

The Diaspora, Governance and Development in Ekiti South-Western Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT

Scholars lay emphasis on development as consequent upon actions of government and civil societies. This implies that the diaspora as a civil society can impact institutional and infrastructural reforms to achieve physical indices of development. Good governance can create the positive environment for the diaspora to positively impact governance. Both can work in tandem to create positive growth in the society. Ekiti state, a subunit of the 36 states of the Nigerian Federation is underdeveloped and largely a civil service and an agrarian state thus requiring government's partnership with the diaspora and other public spirited entities for its development and sustenance. This paper examines the symbiotic relationship between the Diaspora and government in piloting the affairs of the state. It is within the purview of the paper that the onerous task of state building and development is complementary involving government and interest groups among which are the Diaspora. The paper canvasses all-inclusive governance for the development of the agrarian and civil service state.

Keywords: Ekiti State, Diaspora, Governance and Development

INTRODUCTION

The Nexus between diaspora and development is established by scholars (Africa diaspora policy centre 2011, Nauja 2009, Mohan 2002). The relationship of these two concepts with governance is also important. This is because the physical evidence of development is conjectured to be shaped by the social presence in which it exists. Development theorists see development as consequent upon the actions of government and civil societies and as arena in which institutional and infrastructural relation are implemented to improve the society. This implies that actions of government are necessary in relation to the contributions of the diaspora to achieve the physical evidence of development. Successive governments in Ekiti state from its inception in 1996 and most especially in 1999 when civil rule returned to Nigeria have accorded the diaspora a high level of priority in partnering government for sustainable development. Thus in 2006 the regime of Governor Segun Oni invited the diaspora to contribute to the development of the state. Subsequently, the government created the diaspora portfolio headed by a senior special adviser and a special adviser on diaspora matters. The role of diaspora in development is consequent upon the interest and available conducive and democratized environment for participation. Areas in which the diaspora can contribute to development include but are not limited to infrastructure, institutional, socio-economic and cultural environment. These could subsequently be divided into education, health, industrial, cultural activities etc. Good governance is a desideratum to societal development. Popular participation is an important requirement to achieving good governance and the civil society is

an important arm towards realizing this. It is observed that the diaspora constitute an important arm of the international civil society to assist development and ensure its sustenance. Governance is the mechanism in which State power is managed to achieve development purpose. Governance effects accountability, probity and transparency, implementation and formulation of good policies to attain sustainable national development. Governance is a consequence of good governance which Oke (2010) explains as:

Process by which governments are selected, motivated and replaced, capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies and the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them (Oke citing Kaufmann, Kray and Zoido Lobatan 1991:1).

Underdevelopment is prevalent in deterioration of government institutions, pervasive poverty, widespread unemployment, corruption and downward and degenerative social ethos. Corrective measures are apt for the nation at national and state levels and such measures are sought in local and international interventions of Diaspora, an arm of the locality with wealth of experience and professional training in the developed world.

Ekiti state, a resource low on the economic ratings of the 36 States in Nigeria, out sourced assistance from its diaspora and the partnership of this important group with the state government in development is here acquiescence in resolving the development challenge. The diaspora constitute an important pool of talent and expertise to accelerate development. The acquisition, application and usage of knowledge can be exploited to promote peace and security, socio- economic development through brain gain, knowledge sharing and participation. For governance in Ekiti state to be successful, the partnership of the diaspora citizens is imperative. The development of Ekiti is also important for the future of diaspora citizens who might have interest to circulate or resettle at home in the nearest future.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Diaspora

The word diaspora translates to “scattering dispersion” (Greek translation). A diaspora is the movement, migration or scattering of people away from an established or ancestral homeland or “people dispersed by whatever cause to more than one location.” To Sera Luko et al (2011:5) contemporary diaspora means “the voluntary and proactive movement of people and the connections between them” The Nigerian Diaspora exist in relation to the experience and civilization. Since the era of the slave trade it refers to Nigerians migrating to countries outside Nigeria for a range of purposes, from education, and temporary residence to permanent residence (Shuaibu, 2013) Nwara (2010) noted that over 15 million Nigerians live outside the country, as immigration in the United States of America, Britain, Germany, France, Canada and other nations Ekiti state boasts of its citizens scattered across such countries who mobilize associations of various types and contribute individually and collectively to development of their locality.

