

SOCIO-ECONOMIC GLOBALIZATION IN NIGERIA: CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS RESPONSES

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Abstract

This paper is geared towards the understanding of socio-economic globalization in Nigeria. The research reveals globalization as a form of freedom and ability of individuals to imitate voluntary economic transactions with residents in other countries. It showcases socio-economic globalization as promotion of free market, ruthless competition, privatization of public enterprises, and maximization of profits mostly by companies from developed countries. The socio-economic globalization informs open borders, weakening of state powers, deregulation and trade liberation. The developed nations behind socio-economic globalization of the world are not seeking to uphold the dignity of all the members of the world community. Neither are they seeking to maintain and balance the interest of the members of the global village. The research further reveals that proponents and sponsors of socio-economic globalization aim at integrating local economies into the global market system, to ensure economic progress that would benefit developed and developing countries, consumers and producers. The Christian religious responses insist that religious life cannot be absolutely separated from the economic life of the people in general. The divine socio-economic principle is based on organized care that takes into consideration the status of the poor and the rich in the community. The church as agent of divine socio-economic integration challenges the world to provide alternative economic model capable of addressing the situations of the poor and the marginalized in the global community.

Introduction

The practice of globalization generates increased interaction of economics and societies around the world through free flow of goods and services, capital, people and ideas. Globalization has been seen as shorthand name of imperialism, domination, exploitation, marginalization and overall production of injustice, inequalities and poverty (Uka, 2004). Globalization is not a new phenomenon but merely a new name, a sub-code for capitalism that subsumes diverse socio-political and economic manifestations. The oil crisis of 1973 promoted economic globalization, which informed increase in energy prices and reinforced the pressure of capital market. The situation resulted to shift from welfare economics to monetarist economics, international relation and political economy (Razu; 2000: 103). Prior to this period there was fixed currency relationship with Dollars serving as the leading currency guided by International Monetary Fund, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, known as World Bank with general agreement on tariff and trade. Eric said:

The history of World economy since industrial revolution had been one of accelerating technological progress, of continuous but uneven, economic growth, and of increasing globalization that is to say, of an increasingly elaborate and intricate World Wide Division of Labour: an increasingly dense network of laws and exchange that bound every part of the World economy to the global system (1994:84).

Konrad agrees that the real origin of economic globalization was the rapid processes of industrialization in Europe and United States of America through advancement in transportation and communication after Africa had been partitioned by Britain, France and Germany (2002). Globalization therefore started with the conquest of Africa, Asia and Latin America in the 15th century (Razu, 2000:14). As Gonzale puts it:

It is not the first time that a globalization process has been experienced. The arrival of Columbus in America probably meant major globalization. However, that was the first it is experienced with a number of specific characteristics propelled by technological revolution, an extra-ordinary factor accelerating the globalization of our current age (1999: 12).

Currently, Cable network news (CNN) of Tuesday July 20, 2010 carried the caption "China Hungry Energy" in other words China, Japan and Europe consume more energy than America as such sales more to America than they depend on her, gradually gains control and affirm globalization as complex processes. The paper deals with Socio- economic globalization ills and gains as well as Christian religious responses.

Road Map to Socio-Economic Globalization in Nigeria

Social-economic globalization in Nigeria dates back to colonial era that lasted from 1861 to 1960. Within the period Lagos became British Colony, the people became reduced to instruments or tools of labour for boosting the ego and economy of the colonizers. Colonialism exploited the minerals, agricultural and human resources of their colony. The pattern of production, specialization and consumption in the colonies were deliberately changed. In pre-colonial era European middlemen exchanged Nigerian products for European goods while in colonial era colonies were made to send their raw materials to Europe and prohibited by laws from fabricating their own raw materials into finished products. Consequently, the Colonial agents favoured the cultivation of cash crops in Nigeria (rubber, cocoa, coffee, cotton) for European factories and discouraged the production of food crops for domestic population (Nuhu, 1994:12 & Onimode, 2000:11).

