

Statistics, Government and Development in Nigeria

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Abstract: *This paper is a contribution to a paper delivered by Prof. Joy Nwabueze in one of her plethora of presentations. The paper adequately explains the inter-relationship between Statistics, Government and Development in Nigeria. We have looked carefully at the happenings in some developed nations, and have used their solutions to governance and development to provide some recommendations for a developing Nigeria. The role of statistics and good governance in achieving success has been emphasized, and should be treated with great importance by the Federal Government in Nigeria if much is expected in the long run towards development.*

Keywords: Statistics, Government, Development.

1. Introduction

Good governance and adequate statistical interventions toward decision making policy, are some elements of national development. Therefore, statistics, government and development are related concepts, however, development is seemingly a function of statistics and government. On the basis of Human Development Index (HDI) (Data, 2020), and looking from top to bottom, at the top ten most developed countries in the globe (Norway 0.954, Switzerland 0.946, Ireland 0.942, Germany 0.939, Hong Kong 0.939, Australia 0.938, Iceland 0.938, Sweden 0.937, Singapore 0.932, and Netherlands 0.931), it is possible to enumerate components of a developed country, some of which include building of solid institutions to cater for education, agriculture, security, infrastructure (roads, health, basic amenities- water; power), tourism, digital economy etc. Ability to provide for its citizenry and export goods for the growth of the economy is vital in assessing the effort of government. Every citizen needs to feel comfortable to speak and feel good of the government (Data, 2020). Nigeria depends majorly on exportation of oil (Workman, 2020), and this is in limited reserve and it leaves just enough for the citizenry after exportation. What if more aspects of the economy are developed for more foreign trade and practices? It should bring about generation of more resources for growth and development.

2. Materials

Nigerians are creative and smart, if training begins from home and early education, then we can be sure of expertise and manpower to take over the polity and make governance a more productive experience. For as long as politicians are made up of selfish and irrational minds, governance will remain a shadow of what it is in developed nations, and development will continue to be a mirage in Nigeria.

Statistics is the science of collection, organization, presentation, analysis and interpretation of data. Government would need data and statistics to effectively conduct the affairs of the state, there is the need to have the census of the nation to enable adequate planning and distribution of benefits accruing to the state. Statistics will allow a nation work with facts derived from data and science

towards the growth of an economy, it is therefore necessary to ensure that there are strong organs or institutions for statistical activities and development. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) is currently the strongest statistical institution for tackling the need for data and statistics in Nigeria, but it is yet to meet up with its highest potential (Anonymous, 2010). Government needs to ensure that the NBS is adequately prepared for this function by including the bureau in the annual budget and tackling corrupt practices as well.

What the developed countries did differently to achieve optimum success include hard-work, commitment, dedication, selflessness and strong will. Citizens were empowered to deliver their expertise in various works of life, and so, they gave their best towards achievement of national goals; Government, through stability in their economy, in turn, ensured that their citizens were catered for in terms of basic amenities, as such, it was easy for the citizens to discharge more of best practices; this in turn, have allowed their citizens to be better positioned to say no to corrupt practices involving embezzlement of resources (Tax payers' money); and monies allocated for major projects can be utilized effectively without diversion of funds.

Unfortunately, corruption has eaten deep into the Nigerian society, and it would appear like there is little or no growth in sight. We believe very strongly, that things will fall in place as we continue to make little changes as time goes on. In very recent times, the Chinese nationals, intended to bribe a staff of the EFCC in a construction Company contract scam, to the tune of N50 billion between 2012 to 2019 (Saidu, 2020), it is because many of such corrupt practices have made way in the past, that they dared to try.

3. Discussion

Government needs to give room for consultancy and collaboration with statisticians, empower them by funding and inclusiveness, to mingle with their peers in some of these developed nations, while they in turn give back to society. Unless statisticians are empowered in this way, many of the information that government provides will continue to be based on false figures (Kazeem, 2019), results

derived from such falsehood would remain misleading and ineffective.

The HDI was developed by the United Nations as a measure of a country's human development such as education, health and life expectancy, it is on a scale from 0 to 1. The closer the score is to 1, the country is considered more developed. HDI for Nigeria is regrettably 0.532 (Data, 2020). As such, Nigeria is a developing country, and has achieved very minimal success in some aspects of education and agriculture. There is need for great improvement in digital economy, infrastructural growth, security, basic amenities, and health.

It is important for government to look critically at the opportunities that are readily available for the development of Nigeria, by benchmarking with some developed nations for growth (UN, 2016); training of personnel for specialized progress; attending world workshops and conferences; and tackling corruption where necessary.

There is a need for the Nigerian government to transit very quickly, from an old mind-set generation government to a young mind-set generation one, that will allow for radical changes in government, for the benefit of all.

In summary, some of those things the developed nations did differently and could be a guide towards a better Nigeria, were to: -

- 1) Provide for a high quality of life for its citizens through low rates of unemployment and poverty values, while providing high income as encouragement for the employed.
- 2) Provide for high ranking for education, health work-life balance and free access to health for all its citizens.
- 3) Maintain an increased Gross Domestic Progress (GDP) per capita.
- 4) Maintain peace and stability.
- 5) Engage in rapid industrialization and maintain a trade surplus through a highly developed service sector, manufacturing and exportation of goods,
- 6) Utilize their expertise in renewable energy and land restoration.
- 7) Imbibe gender equality and decrease in income inequality.
- 8) A well informed, patriotic and educated team of leadership that is willing to work with facts and data to move the nation forward.

4. Conclusion

Finally, it is good to note that a blend of good governance and statistics, educational prowess should bring Nigeria to attain development. Since 12 June 1999, Nigeria has enjoyed democracy and a democratically elected leadership (Agbalajobi, 2019), it gives hope that someday, governance would be more effective as is needed for a developed Nigeria.

5. Acknowledgements

Prof. J. C. Nwabueze

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