

EMPLOYING THE PRINCIPLES OF SUBSIDIARITY AND PARTICIPATION AS VERITABLE CATALYSTS FOR AFRICA'S SOCIO-POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This paper is concerned with the sad state of Africa's socio-political and economic underdevelopment. It holds that among the problems contributing to the snail pace of Africa's march to self-reliance is the over-centralization of power and resources to large social entities to the exclusion or marginalization of individuals and lesser social entities whose initiatives and contributions are considered inconsequential. The paper advocates embracing two very important principles of social philosophy: subsidiarity and participation which, among other things, in recognizing the creative subjectivity of individuals and small social entities believe that they have something original to contribute towards the growth of the society. Based on this, the state or higher authority is urged to assist these lesser social entities and also refrain from stifling the initiatives, freedom and responsibility of individuals or small essential cells of the society. Employing the method of philosophical exposition and relying on textual analysis and current affairs the paper exposes the strengths of these principles, articulating how they can be employed in the various spheres of national development through the direct involvement and contribution of these small groups. Among the various areas discussed in the paper include the areas of political participation, agriculture, production of goods, provision of infrastructures, security, etc. In conclusion the paper reiterated that if these principles are employed they will provide a veritable catalyst for Africa's socio-political and economic development.

Key Words: Subsidiarity, Participation, Socio-Political, Economic Development, Catalyst.

Introduction

The slow pace of Africa's socio-political and economic development is a stark reality attested to by all who acknowledge the disadvantaged position of the continent in the comity of nations. This apparent stagnation clamors for both material and theoretical stimulants to spur the socio-political and economic development of this regional block. Many positive theories have been advanced, many economic and political policies have been propagated and so much material aid has been granted with negligible improvement noticed.

Africans are ingeniously skillful and naturally industrious. If with these qualities coupled with the spirit of communalism and solidarity Africa has failed to advance like other continents, then more theories and principles must be employed to stimulate socio-political and economic development.

The crux of this paper is to propose the socio ethical principles of subsidiarity and participation as veritable catalysts for Africa's socio-political and economic development. The

continued trend towards excessive centralization and negligence of subsidiarity and participation will continue to hold down African's progress.

The principle of subsidiarity is a fundamental principle of social philosophy very much rooted in Catholic social teaching which in its most basic formulation insists that socio-political and economic problems should be handled at the most immediate (or local) level consistent with their solution. It holds that decisions should be taken as close as possible to the people they affect and that action should be taken at the level where it is most effective. It is a principle which is in line with federalism, liberalism, decentralization and devolution of powers. As a social principle it holds that nothing should be done by a larger and more complex organization which can be done as well by smaller and simpler organization closer to the people. Hence any activity which can effectively be performed by a more decentralized social entity should be.

On the other hand the principle of participation is a natural consequence of the principle of subsidiarity; it entails the involvement of citizens either as individuals or social groups or associations whether directly or through representation to contribute to the economic, political or social life of the civil community of which they are members.

These very important principles of social philosophy in recognizing the creative subjectivity of every individual or lesser social entity, who truly have something original to contribute towards the growth of their society, calls for their direct involvement in advancing the promotion of the common good and also calls on higher authorities or the state to offer them the necessary assistance while refraining, from anything that would restrict the initiatives, freedom and responsibility of these individuals or lesser social organizations.

The paper singled out over centralization of political and economic powers to the higher authorities as one of the principal factors to blame for Africa's socio-political and economic backwardness. The paper employing critical philosophical expository method with empirical evidence uses Nigeria as a case study of the failure of centralization which have stifled individual creativity and initiatives and diminished the participation of smaller social organization and individuals. The paper thereafter shows how embracing the principles of subsidiarity and participation will stimulate socio-political advancement in the areas of politics, agriculture, infrastructural development, production of goods, educational and health sector and in maintaining peace and security in the country.

In conclusion the papers maintain that employing these principles in practice will surely be a veritable catalyst to advance the socio-political and economic prosperity of Africa.

