

# **ETHICAL ANALYSIS OF MODERNIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT: THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE**

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## **Abstract**

*Technologically, modernization is achieved through a change from the use of simple traditional techniques and tools to the use of modern scientific knowledge resulting to industrialization. Thus, modernization is a process of social, economic, cultural and political technological changes whereby nations that are less developed like Nigeria acquire features which are common to the more developed and advanced societies. While development her part has several edges process like change in the structures, institutions and attitudes, in areas like acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality as well as eradication of hunger and poverty in a certain society. Here development is viewed base on the positive changes in institutions, structures and functions of the society in areas of social, political, economic, cultural and technological sphere. Thus, modernization is viewed as an aspect of development. The paper shall examine the concepts modernization, development, their factors, the interaction between modernization and development, their ethical effects on Nigeria, while the paper rounds up with a conclusion.*

Development and modernization are related concepts and processes. Development can be seen as the total growth and changes of the society, while modernization is viewed as an aspect of development that includes the total transformation of a society from one stage to another. Thus, modernization may be seen as migrating from traditional ways of life to modernity, changing from primitive life to civilized ways of life. These ways of live could be technology, means of transport and communication, education, system of government, modes of worship, dressing and eating, agriculture, trade and many others. It is clear that as these ways of life are being modernised, they are also being developed. Thus, modernization leads to development. According to Uduig women (2006:236), this particular observation becomes remarkable when it is called that Plato in his Republic had referred to the state as individual or man-writ-large. This means that the individual human person is a reflection of the society at large and whatever affects man in his overall development is

a direct effect on the development of the state or society as a whole. Thus, ethical principle is important in the development of a nation particularly Nigeria. The paper shall examine the concept of modernization, development, their factors, their effects, the interaction between modernization and development, their ethical effects of modernization and development of Nigeria as a nation, while the paper rounded up with a conclusion.

### **Concept of Modernization**

Modernization process involves the various ways changes occur in a society. According to More view (1990) as cited in NTI, NCE (2000:226) it is the process of modernization that can take various forms – it could be total, radical, violent or partial, gradual and non-violent. These various changes can take place through political, economic, social, cultural, religious and technological dimensions. The total, radical and violent process of modernization is called revolutionary process, while the partial, gradual and non-violent process is called evolutionary process. There are several other agents such as education, religion, transport and communication. While other systems of government and urbanisation were put in place to facilitate the process of modernization.

Although, there may be both negative and positive effects of colonialism, our main concern is on the claim by the European countries that they have come to modernise the African countries using colonialism, industrialisation and commercialisation as the three related processes. Technologically, modernization is achieved through a change from the use of simple traditional techniques and tools to the application of modern scientific knowledge leading to industrialisation. Generally, modernization is a process of social, economic, cultural and political technological changes whereby less developed nations acquire characteristics common to the more developed and advanced societies.

### **The Differences between Pre-Modern and Modern Man**

Both modern and pre-modern men have attributes that distinguish them. In Sherman (1982) view as quoted in NTI NCE (2000:227), the pre-modern man has the following attributes:

His educational system was traditional and indigenous.

Agricultural system was subsistence, and he made use of simple, crude implements. His shelter was rural and primitive settlement pre-modern man made use of leaves and animal skins as clothing materials. His technology was traditional involving manual labour with crude implements. Their means of transport was the beast of burden and by trekking. He made use of gong bell and drums as means of communication. Her system of government was traditional monarchy. Trading was by barter – exchanging

goods for goods. Medically, medication and based on divinations, the use of herbs, roots, bark of trees. His religion was the belief in supernatural phenomena. While attributes of the modern man include the following:-

Formal educational system involving schooling, teaching and learning through reading and writing. The nature of settlement is urban. Textile material of different fabric, patterns and designs are being used.

Agricultural items are commercialised, technology is modernised and advanced. Modern means of transport by air, road and water are available. The use of electronic and print media as communication gadgets.

Politically, modern democratic process as a system of government and improved health systems. Industrialization and commercialisation are other attributes.

With this pairing of the attributes, it is clear that the attributes of the modern man are improved or modernised forms of those of the pre-modern man. Thus, these changes improvement, transformation from one stage of human life to another is modernization.

### **X-ray of Modernization in Nigeria:**

Modernization processes the Nigerian experiences are various. Some changes occurred in Nigeria in a violent and radical manner. Politically, these political changes were through military interventions (coups). Other changes are gradual and non violent like more of the socio-economic changes in terms of education, health, transport and communication and several others. Some changes in Nigeria were as a result of colonialism. Nigeria was colonised by Britain. Her government attempted to modernise Nigeria, using this process in changing Nigerian way of life. The establishment of industrial and commercial enterprises resulted in various changes in Nigeria. Religion was also used by European and America missionaries to modernise through the process of evangelism. There were also oriented eastern influences coming through Islam from North Africa and the Middle East.