Governance

Governance is defined by the World Bank as “the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources for development.” Good governance will in effect mean the use of power by the government i.e. the president and his ministers, senators, members of House of Representatives and how the public service operates: (a) to promote democracy, accountability and transparency (b) to formulate and implement good policies (c) to effectively and efficiently manage human and financial resources in order to achieve sustainable national development, to achieve economic prosperity to alleviate poverty (Yahaya 1999:15). Thus good governance is guaranteed on a platform of a plural democratic

system and a public service that can work and achieve results. "Governance is the act of running a government or any other organized entity. Azeez in Bello Imam (1997) opines that Governance entails the mechanism whereby an institution or organization (be it family, the nation state or element of it) incorporates the participation of relevant interest groups in defining the scope and content of its work, including the capacity to mediate among these interests when they enter into conflicts... and the means whereby it demonstrates accountability to those who support it (Azeez 2002:337-338). Furthermore, a 1997 United Nations report defines governance to mean the existence of political, economic and administrative authority to manage a nations affairs, it is the complex mechanisms, processes, relations and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interest exercise their rights and obligations and mediate their differences Imam 1997) Good governance is an important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development. it symbolizes a new perception of role government play, policies guidelines action to dictate the procurement of goods including infrastructure and build (Dauda:2008:256) "Governance in the exercise economic, political and infrastructure and try to manage a country's affairs at all level" it compress mechanism, processes and institutions through which citizens and their obligations and mediate the differences. The relevance and importance of good governance for the wellbeing of citizens and the sustainable of society's capacity to replicate efforts aimed at improving the quality of life in the society makes it important for the state, civil society organizations (csos) and the private sector to be relevant stakeholders as role players in its attainment.

Development

Development is the ability to meet the needs of the society in spite of an increase in population (UNDP 1999). It is the provision of basic needs such as drinkable water, good roads, electricity, good schools, jobs and wages that meet up with the international quota allocated for subsistence existence. Scholars (Cole 1981, Ayodele 2005, Mohan oet al 2002 Nauja 2009, Oladele 2009) agree that development implies a change or movement and is usually defined from a positive perspective through the concerted efforts of its (the society) members (the diaspora members inclusive) Development according to Adefolaju (2007) involves all factors of human life: economic, social, technological, and cultural. Todaro (1989) explains further that development is focused on economic transformation and the eradication of poverty. It is a positive impact on the promotion of human rights and the rule of law. National Development is a multi-dimensional process that requires the intervention of the total population. The citizens of the country (Ekiti State in this paper) residing outside the country are inclusive of this population.

Ekiti State in perspectives

Ekiti state is a political subunit of the Nigerian federated States. Ekiti state was carved out of the old Ondo State on first October, 1996 by the former Head of state, Late General Sani Abacha, following the clamour and agitation by some of its elder statesmen for its creation. Occupying an area of 7000sqkm, undulating gently in the South and West generally, flat in the Central of Northern parts, Ekiti is bounded in the South by Iju/Itaogbolu, Ifedore and Owo Local Governments of Ondo State; in the East by Akoko also of Ondo State; in the West by Osun State and in the North by Kwara and Kogi States. (Fasuan 2002:1). The Ekitis are historically homogenous, culturally identical, geographically contiguous and religiously similar. They also speak a common dialect of Yoruba language. It was known in about 1900 as the confederation of Ekit Kingdoms. The people of Ekiti are industrious though poor. Most of them are Farmers but their sons and daughters are well among the highly educated sections of the Federation with scores of PhD holders, professors, medical doctors, engineers, lawyers, accountants, educationists, contractors etc. Among them are also statesmen, politicians and dedicated civil

servants of all cadres (Ibid. 9). Its affairs have been piloted by ten administrators and Governors made up of both the Military and the civilians whose tenures were either protracted or short-lived because of one event or the other thus limiting the chances of the state for smooth development.

