 2011.

⁴⁰Appadorai, A., 25.

⁴¹Karl, M and Friedrich, E. *The Communist Manifesto*. Hertfordshire: Wordsworth, 2008, 28.

⁴²Fawole, O. A. Ogunkan, D. V & Omoruan. A. "The Menace of begging in Nigerian Cities: A Sociological Analysis." *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology* 3, no.1 (2011): 11.n

⁴³*Ibid*, 12.

social contract which binds the citizens and leaders are rampantly renege, thereby making revolution as Locke avers an option for the oppressed.⁴⁴ However, revolution must not be random lest it cast the nation from bad to worse situation. Rather organizers must have a solid blueprint and aim that must guarantee a better society. Prior to open revolution, the Nigerian masses need intrinsic revolution against negative individual tendencies that have eaten deep into the fabric of the citizenry. This is necessary in order not to substitute one set of oppression and tyranny with another. For, given the chance to manage the country, most of the oppressed, based on their present negative tendencies will replicate the present oppression of the political class. This indeed explains why perpetrators of poor human condition in Nigeria still enjoy large support among the victims.

Nigerian socio-political system. This is in order to pave way for application of pragmatic philosophical thought that in other places guarantee sustainable development and better human condition. Part of this overhaul is restructuring the country through creation of semi-independent federating units. This will enhance efficiency and proper management of political processes, governance, resources and economy.⁴⁵ This will as well facilitate the socio-political and economic capacities that will enhance equal economic opportunities and better human conditions among the citizens. Indeed, restructuring will create and enhance functional politics, larger participation of people in politics, more implementation of rational thoughts, competitive advantage and functional institutions that will give incentives to invest and to work hard. It will also pave way for efficient generation of resources, and enhance human capacity building and capital base that foster wealth and good human condition. With the political system sanitized, Nigerian public must start to encourage leaders who will not confuse public offices with sources of making personal wealth to emerge. These must be leaders who will value humanity, human right, common good, and implement rational thoughts. These must be leaders who will ensure quality education that will serve as sure means of exiting from poverty and enhancing people's confidence.

Conclusion

Politics in Nigeria is indeed an activity inimical to the progress of the masses. This is as it does not embrace the masses nor create incentives, free market, and equal socio-political and economic opportunities to the larger population, but expend huge amount of funds to programs that benefit the rich, political

⁴⁴Thomas, M. M., 490.

⁴⁵Kaplan, S and Weisbach, M. S. "The Success of Acquisitions: Evidence from Divestitures." *Journal of Finance*. 47 (1992): 107

class and their loyalists. Nigerian politics as well strangulates innovation and deprives the larger population access to quality education, health services, gainful employment, equal political rights and economic opportunities. In Nigerian state therefore, the masses are mere tools and commodities used to achieve political ends. These have increased poor human condition, human suffering and low life expectancy.

With deep dissatisfaction resulting from this poor condition, Nigerian state is characterized by escalating restiveness, crime, agitation, secession movements and class struggle. Despite these, there seem to be unlimited complicity in Nigerian rotten system because most of the oppressed seem as corrupt as the political actors. For deep in their mind, they eagerly hope for turns or opportunity to divert public funds and replicate similar behaviour of the political actors which they are already doing at their lower level. Unless the trend of politics which controls every sector of Nigerian society is rationally refocused to accommodate the good life of the citizenry, Nigeria will remain replete with instability, class struggle, anarchy and poor human condition.