In this vein, it is certain that the process of modernization in Nigeria by European power followed this pattern; evangelism/education. Colonialism, Industrialisation and commercialisation.

The Europeans first came to convert the people of Nigeria to Christianity. After the change from traditional religion to modern religion (Christianity), Nigeria was colonised. Secondly, for efficient trade, Commerce and Industrial enterprises establishment of a form of government became necessary. Thus, these affected the Nigerian way of life ranging from education, agriculture, health, system of government, and several other ways (NTI, NCE 2000:228).

### **The Concept of Development**

The concept "development" has not yielded to any straightjacket kind of definition. Scholars have variously interpreted it.

Historically, development during the classical epoch was given purely an economic meaning. This was based on the understanding that it is an increase in Gross Domestic Product (GDP). But as Ekanem et al (2000:254-261) explains, there has been a shift in this definition, which now embraces other indicators of the quality of life. He opines that these indicators are social among other facets of life. Here, we discover that there is a radical change in what constitute development. Thus, development is currently seen as a process involving people's capacity in a definite area within a specific period to manage and induce positive change. But for this to be achieved, there is a consciousness required to plan, predict, understand, monitor and evaluate changes with the aim to either reduce or eliminate any unwanted change. It is discoverable from this that, development is time-bound, and this could be attributed to dynamism inherent in it. This time frame makes it possible for the process to bring about modernization, improvement, and change to what is obsolete to sophistication. It is a value-laden process of change that requires consciousness to make achievement possible.

Development is an imperative for the continuous existence of the human race and ensures modernisation. There is no sphere of human life, which cannot be impacted by development. It permeates the entire spheres of life. Its process aids and enables man to alter or change his life in the direction of improvement. Thus through the process of development, man is able to initiate actions that penetrate nature using his creative energy. Development is also the ability of man to totally and effectively dominate his environment through its domestication. It is the ability of man to systematically evaluate the prevalent conditions of things in the society with the aim of changing them through additional values. Based on this, we can talk of development in the areas of politics, economics, morally, spirit, science, technology, intellectual and many others. Thus, development is a many-sided process involving changes in structures, institution and attitudes, as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and the eradication of hunger and poverty in a given society. Development involves positive changes in the institution, structures, and functions of the society in terms of social, political, economic, cultural, and technological dimensions (NTI, NCE, SOS, 2000:233).

### **General Factors of Modernization**

Factors of modernisation are those conditions that motivate people to become modern. These conditions also generate motivation for positive change. This is true to the fact that every aspect of human life is concerned with modernization. Like people desire to modernise or develop because they want an improved educational system that is functional and relevant to the needs of the learner in particular and the society in general. This will generate motivation for change in the educational policy, thereby resulting in modernization. As educational system is being modernised it will affect other factors such as science and technology that are acquired through education. Thus, the factors of modernization include the material improvements in a society such as

social services and infrastructural facilities. Among these factors are education, health, politics, urbanisation, population science and technology, transport and communication, religion and other social amenities (NTI, NCE, SOS, 2000:230).

### **Factors of Modernization in Nigeria**

Like every other country has passed through stages of development. At the eve of the coming of the Europeans, that is pre-colonial era, Nigeria had experienced some measure of development. While during the era of colonial period that Nigeria was colonised by Britain, most Nigerians' their ways of life were changed because of British attempt to modernise or develop us. When Nigeria got her independence in 1960, Nigerians were left with the factors to stimulate them to become modern or generate motivation for change.

It is clear that since independence, Nigeria has been trying to bring about positive changes in all dimensions of development. Except at the political sphere that has witnessed violent changes because of coups (that is military interventions) changes in other dimensions have been gradual and slow.

The problem with Nigeria is the abuse or misuse of the factors to effectively generate motivation for positive changes. This abuse of factors leads to problems of modernization like political, social, cultural and economic problems.

### **Effects of Modernization on Mankind**

In spite of these factors, modernization has contributed to a lot of effects which plaque mankind throughout the world. Among these problems are:

1. The generation of solid waste – The industrial wastes constitute a serious health hazard both in the developed and developing countries (Nigeria) of the world. Today, developing countries have become the dumping ground for thousands of tons of unwanted waste.
2. Air pollution – Waste arising from industries also cause a lot of ailment to workers and residents in areas around the factory site.
3. Noise pollution – As the urban population rises, industrial activities, heavy traffic and the playing of electronic equipment generate a lot of noise which greatly impair human health.
4. Environmental deterioration – As the urban population grows at the expense of rural areas, new residential structures and infrastructural facilities are constructed in urban areas to meet the needs of the citizens. A lot of natural vegetation is consumed in the process.
5. Cultural pollution – Modernization has contributed to a weakening of the social fabrics of traditional society.