Ekiti geo-political arrangement comprises Ekiti North Senatorial District, and Ekiti South Senatorial District and Ekiti Central Senatorial District.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework employed in this work is the group theory. This approach clarifies politics by reference to groups. In the words of Bentley; "when the groups are adequately stated, everything is stated. When I say everything I mean everything. The complete description will mean the complete science in the study of social phenomena, as in any other field" (Bentley in Isaak, 1969:208). This statement clearly equates a description of group activity to a description of all politics (Enemuo1999:24). To most group theorists, "a political group exists when men with shared interests organized, interact and seek goals through the political process ". The theory emphasizes not the structural composition of a group but its activities. The interactions among its members must be both relatively frequent, sufficiently patterned and be directed towards the attainment of certain interests by its members. The group approach conceives of society as a mosaic of numerous interest groups with cross-cutting membership. Exponents of the approach posit that the form of politics of any society is ultimately determined by the interaction among groups within the society and the competition among such groups to influence government in the allocation of societal resources and exercise of power (Enemuo ibid.). Thus the diaspora as a formidable group is pivotal to governmental activities in any country and as such its contributory role to governance is capable of engendering development or otherwise. In the particular case of Ekiti state, the diaspora have positively influenced governance and have become resolute in chatting a common front towards the development of the state.

Diaspora, Governance and Development in Ekiti State

The Nigerian Diaspora exists in relation to the experiences and civilization since the era of the slave trade. It refers to Nigerians migrating to countries outside Nigeria for a range of purposes , from education and temporary residence to permanent residence. Senator Shuaibu (2013) noted that over fifteen million Nigerians live outside the country as immigrants in the United States of America, Britain, Germany, France Canada and other nations. Governance is the act of running a government or any other organized entity. Azeez (2002:337) citing Bello Imam (1997) opines that governance entails:

The mechanism whereby an institution or organization (be it family, the nation, state or elements of it) incorporates the participation of relevant interest groups in defining the scope and content of its work, including the capacity to mediate... means whereby it demonstrates accountability to those who support it.

Governance is the exercise of economic political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It comprises mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups (Diaspora) articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, mediate their obligations and differences (Dauda 2008:256) The 2003 world Development Report noted governance to mean "the manner in which political power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development of public and private sector" (world Development Report 2003 (World Bank)

Development presupposes the ability to meet the needs of the society in spite of an increase in population. It is about the provision of basic needs such as drinkable water, good roads, electricity good schools, jobs and wages that meet up with the international quota allocated to subsistence existence (UNDP). Most scholars agree as Cole (cited in Cole 1981) that development implies a change or movement and is usually defined from a positive perspective through the concerted effort of its (the society) members, the diaspora members inclusive.

In addition, development implies democratic structure of government together with its supporting individual freedom of speech, organization and publication as well as a system of justice which protects all the people from actions in consistence with just laws known and publicity accepted (Fagbemi 2014:22). Development is the ability of respective communities to control the productive force of their environment for the purpose of solving the problems imposed on them by nature and by man. Development is a widely participating process of direct social change in society and material advancement including greater freedom, equality and other valued qualities for the majority of the people through their gaining control over their environment. It is a conscious attempt by man to emancipate itself from obstacles both natural and manmade in order to achieve a more fulfilling life. General accepted indices used to calibrate or ascertain the development of a place or country, include such variables as poverty, diseases, unemployment, inequality, infrastructure, and social amenities, improved justice and good leadership within an improved rule of law.

The capacity of diaspora to engage in development interventions is reliant on several factors like desire, capacity, and environment. These three groupings can also be further looked at from the economic, political and social dimensions. AFFORD (study of African Diaspora) noted "that a positive attitude by the state to the diaspora grouping is desirable."

A measure of diaspora input for development in terms of quantitative and qualitative attributes shows that it is an important constituency outside of the developing world to consider for the elimination of poverty and to contribute to the development of the South (AFFORD 2010:12)

Adepoju (2010:161) has suggested that Africans countries need to incorporate the contribution of their diaspora and remittances into national development planning and programmes. In opposition to the old brain drain ideology of 1960's and 1970's, diaspora, in the internet age are seen as resources with human, financial and social capital for the development of their home communities. The Indra Ghandi's National Open University in 2011 reaffirmed that governments and development agencies of countries of origin in many developing countries have been playing a growing role in challenging the initiative, energy, and resources of diaspora into economies and societies and institutionalizing the linkage of the diaspora to the socio-economic activities of their home countries. The Universities noted that many Asian and Africans countries have taken initiatives at the top level to provide institutionalized platform to facilitate the diaspora to play development role back home. Ekiti state under the administration of Dr Kayode Fayemi (2010-2015) established a diaspora portfolio headed by a senior special adviser and a special adviser on diaspora interventions to exploit the advantage of diaspora interventions.