The socio-economic paradox of the colonial era intoned that colonialism paved way for the development of the economy as indigenes enjoyed colonial scholarships that gave rise to human resources development and capacity building. Introduction of new cash crops boosted export trade as well as the building of schools and hospitals, gave rise to sociological well-being and elites used their intelligence wisely to gain independence for Nigeria without a gunshot. The building of railway lines from Lagos to Kano and from Port Harcourt to Kaduna eased transportation and conveyance of goods and services across the Nigerian nation state. The British colonial system had greater advantage over the French and German territories in that Nigerians enjoyed the right to own property which helped in the advancement and sustenance of sovereign state. Above all, at international political corridor Nigeria has always enjoyed the patronage of Britain. The European companies enjoyed monopoly of trade, transportation, shipping and banking. The development of Europe constituted and contributed to the underdevelopment of Africa in general and Nigeria in particular as the surpluses produced by Nigerian labour was transferred to Europe (Rodney, 1972). Even though colonized people produced what they did not consume (cash crops) and consumed what they did not produce (finished goods) and those that took white collar jobs received fewer wages than their European counterparts while, qualified Nigerians were denied employment into senior cadre than their European counterparts yet life seemed to be more meaningful with security and crime wave.

The emergence of America into the centre stage of international politics without colony in Africa called for "Open Door Policy" and foundation for decolonization process in Nigeria (Gidado, 2002). The development of sustainable economy in the new independent African nations was limited by competing factors of colonialism, de-colonialism and open door policy that warranted the trial of structural adjustment programme of international monetary fund.

Structural Adjustment Programme

World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) became agents of the introduction of structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in Nigeria. Nigeria sought to obtain external loan from IMF, World Bank and other Western nations and banks to increase production capacity and strengthen her weakening economy arising from general economic recession and collapse of world commodity prices. The policies of World Bank and IMF devalued the Nigerian economy in exchange rate, tariff, and determined organization of parastatals, public budgeting and expenditure as well, subsidies and public good exported became cheaper while agents of SAP increased their worth in international market (Adejumobi, 2004:175).

Indeed, in August 27, 1985, General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida became Military Head of State and in his maiden broadcast expressed dissatisfaction with nation's impasse with IMF and resolved to break the deadlock. General Babangida instituted nationwide IMF debate over \$2.5 billion loan and the nation's economic future and Adejumobi said:

Although, in an attempt to source credibility and legitimacy for the present regime, a beguiled national debate was introduced on IMF loan in September 1985 by the administration but while the vast majority of Nigerians opposed the IMF loan and its conditional ties, the Babangida regime tacitly declared a state of national economic emergency in October 1985 and carefully smuggled the IMF conditional ties into the nation's economic recovery programme through the back door (2004:268).

The socio-economic experience of Nigeria passed through all the elements of IMF adjustment policies. Consequently, Babangida embarked on second tier foreign exchange market and naira was auctioned, devalued by the Central Bank of Nigeria and by March 1992 deregulation of the exchange rate started. Subsequently trade was liberalized and most public parastatals were privatized. It generated feeling of alienation and open criticism of the regime as Nigerian economy was challenged with privatization scheme (Okoro, 2006).

Economic Privatization in Nigeria

The transfer of all or any right of ownership, operating right and developmental right of business, enterprise, agency or public service from the public to private investor has been seen as privatisation. The second economic summit at Abuja May 3-5, 1995; described privatization as variety of policies aimed at transferring fully or partially, ownership and control of public enterprises to private sectors to encourage competition and emphasize the role of market forces in place of stationary restrictions and power (Okoro, 2006:58). The most common type of privatization is selling shares on the stock market known as share issue privatization. In asset sale privatization entire organization or part is sold to strategic investor by auction when shares of ownership are distributed to citizens.

It was in Babangida's regime that Technical Committee on Privatization and Commercialization was established. The committee was inaugurated in July 1988, charged with the task of reforming public enterprises as part of structural adjustment programme.