Understanding the Principles of Subsidiarity and Participation

Etymologically the concept subsidiarity is derived from the Latin words *subsidio* (to aid, to help or assist), *subsidium* and *subsidiarius* (aid, assistance or subsidy) which entail assistance or support given to a less privileged person or organization. As a socio-ethical principle it is one of the most crucial social doctrines of the Roman Catholic social teachings firstly propounded in the encyclical letter of Pope Leo XIII *Rerum Novarum* (1892) and later developed in the writings of the German theologian Oswald Von Nell-Breuning whose work influenced the social teachings of Pope Pius XI in his encyclical letter *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931).

One of the most emphatic statements made about subsidiarity as a most important principle of Social philosophy was made by Pope Pius XI in *Quadragesimo Anno* where he stated that "Just as it is gravely wrong to take from individuals what they can accomplish by

their own initiative and industry and give it to the community, so also it is an injustice and at the same time a grave evil and disturbance of right order to assign to a greater and higher association what lesser and subordinate organization can do. For every social activity ought of its very nature to furnish help to the members of the body social and never destroy and absorb them". (Pius XI, 1931, 203). The principle advocates that the state or superior social order must adopt attitudes of help, ("*subsidium*"), support, promotion, and development with respect to lower-order or inferior social organization. (Compendium, 101). As a basic principle of social philosophy subsidiarity holds that decision with regard to the common good should take place at the lowest level possible and the highest level necessary. According to this principles, the state, government or higher authorities should not embark on any task or project which can be effectively carried out by individuals or smaller and simpler organizations. Complex social entities should not usurp the duties that smaller social groups can as well perform. Individuals or lesser organizations should not be absorbed by larger authorities but supported or assisted by them to perform tasks within their ability. The subsidiarity principle, according to David Bosnich (1996) is "a bulwark of limited government and personal freedom. It conflicts with the passion for centralization and bureaucracy characteristics if a welfare state". Based on the autonomy and dignity of the human person, subsidiarity holds that the various strata of the society, from the family to the state and the international order, should be in the service of the human person. Rightly holding that these human persons are by their nature social beings, subsidiarity emphasizes the importance of small and intermediate sized social groups and institutions such as the family, town unions, labour unions, religious bodies and other voluntary organizations as mediating structures which empower individual action and link the individual to society as a whole.

Subsidiarity is a very crucial principle because it has application in every aspect of socio-political, moral and economic life. Subsidiarity, according to Meghan Clark (2012), "is an effort at balancing the many necessary levels of society, at its best, the principle navigates the allocation of resources by higher levels of society to support engagement and decision-making by the lower levels" (www.catholicmoraltheology.com/subsidiarity...). Hence subsidiarity applies to every human institution including the federal, state and local authorities. When the federal government usurps the rights and responsibilities of the state and local government, a flagrant violation of the principle of subsidiarity has occurred, likewise when the government at any level usurp the rights and responsibilities of lesser social organizations such as town unions, labour unions, economic organizations, health and educational institutions and other non-governmental and voluntary organizations the principle of subsidiarity is violated. The violation of the principle of subsidiarity common when upper echelon bureaucrats operate in a top-down manner denying space to their subordinates breeds inefficiency, redundancy and stagnation.

The principle of subsidiarity insists that intermediate social entities (communities, town unions, institutions, labour unions, voluntary organizations etc.) should be supported or encouraged to perform the functions within their sphere without being required to hand them over unjustly to other social entities of a higher order, by which they would end up being absorbed and substituted, in the end seeing themselves denied their dignity and essentials place. Hence in as much as subsidiarity positively understood entails the economic and institutional assistance offered to lesser social entities (subsidy, aid etc.), it also has some negative implications which requires the state or higher level social entities to refrain from anything that

would restrict, stifle or supplant the initiative, freedom and responsibility of smaller essential cells of the society.

As has been indicated above, the principle of subsidiarity protects individuals and intermediate socio-economic organizations from abuses by higher level, social and political authority and implores these same authorities to assist individuals and intermediate groups to fulfill their potentialities. This principle is imperative because every individual, family and intermediate group has something original to offer to the society at large. It must be acknowledge that an absent or insufficient recognition of private initiative and creativity as well as the contribution of organized groups and the failure to recognize their function, contribute to the undermining of the principle of subsidiarity, as does monopolies and centralization.