In some parts of Nigeria, youths now have disregard for the age-long norms and values which their society were known for and indulge in many anti-social activities such as house breaking, alcoholism, manslaughter, drug abuse, prostitution and organised armed

robbery. Modernization has also contributed to loss of identity by individuals. The urban centres or cities environment tends to atomize society thereby depriving its members of the sense of community and belonging without which individual fulfilment cannot be satisfactorily achieved. But it is certain that whatever problems that might be associated with modernization, its advantages outweigh the disadvantages. Like in area such as economic, health, agriculture, mass-media and transportation.

### **Interaction between Modernization and Development**

Modernization and development are two related phenomena. From their definitions, both of them include processes, they are transitional processes. First they include quantity of change and growth in human activities, and they are desirable targets or goals every human society would want to achieve. Secondly, modernization is viewed as an aspect of development. Modernization theory describe the process of development as moving from traditional to modern ways of life (traditionality to modernity). Modernization include a process of change towards those kind of social, economic, and political system that developed in Western Europe and North America from the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the 19<sup>th</sup> and has continued with accelerating speed to different parts of the world. It is characterized by the use of the mass media in communication and universal public education, which help to install a common set of values in the people, mass transportation which aids individuals to become mobile, mechanization of agriculture that leads to mass production of food and cash crops that often lead to rural transformation. Secular way of life, and mass participation in the country's political system through elections and several other effects.

Development as a concept has been defined by Esman in Olew's (1995) as quoted by NTL, NCE (2000:373) as the national process of organizing and carrying out prudently conceived and staffed programmes or projects as an individual would organise and carry out military or engineering operations. Development is usually conceived as an aspect of change, that is, desirable, broadly predicted or planned and administered or at least influenced by government action. Development is often used inter-changeably with the concept of modernization, but it is often perceived as a broader concept denoting a particular change of which modernization is an instance. It is an activity which people do with clear aims in mind and with a certain amount of planning so as to bring about some positive changes in a society. Thus, development transforms man in every sphere – socially, economically and politically.

Modernization and development are closely related and have many characteristics in common. First, all of them can be internally or externally generated. Like in developed societies they are internally generated but externally generated in developing ones. Secondly, the two concepts are aimed at improving the general standard of living and welfare of mankind like elimination of poverty, reduction in illiteracy, and in unemployment and attack on endemic diseases. To achieve and sustain

this, industries, institution, of learning, financial institutions such as banks, dams and agricultural projects along side roads and bridges are set up.

Both modernization and development as processes, take place in stages in different countries of the world, as the level of modernization of development does not remain static. Modernization and development level differ from one part of the globe to another, and in Nigeria from one part of a state to another, like the South and North. Development is more often than not planned in a country during a development plan and is more closely associated with changes in the economy.

### **The Ethical Effects of Modernization and Development of Nigerian Nation**

The essence of ethic in the development of a nation cannot be overemphasized. As there must be in existence a solid ethical principle upon which every aspect of a nation's development must be founded if it must truly be called development.

Today, according to Uduigwoma (2006:238), the preoccupation of those governing Nigeria is mobilization for development. Development in areas like technology, science, rural development and others like our villages will transform into huge factories, our cars, airplanes or satellite manufacturing plants will improve and Nigeria will interact favourably with those known to the developed parts of the world. In fact, the federal government has policies geared towards the achievement of this kind of development.

At this point several questions arise in Uduigwoma's views they are, what line of action ought we to take in order to realize these developmental programmes? What ought we both individuals and governments to do so as to attain this level of development in every sphere of our country's life? Thus, this paper posits that the answer is in the teaching, learning and practice of ethics and ethical principles in our schools, colleges, tertiary institutions or universities and at the individual and governmental levels.

It is certain that a policy which is unduly formed in favour of development of any kind without proper recourse to ethics and morality is a misguided one. Thus, it is a policy that could lead to improvement of technological, social, political, scientific condition of a state, but not to development. Thus, for any meaningful national developmental effort must be people-oriented. Thus means that the most important aspect of the development of any nation is unarguably the development of human personality. In Omoregbe (1993:147 as cited Uduigowoma (2006:239) moral development of the citizens or individuals that constitute the country's national development. In fact, moral maturity is a mark of human development, and it is the most important aspect of national development.