The Obasanjo led democratic administration established National Council on privatization headed by the then vice-president Atiku Abubakar in December 1999. The second phase of the programme was aimed at helping government raise fund to narrow down budget deficit, pay back public debt, avoid new borrowing, restructure other enterprises and export social sector of education, health, power and rural development (Anyanwu, 2009:8). Privatization in the society has been geared to cover Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), electricity supply (energy) and probably water for sale that has implications in the socio-economic life of the people.

Effects of socio-economic globalization

The positive effects of socio-economic globalization encouraged the diversification of national economy. It restored confidence in International financial institutions and other Western nations, in the nation's external debt and repayment and Nigeria 60% foreign indebtedness was waived in 2005.

However, open trade increased the importation of technological wares, drugs and tax free on essential commodities exemplified on the "Roll back malaria summit" April 2000, taxes and tariffs on mosquito nets were waived. Trade liberalization as globalization package encourages foreign direct investment that enhances advanced technology with overall productivity and growth in domestic firms. Konrad said:

Trade integration with foreign market enables the economy to be less dependent on domestic market. The global market explosion has become the central driving force in the economy to be less dependent on domestic market. The global market

explosion has become the central driving force in the development of global capitalism informed by advance in information technology (2002:11).

The privatized enterprises have performed creditably and national treasury has received volume of increasing cooperate taxes. The sales of shares and assets generated over N3.7 billion as gross privatization proceeds from 55 enterprises that had original investment of N652 million. The programme of privatization has encouraged new investments in the enterprises concerned with 8,000,000 shareholders twice more than 1988 records (Anyanwu, 2009).

While negative effect of socio-economic globalization include brain drain, in that intellectual genius left Nigeria for greener pasture in America and other nations of the world. Individual voluntary initiative of socio-economic imperative with resident in other countries has been fostered by visa lottery. There is great unemployment, poor salaries and wages along with non-prompt payment. Individuals, families and nation stand at cross road of desperation as poverty, crime and drug addiction have become normative in our society. The technology of transnational corporation is not labour intensive, does not generate employment rather renders the people hosting it redundant.

The socio-economic globalization has polarized our society as professionals, upper class while politicians live in great affluence in a society where majority of the population have no access to portable water, electricity, good road and even kerosene. In fact, the key players in Nigeria major economic base are foreign privatized companies namely: the French (Total), US based (Exxon, Mobile and Chevron), and the Anglo-Dutch (Shell), have their administrative base, determines the policies and decisions that the companies implement in Nigeria. The Petroleum and Senior Staff Association of oil and Gas (PENGASSAN) in press release published in September 2003 protested against shell's plan to organize the business of petroleum across the world on regional basis, in Africa, America, Asia, Pacific, Middle East, Russia, Central Asia and Europe. African Regional headquarters was located in Hague and African Regional Directors were not Africans in spite of Nigeria's contributions to Shell group of companies. We then turn to investigate the reaction of Christian Religion to economic life of the people.

Christian Religious Responses to Socio-Economic Globalization in Nigeria

Impact assessment of Christian religious responses to socio-economic globalization in Nigeria demands periodization for purposes of logical sequence and conclusion. The periodical

responses of Christian religion on socio-economic life of the Nigerian peoples have been classified into three namely: 1842-1960; 1961-1999 and 2000-2013.

First Period 1842-1960

Christian religious response to socio-economic globalization in all the periods are geared to underscore that people should be enabled to live meaningfully, purposefully and qualitatively in the society for now and eternally if they make Jesus Christ their friend. Secondly that Christian religion is an instrument of change, peace, progress and it also functions as instrument of liberation from ultimate problems of human life (sin, poverty, injustice, ignorance, illness or disease and segregation).

Poverty has been identified as the leading factor of all the problems of man in the society. Nwokeoma agreed with Haralambos (2004) and he said:

Poverty involves the absence or lack of basic human needs that is measured in terms of resources required to maintain health and physical efficiency. That poverty is not the absence of money, rather it results from an absence of knowledge (2012: 20 & 29). The Copenhagen world summit on development gave an absolute conception of poverty as a condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. It depends not only on income but also access to services (United Nation, 1995).