Financial capital accumulated by diaspora abroad is repatriated to the country of origin in the form of remittances or direct investment to benefit the home community with technological advancement, human capital can be easily transmitted across border to create opportunities in many sectors such as education training, research and development etc. Social capital in return migration by using communication technologies in host country can provide access to more

developed markets. Foreign Direct investments in infrastructure and industrial development can promote development in home states. The resultant economic growth, socio-political changes that are positive will benefit the home country.

Mabogunje (citing Aguolu 1987:16) identifies the internal attributes of development. In this he observes, development involves economic growth, modernization, equitable distribution of income, national resources, and socio-economic transformation. It is important to note that development connotes growth plus a change and change may be socio-cultural, economic, quantitative and qualitative. Aguolu thus concluded that national development incorporates economic growth as well as cultural, educational, political and social advancement. Supporting national development therefore would include investing in business, making social remittance in the knowledge economy, influencing policies and supporting economic recovery as well as engaging in various forms of human capacity development.

The diaspora has made major positive impact on the development of Ekiti state. Available records show that non-governmental organizations, ethno-religious bodies and social organizations have made positive efforts to assist the homeland in development especially in poverty alleviation. Professional associations have made concerted efforts and remittance record the most notable effort of diaspora in poverty alleviation and industrial development. The world Bank records show that in 2010 overall remittance to Nigeria and most developing countries surpassed the ODA and foreign Aid from the developed countries Ekiti state is one of the beneficiaries in this wise.

The former Nigerian Minister of Trade and Investment; Olusegun Aganga claimed that “the country is leveraging on the large Diaspora population who can actually be the catalyst, those agent for trade between the countries. Mr. Femi Adefolaju, a return diasporan and one time Senior Special Adviser on Diaspora matters to the Ekiti state government also maintained that the quantum of diaspora investment in Ekiti development is undervalued. He gave examples of returnee diasporans that have established small scale industries across the state, employing citizens and assisting in poverty alleviation. He remarked that an estate development project was in the pipeline towards ameliorating housing problem in Ekiti state (Personal interview, March 16, 2014 in Ado Ekiti). The Diaspora have also contributed to infrastructural development in the areas of building dams for electrification and water supply, motorable roads, amusement parks, transportation, large scale agricultural development and industrial development among others. They have also acted as pressure group and watchdog of democracy through offering healthy and constructive advice as well as criticisms to the home government towards good governance and community development. Sometimes, the Diasporas have participated actively in state governance and administration. Suffice to mention here is the case of Dr Kayode Fayemi; the immediate past governor of the state who migrated home purposely to participate in governance and was elected to govern the state between year 2010 and 2015. Also included in this category was Mr. Femi Adefolaju who worked as the Senior Special Adviser on diaspora matters to the executive Governor between 2010 and 2014.

CONCLUSION

This paper underscores the pivotal role of the Diasporas to governance and societal development. It brings into the fore the enormous tasks of governing the modern states and the contributory roles of the diasporas in state development and administration with a particular emphasis on Ekiti state, Nigeria. It is within the purview of the paper that modern societies require concerted efforts towards development and the Diasporas' contribution cannot be brushed aside. In the particular case of Ekiti state, this paper has revealed that the

Diasporas have contributed to governance, community building and development, establishment of cottage and small scale industries, educational advancement through scholarship awards to indigent students and book donations to schools as well as housing and urban development and administration. They have also contributed to good governance through offering healthy and constructive criticisms and advice to the home government. Thus the Ekiti Diasporas have played key roles in curbing executive recklessness and have thus contributed to societal administration which is the hallmark of modern day societies. It is thus clear that through enduring democracy and a secured atmosphere, the Diasporas are capable of heralding national development and must therefore be encouraged towards realizing this.

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