With regard to participation it can be said to be “the characteristic implication of subsidiarity” (Paul VI, (1971) 22, 46) which is expressed essentially in the various activities through which the citizens whether as individuals or in association with others; either directly or by representations, contribute to the cultural, economic, political and social life of the civil community to which they belongs (Vat II, *Gaudium et Spes*, 75). It is said that “participation is a duty to be fulfilled consciously by all, with responsibility and with a view to the common good” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1913 – 1917).

As a collary to subsidiarity, participation encourages the recognition, employment and development of the creativity and initiatives of individuals and organized intermediary social groups in attending to matters of common good. Participation, whether directly or by representation, gives the citizens a sense of belonging and wins their maximum co-operation in promoting government policies and programmes which they were involved in formulating. The principles of subsidiarity and participation are strongly opposed to the centralizing impulse which afflicts modern day governments. In accord with subsidiarity and participation, true democracy is a product of local institution and self-reliance. Subsidiarity and participation frowns at a highly centralized social system which intends to do virtually everything for the individual and intermediate social entities reducing them to mererecipients and never contributors to social goods. These principles reject a system that wants to unilaterally guide the individual and lesser groups in all their affairs that, if possible, wants to think for them and even spare them the trouble of living. Where subsidiarity and participation is rejected, citizens are kept in perpetual childhood. Since the fundamental goal of all social activities is the common good, subsidiarity and participation in respecting personal dignity recognizes in every individual or social group an entity that is always capable of contributing to the common good. The government or higher level social organizations are also accorded the responsibility of creating the enabling condition for human flourishing through their constant assistance.

How Subsidiarity and Participation can be employed to Stimulate Africa’s Socio-political and Economic Development

Reid Buckley (2008: 177) to emphasize the importance, necessity and urgency of employing the principle of subsidiarity remarkable thus: “Will American people never learn that, as a people to expect swift response and efficiency from government is factious? Will we never heed the principle of subsidiarity (in which our fathers were bred), namely that no public agency should do what a private agency can do better, and no higher level public agency should attempt to do what a lower-level agency can do better – that to the degree the principle of subsidiarity is

violated, first local government, the state government, and then federal government wax in inefficiency? Moreover, the more powers that are invested in government and the more powers that are wielded by government, the less well does government discharge its primary responsibilities....”

To effectively employ the principles of subsidiarity and participation in African countries there is a corresponding need for respect and effective promotion of the human person and the family as well as a greater appreciation of small social entities and intermediate organizations in their fundamental choices especially those that cannot be delegated to or exercised by others. Accordingly, there should be an encouragement of private initiatives and creativity so that every social entity remains at the service of the common good each displaying its own distinctive qualities. In order for the principle of subsidiarity and participation to be put into practice in Africa, there is urgent need to allow the presence of pluralism in society and due representation of its vital components, human rights as well as the rights of minorities must be safeguarded; there must also be bureaucratic and administrative decentralization and striking of balance between the public and private spheres, with the resulting recognition of the social function of the private sphere. Hence there must be appropriate methods for making citizens more responsible in actively “being a part” of the political and social reality of their country (compendium 102-103).

There must be a restructuring or reorganization of authority in African countries so as to bring about a system of co-responsibility between institution of governance at the federal, state and local levels in accordance with the principles of subsidiarity and participation thereby increasing the overall quality of effectiveness in delivering the social goods to the populace. Thus the principles of subsidiarity and participation, according to Vischer (2001, 109 – 116) embodies a notion that the health of a society is in a great part a function of the “vibrancy and empowerment of individuals acting together through social groups and associations” and it consequently promotes a tendency toward solving problem at the local level and on fostering the “vitality of mediating structures in society”

Subsidiarity and participation which positively entails the mobilization and involvement of all hands at the lower level with the support of higher authorities in promoting the common good will, as we will see below, enhance Africa’s socio-political and economic development.

Subsidiarity and Participation in Political Participation

The constitutions of many African nations give much room for subsidiarity and participation at the political realm in principle. This is seen in the federal or provincial character of the constitution as well as the enshrined principle of devolution of power from the Federal, State and Local Governments. It must be stated that even with this provision which should have been properly enforced and even multiplied and stepped down to the least possible social entity, the federal government or the government at the center (be it state or local government) tends to stifle the lower cadres of administration and take the lion share of the political power and responsibility to the detriment of the lesser authorities.