Christian religion laid the foundation and the development of socio-economic life and institution of Nigeria as a Nation. Christian missionary activities of the Methodist, Anglican, Presbyterian, Baptist and Roman Catholic missions laboured in the mission fields of the various ethnics groups that were constituted into the nation of Nigeria from 1842 when Christian evangelization of Nigerian peoples started (Ajayi, 1948: 147 – 148).

The pioneering Christian missions have great fervour in industrial education and academic institutions were established. Methodist boys high school Lagos in 1879, Anglican training institution at Abeokuta in 1853, boys Grammar school Lagos in 1859 and also girls secondary school Lagos in 1879 while Baptist established Academy at Lagos in 1886 along with the mission paying students to attend school. Roman Catholic established St Gregory's College Lagos in 1881 and Christ the Kings College (C.K.C) Onitsha in 1933. Presbyterian mission established Hope Waddell training institution in 1895 at Calabar and the institution consists of departments of printing press, primary; secondary, teacher training, tailoring, carpentry and engineering. Njoku

remarks that the industrial education of the missionaries paved way for socio-economic order in Nigerian society (2008, 35). Njoku agrees with Ajayi and says:

The Anglican mission established industrial institutes at Ebute-Metta and Addo while the Presbyterian mission established women training center at Ogbanelu in 1937, Ikot Inyang in Akwa Ibom and the rural training center Asaba in 1948. The Presbyterian mission arrived in 1846 with printer, printing press, and became the first to publish printed materials in Nigeria. Hope Waddell reported of his journal publication in 1849. The Anglican mission published one of the oldest newspapers known as "Iwe Irohin" in Yoruba in 1859. In 1860 journal in Yoruba carried the church and state news while in 1861 the oldest advertisement of vacancies for clerks, house boys and apprentices were published then the Anglo-African Newspaper was founded by Robert Campbell in 1862 (1948: 158 – 159 & 2008: 55).

Ajayi appraised Presbyterian mission for extreme concentration but applauded her for projecting education more than church expansion in contrast with other missions. He therefore noted that schools came first in Presbyterian mission and instructions within the compounds of various houses (1948: 94).

In appreciation of Christian religious response to socio-economic and human resources development Ayandele says:

The church became the cradle of Nigerian nationalism, in deed, the only medium of nationalist expression until 1879 when Nigerian owned press was established and remained the fulcrum of nationalist strength even after the amalgamation of Southern and Northern Nigeria in 1914. The first generation educated Nigerians were products of the mission education scheme equipped for nationalist task by learning and circumstances of that time (1966: 175).

The Christian churches in Nigeria salvaged Nigerian peoples from the clutches of ignorance and many Nigerians benefitted from the scholarship scheme and studied overseas that guaranteed capacity building by which societal progress became realistic. Socio-economic barriers and social stigma inflicted on people by illness and dreaded diseases were confronted by Christian missions in Nigeria. The pioneer missions established hospitals namely: Bishop Shanahan hospital at Nsukka, Mater hospital Afikpo, Mount Carmel hospital Emekuku, Holy Rosary maternity Onitsha and St Luke's hospital Anua at Uyo. The joint actions of the Anglican, Methodist and the Presbyterian missions established Queen Elisabeth hospital Umuahia in 1956. Other hospitals include Ama-echara hospital Umuahia, Eja memorial hospital Itigidi, and Rural Improvement mission Echara Ikwo. The Unwana mini hospital established in 1899 was transferred when Uburu hospital was established in 1913. Itu leper colony was established in 1928, followed by Garkida, Uzuakoli leper settlement, Oji river leper settlement, and Uburu leper settlement. Sudan Interior mission leper settlements were opened in 1943 at Sokoto, Katsina, and Kano. Roman Catholic

mission established several leper settlements in Ebonyi State at small scale basis (Njoku, 2008: 53 – 54).