In Uduigwoma (2006:239) emphasis on this point here will be in order to recall Plato's division of the state into three parts; the rulers, the auxiliaries and the labourers. He goes on further to say that the state develops or prospers in the right direction if each of these parts functions well, that is, if each carries out its responsibilities well. Plato

recognized that of all these parts, the part of the rulers is the most important as it controls the other parts and this would not be over looked. In this vein, it is certain that this division conforms analogically to the division found in a nation. The human and the non-human parts of a country like Nigeria need to function well for there to be proper national development.

Between the national and human development, the most important is the development and proper functioning of the human person, for it is through its development that the other non-human aspects of the society will be developed, thereby ensuring adequate national development.

Thus, the knowledge of ethic or morality and subsequent imbibing of moral principles by individuals in Nigeria will inculcate in Nigerians the right type of values and attitudes that are required for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society at large. This is true national development. In the same vein, the exposure to nature of ethics and principles of human conduct, the individual in the society upon whose shoulders the task of ensuring national development lies, would embed the right skills, abilities and competence both mental and physical as equipment to live in and contribute to the development of the society. Uduigwoma (2006:239).

With this when the principles that distinguish between right and wrong actions and decisions are established in the minds of Nigeria through education and continuous practice, it is certain that the following changes will take place, as all geared towards the development of the Nigerian nation and there will be respect for the worth and dignity of the individual, shared responsibility for the common good of society, moral and spiritual values in interpersonal and human relations, respect for the dignity of labour and many others. These and similar values constitute the basic or fundamental pillars of any meaningful development in a nation like Nigeria. Thus this confirms what Uche asserted as quoted by Uduigwoma (2006:240) that value ethical education inculcates in the individual some societal expected behaviours and group activities, attitudes, values and feelings.

While Okonkwo, as quoted by Uduigwoma (2006:240), was referring to none other than the need for ethical education and reorientation of the individuals if the Nigerian nation must achieve any meaningful development. He confirmed this in the following words;

Development .... involves change: Development does not end in economics or industry. For these to even take off, there must be a mobilization of human resources. This mobilization is usually aimed at the formation, internalization and crystallization of new skills, new aspirations and new goals. In other words, the paramount requirement of change in any society is that the people themselves must change. This change, I believe, must be rooted in the arts and humanities.

The awareness of moral decadence in the Nigerian nation amount to some of the social ills found in the Nigerian nation that have continued to deny Nigeria room for development. The high level of bribery and corruption, incidence of economic, political

and financial crime, murder, prostitution, drug addiction, drug trafficking, alcohol, alcoholism, mental health, self-interest and other vices have proved to be the bane of Nigerian developmental processes. Thus, the immorality of a Nigerians constitutes the greatest obstacle to the development of that state.

At this juncture, how can Nigeria who is confronted with problems associated with modernization and development like,

1. Creating more jobs to reduce unemployment through industrialization.
2. Improving on peoples health conditions through the invention of drugs and diagnostic equipment
3. Making more food available through mechanization of agriculture
4. Facilitating movement of people through road construction and the invention of motor vehicles. (NTI, NCE, 2000:322).

On the other hand, how can Nigeria develop in the face of immorality. According to Omoregbe (1982:147) how can there be development in a country where public funds intended for developmental projects are diverted into private and selfish ends? How can the economy of a country develop if its citizens lack a sense of duty, a sense of moral responsibility and social accountability? How can there be development in a country in which bribery and corruption breakdown law and order are the order of the day? How can such a country develop? With all these the result will be grave if we in Nigeria will pretend to divorce morality and ethics from the politics, governance and the developmental processes of Nigerian nation. Thus, the question is if the people who are supposed to contribute to the development of other aspects of the Nigerian nation are themselves immoral, one wonders what will become of the developmental efforts in the country. The effect in the long run is there will be no meaningful progress in that direction.

Here, Uduigwoman (2006:241) as quoted in Iwe's (1991) definition of ethics "as the scientific study of the principles of human conduct as well as the institutionalization of morality in human life and society". Thus an individual has to understand that it is the absence of ethical principles that has contributed to the steady decline in traditional and societal value system. The crisis of morality and ethnics in Nigeria is the crisis of development in the Nigeria nation.

The essence of ethics to the development of a society or nation cuts across every discipline, profession and every facet of life. Uduigwoman (2006:241) rightly captures John (2005) as he assert that for in every society, morality plays a very significant role in life, for it is in the demonstration of moral values that life's most important experiences are weighed and verdicts given. On this basis we insist that moral education in particular and education in general, is indispensable to development, for any country that neglects the education of its citizens refuses to develop.

### **Conclusion**

Modernization and development has given man almost unbelievable powers as less than the twinkling of an eye an achieves more compared to the time it he taken him to evolve. In Hamilton's (1973:41) view, if man's race is not wiped out by a cosmic cataclysm, he will have to act widely if he wants to ensure that human life continues on the earth or elsewhere for anything like the span he has already enjoyed.

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