The government at the centre tends to take every initiative, merely passing instruction to the lesser authorities for implementation in accordance with the wishes of the central authority.

The society apart from being constituted of socio-political entities like the federal government, state government, and local government authorities is also made up of social groups, town unions, labour unions, village councils, religious groups, socio-political associations, interest groups etc. These entities more than the federal, state and local governments as constituted, represent more the interest of the people and have capacity to mobilize the people more effectively than the former. These lesser socialized political cells can influence public opinion more easily and can bring down to the people the policies of the government. They can more easily tap the initiatives of its members and bring them to the table while articulating government policies and programmes.

The representatives of the people at the various stages of government do not really represent the people since they rarely consult them in any forum (this is why Rousseau and James Mill were against representative government).

Centralization of government structures makes individual initiatives and the initiatives of smaller social entities redundant and governance cumbersome. It may be argued that the political arrangement which recognizes the federal, state, and local governments was meant to take care of this. We must say that this is far from addressing the subsidiarity and participation principles because these arms of government have really taken over what individuals and lesser social groups are meant to do thereby making them to exist in name. These arms of government should be supportive to individual and group programmes and initiatives and also involve and engage them in the formulation and implementation of programmes and policies. Individuals and lesser social groups should not merely be seen as beneficiaries or recipients of government services but should be made participants to and providers of government services. The three arms of government should not think for them, and work for them but should allow them to think, and work for their preferred common good in a manner acceptable and most suited to them.

The lesser social entities must not be made only beneficiaries of the common good but also contributors to the common good. They must be empowered and encouraged to stimulate development at their various areas rather than sitting back and looking at the central government to take responsibility with regard to everyone of their concerns. Hence to facilitate development government must recognize the distinctive features or peculiarities of individuals, lesser social entities and minorities and tap from their strength in the achievement of socio-economic growth. The African governments must desist from being overbearing and allow enough breathing space to individuals and smaller socio-political associations to express their talents in promoting development within their vicinities especially in those areas they are very capable of executing. The government should not do for them what they are capable of doing for themselves. The principles of subsidiarity and participation can be used in the electoral process, in the legislative

process, in law enforcement, in taxation, in census etc. where local councils, socio-political associations, town unions can be employed at local levels to carry out what has continually failed because of the bureaucratic, impersonal and apparently transcendental nature of a highly centralized socio-political organs of government.

Involving the recognizable, immanent and ready-to-hand individuals and lesser social groups will make government policies and programmes more acceptable, more efficient, more result-oriented and less expensive. Participation in these government programmes gives these smaller cells a sense of belonging and self –importance and makes it easy for them to co-operate as people performing an important task for themselves. It is the submission of this paper that any activity which can be conveniently executed by a more decentralized entity should be left to them. Hence the federal government should not usurp the rights and duties of the state government, likewise the state government should not usurp nor interfere with the right and responsibilities of the local government and none of the above larger or more complex organizations should usurp the functions and rights of smaller entities or individuals. Doing so will amount to flagrant abuse of the principles of subsidiarity and participation, stifling of initiatives, loss of human energies and retarding socio-political and economic development. Hence lesser socio-political entities other than the federal, state and local government authorities must be actively involved and unrestrainedly participate in the executive, legislative and judicial functions of government.

Subsidiarity and Participation as Potent Drives of Economic Growth.

Among the many variables that can drive sustained economic growth to be discussed here includes production of goods and services, agriculture and creation of employment. The stimulation of economic growth has always being solely laid on the shoulders of the federal and state government and by extension the local governments. This normally has grossly affected the economic viability of many African states. This centralization of resources at the centre to the exclusion of the veritable drives of economic growth has been the bane of many African States. This violation of the principles of subsidiarity and participation has rendered individuals, vibrant private sector outfits and basic socio-economic entities redundant with their initiatives and energies wasted.

a). Subsidiarity and Participation in the of Production of Goods and Services:

In the area of production of goods and services it is a fact that many African countries at the federal and state levels have ploughed enormous resources in building gigantic industries or set up business outfits which floated only few years before going down or becoming an economic drainage pipe. The funds spent on such business outfits are enough to have set up multiple

industries if decentralized. Some examples of such in Nigeria include: the Ajeokuta Steel Complex, the refineries (under the NNPC), the Nigerian Textile Companies, cement companies like NIGERCEM, Aba Glass Industry, Petrochemical Industries, Printing and Minting companies, Nigeria Airways, the shoe industries, car assembling industries etc. Most of these industries and business outfits have collapsed and their workforce retrenched. Part of the reason for their failure may be corruption and unfriendly operating environment with little infrastructural presence which escalates their operational costs. Knowing this unhidden background, the government would have invested properly employing the principles of subsidiarity and participation in tracking the prevalent socio economic adversities.

In some emerging economies in the present day world especially the Chinese and other Asian Tigers (Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan and South Korea) subsidiarity and participation principles appear to be the order of the day. The cottage industries are highly encouraged. Small social entities like groups, families, individuals, schools etc. produce goods for export just as big companies do. The central governments mostly embark mainly on infrastructural development to provide the enabling environment for the private sector.

In African countries, especially in Nigeria, having seen the failure of many gigantic federal and state government industries and business outfits, it is time to employ the principles of subsidiary and participation in the production of goods rather than encouraging importation of goods from other countries. Aba in South Eastern Nigeria is the economic production nerve center of the zone full of overflowing energy and unlimited creativity in every aspect of production. This creativity and zeal is dying off because of lack of government support and encouragement accruing from absence of basic infrastructures like good roads, electricity and lack of security as well as the financial backup to promote and sustain the realizable dreams.

Subsidiarity and participation here will mean the government instead of setting gigantic ready-to-collapse industries like the Aba shoe industry, the Aba glass industry etc., should convoke an assembly of Aba producers and traders, have a survey of the various areas of their production capacities, their prospects, dreams and challenges and then through the present SME programmes empower them financially, provide the necessary infrastructures and security and sit back and marvel at the economic growth that will be generated. In the past goods produced in Aba through the unaided efforts of individuals and small organized producers association were exported to the Camerouns, Equatorial Guinea, Chad, Benin Republic, Niger and other African countries with the tag "made in Aba". Today due to the overcentralization of resources at the center, the near collapse of basic infrastructure, lack of empowerment by the government who takes over the duties and rights of these smaller groups and individuals as well as the absence of

adequate security, the Asian Tigers have taken over the market and our economic growth is slowing down.

What is true about the ingenuity, originality and creativity of the Aba producers is true of the Onitsha, Lagos, Kano and other producers across African cities and villages. Hence in employing the principles of subsidiarity and participation the government should refrain from taking over those areas of production which individuals and smaller organizations can conveniently carry out with sustained capacity and efficiency. The likes of the Aba bag and shoemakers association that used to produce thousands of shoes and bags on weekly basis should be allowed to be, encouraged and supported, likewise the tailors association that sew and package thousands of suits, trousers, T-shirts, and assorted male and female dresses for local and foreign trades should be encouraged.

The Government should thus in alliance with the leaders of these associations play a supervisory role to ensure that standard is met in the production of these goods. Cottage industries that produce detergents, toiletries, construct and reconstruct motor spare parts, building materials like paints, electrical, electronic parts and computer parts, stationeries etc. should be supervised, given professional advice and empowered financially.

It is evident that many government owned industries and business outfits that engage in production of goods for local consumption and export purposes are no longer operational and that majority of the few industries presently engaged in the production of the above goods and services are big industries and business outfits beyond the capacity of small production associations and many individuals. Despite these known facts, the federal and state governments keep wasting the government funds building or trying to maintain such unviable business outfits violating the principles of subsidiarity and participation by usurping the functions of the smaller groups or associations which have the tested ability to efficiently flourish in floating these industries in a smaller scale.

To promote economic growth through production of goods and services the federal, state and local governments should concentrate on those production sectors beyond the capacity of individuals and smaller organizations and refrain from struggling with them the areas they can properly execute with efficiency and at a lesser cost. African economies should emulate the Asian Dragons (Tigers) and promote creativity and industry amongst its populace at various levels of the society.