Christian religious responses to socio-economic life of the people through medical services reshaped peoples' world view and cultural outlook on lepers in Nigeria. Through Christian religion anti-leprosy public education was carried out and the conceptual model that stigmatized lepers as outcasts was removed. The agenda of global village in Christian religious responses to socio-economic life encouraged the establishment of leper colonies in Nigeria. In the colonies lepers were treated, cultured, comforted and security provided while law and order were maintained through social groups, colony police along with counselling that tailored the colonies as reformatory homes. Leper's worth was based on their character rather than colour or race. Christian religious medical services provided fundamental needs of the Nigeria peoples, dealt with sickness and dreaded diseases, enlightened the minds and showcased organized work along with pastoral care for the benefit of both rich and the poor in the society. Through medical response Christian religion created Christian communities in Nigeria. The products of mission educational institutions and health institutions formed the political class, vanguards of missionary enterprises to other parts of Africa while others were gainfully employed by institutions of their learning. Christian religious response placed food on the tables of poor Nigerian peoples, shaped and repositioned the environment and the society was ready for independence (Njoku, 2009: 171-173). The second face of Christian religion began in 1961 to 1999.

Second Period 1961 – 1999

Christian religious response has gained ground in human resources development and products of the missions were leading the independent Nigerian nation. World Council of Churches (WCC) held her meeting in 1965 at Enugu and Akanu Ibiam (Late Elder, Ezeogo, Sir Francis) was elected vice president of WCC that marked successful capacity building and human resources development as the elder statesman was the Governor of Eastern region (Njoku, 2008: 126 – 127).

Before then, the Norwegian Church Agricultural Mission (NORCAM) collaborated with the Presbyterian church of Nigeria and Norwegian Church Agricultural Project (NORCAP) was established at Echara Ikwo in 1962 (Kang 1962). The management of NORCAP embarked on recruitment, training of personnel and trainees were awarded certificates, established as group farm

or employed as staff and others were sent on further studies to universities. The management of NORCAP embarked on scholarship scheme for the community, group farm scheme, animal and husbandry and health scheme, as well as water and road construction schemes.

The educational programme of the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria(NORCAP) was implemented from primary to University levels and beneficiaries of the Presbyterian project scholarship scheme include members of Assemblies of God church, Roman Catholic Church, Church of God, Grace of God and the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria (Njoku, 2008; 128). Christian religious response to socio-economic life of the people warranted the establishment of cattle ranches at “Abina Akunakuna, Odomowo and Igweledoha” communities in Ikwo. The Presbyterian project (NORCAP) provided adequate supervision, health care and maintenance of the cattle at controlled labour. For Njoku:

The health scheme of NORCAP absorbed the rural improvement mission dispensary at Ndegu Echara Ikwo and established Echara maternity at Onuebonyi Echara within the now premises of Ikwo Local government headquarters. The erection of hospital bloc that backed Agubia Presbyterian Church at the former Agubia health centre now Agubia cottage hospital was part of the scheme. NORCAP health scheme also include mobile clinic services that offered health services to all villages in Ikwo clan (2008: 130).

The scholarship scheme liberated the people from the shackles of ignorance; human resources development took the centre stage for societal progress. The health scheme of the church was made available to the people at their door steps. It was health for all.

The management of NORCAP assisted their trained personnel to secure land and twenty seven group farms were established. NORCAP provided revolving loan fund to the group farms. The group farm settlers practised mechanized system of farming, introduced the use of fertilizers and planting of upland rice and cooperative farming to the natives Christian religious response to socio-economic life of the people within the then guinea worm endemic zone of Nigeria focused on mobile public health education on how to make bad water good for drinking. The water scheme project of NORCAP (the Presbyterian church of Nigeria) further combated the infestation and freed the people from being crippled by guinea worm attack.

The water scheme was implemented in three phases of bounded water reservoir or dams and sand filter or pumping device. The management of the water scheme deployed the services of Israeli engineers and water projects were established at: “Echara, Igweledoha, Abina, Agubia, Omege

Echara, Ifelemenu, Odomowo, Orona, Obegu Eleke, Ekpelu, Amaugwuru, Ndufu Umota and Okpuitumo” villages in Ikwo (Njoku, 2008: 131 – 132).

Only Agubia water scheme reached the third stage of pumping device before Norwegian Church Agricultural mission withdrew from the management of NORCAP. The Presbyterian church of Nigeria handed over NORCAP to the then Anambra State Government and the project was reconstituted as Anambra State college of Agriculture Ikwo (Anyigor, Mbah & Onuk, 1982). And now, the project is renamed Ebonyi State College of Education Ikwo (Egwu, Ucha, & Ukoro; 2001).

Before NORCAP was handed over, the management undertook the construction of roads and building of bridges in Ikwo land that enhanced socio-economic development of the people evidenced in the citing of Ikwo Local Government Headquarters opposite NORCAP. The efforts of Christians were geared to develop the socio-economic life of the people and within this period the wave of Pentecostal movements were too obvious and more so the takeover of schools from the Christian mission by the Nigerian government had adverse effect on Nigerian public morality as the Christian religion response assumed the third approach in the mission filed (Njoku, 2011).

Third Period 2000 – 2013.

Christian religious response to socio-economic globalization in Nigeria in this period has been affected by over secularization of religion, moral decadence, new generation churches, high level of crime wave, insecurity and new world order and economic meltdown (Nwokeoma, 2012 & Njoku 2008). Although new generation churches are into business of amassing wealth yet the impact of some Christian churches have established and run university education while nursery, primary, secondary and seminary are on the increase at most affordable rate taking the poor into consideration. Christian religious response to socio-economic life of the people value group formation and provision of revolving loan for small scale business, social and financial support in times of difficulties. Christian religious hospitals in Ebonyi State today treat patients free encouraged by Ebonyi State Government sustainable support. Christian religious response- to socio-economic globalization in Nigeria insistently advocate that people should be enabled to live meaningfully, purposefully and qualitatively in the society for now and eternity if they make Jesus Christ their Lord and Saviour.

Recommendations

1. The Churches in Nigeria should call on the 118 countries led by America to revise the socio-political and economic policies currently pursued in the name of maintaining world peace and development that has unleashed great misery to developing nations of the world.
2. The developed countries should begin to conceive and fund imaginative projects rather than the promotion and sponsorship of structural Adjustment Programme conditional ties in the third World countries.
3. The poverty situation in developing countries ought to elicit the compassion and care from religious bodies and institutions in keeping with Christian virtue as the core of Judeo-Christian ethics.
4. The Church should promote debate on alternative system of finance that is democratic in nature, the Christian religious economic principles.
5. The government should adopt an incremental; reform that alters some of the incentives and constraints confronting governmental agencies or firms to achieve efficiencies and innovations without transferring the firms to private sector.

Conclusion

There have been changes in the economy of the world with varying degrees. The era of industrial revolution had attendants of worldwide division of labour and the abolition of slave trade led to trade in palm oil and kernel along with the partition of Africa. Oil crisis informed increase in energy prices as well as shift in tariff. Colonialism brought different shifts in economy of colonies and development of Britain, French and Germany. The emergence of America into the centre stage of world politics without colony in Africa became foundation for decolonization process, open door policy and globalization became inevitable.

The Christian religious responses to globalization as instrument of change, peace, progress and liberation presented organized combat against ignorance, poverty, injustice, illness or disease and segregation as well as sin that were ultimate problems of man in the society. Christian religion insistently advocates that people should not be yoked rather empowered to live meaningfully, purposefully, and qualitatively in the society, for now and eternally if they make Jesus Christ their friend. The developed countries should begin to conceive and fund imaginative projects rather than promotion of globalization and structural adjustment conditional ties in the third world.

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