A country like Nigeria does not need to have only four refineries with each having the capacity of producing millions of barrels each day. For some years now there has been a sustained war against illegal refineries who usually steal crude oil and locally refine them thereby wasting the many petroleum products derivable from the crude oil. While condemning this

stealing and wastage caused by these illegal refineries, one must acknowledge the fact that there is some level of knowledge of the refining technique that enables them to produce (PMS) petrol while discarding other valuables from the crude. The question arises whether the owners of these illegal local refineries should not be invited at a friendly rounded table meeting, their equipment studied, their creativity or initiative put to positive use and their cottage refinery industry sustained no longer with stolen crude and further products they cannot refine after PMS be taken to another local refineries that can extract another product out of it. Another poser is whether it is only the federal government that can build refineries? Can't state of local government build refineries with smaller production capacity? Can't individuals or small associations build refineries that can produce even if at the capacity of one thousand barrels of crude daily?

Subsidiarity and participation should also be employed here. The government needs to make the enabling laws, liberalization and deregulation, empower the lesser organizations and individuals and provide the enabling environment by the provision of the necessary infrastructure.

If the federal and state government liberalize these areas of production, individual and group initiatives will come to play, many such local refineries will spring up with their multiplier effects, petroleum products will be readily available locally and will also be exported, importation of this product and the huge waste on it will cease and surely economic growth will be stimulated.

b). Subsidiarity and Participation in Agriculture.

The governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Godwin Emefiele recently acknowledged that “the agricultural sector provides up to 70 percent of employment in Nigeria and accounts for about 42 percent of the country’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP).” Agriculture (crops and livestock) is one of the major occupations of many African states. Before the discovery of the liquid and solid minerals like crude oil, gold, tin, coal, limestone etc. African economies relied on agricultural products like palm oil, cocoa, groundnuts, rubber, fruits, vegetables etc. for their survival. In Nigeria, for instance, before the discovery of the crude oil, cocoa; palm oil and groundnuts were the main cash crops exported from which Nigeria mainly drew its revenue. These agricultural products were not produced by the government but by individuals, families and organized groups. The efforts of these small social entities were coordinated by middle men and co-operative bodies. Thus at the local level which was the engine room of these massive output, the presence of the government was minimal. The groundnut pyramids, the massive heaps of cocoa bags and the huge drums of palm oil were the fruits of subsidiarity and participation of individuals and organized local groups who invested in agriculture through their

extensive farmlands and plantations. It is unfortunate that when the government saw the economic potential of agriculture and decided to be involved, it subdued the individual efforts and the coordinated efforts of small organized groups and co-operatives. The government with good intention in its policy brought in mechanized agriculture, cultivated massive rubber, cocoa and palm plantation, established agricultural research institutes and introduced hybrid crops and fertilizers. The initial result of these measures were a success, but with corruption, the discovery of crude oil (which diverted the attention of government) and bad management these huge investments of government went down the drains and agriculture collapsed.

The tested ability and efficiency of individuals and organized social groups in agricultural production in Nigeria with minimal involvement of the government could be seen in cocoa harvest in Western Nigeria, groundnuts, onions, potatoes and carrots in Northern Nigeria, palm oil, rice, yams and cassava harvest from Eastern Nigeria. Abakiliki and Benue rice production was a flourishing industry and coordinated by locals. The individuals and private sector participation in agriculture has also presently promoted agricultural production in many parts of Nigeria. We have such non-governmental outfits in Cross River State (the Biase Plantation) in Kwara State, in Oyo State (FTN Cocoa), in Edo State (Ibru Farms) and in so many states in the northern part of Nigeria. This success was recorded because the government has allowed these small social entities to operate freely. In some cases where the governments have tried to hijack this function from individuals and organized social groups and do it directly it has succeeded in recording nothing but dismal failure. Instances of such failed attempts include the Imo Poultry farms in Imo State South East Nigeria reputed in the early 1980s as the biggest poultry farm in West Africa. This lasted only for eight years. The Cross River State Pineapple and Castor oil farms of the early 2000s also did not see the light of the day. Many other agricultural investments directly under the management of the federal or state governments have failed woefully.

Among the many reasons that may be preferred for this dismal failure is the violation of the principles of subsidiarity and participation. Individual and organized social groups and non-governmental public sector, agricultural outfits are more than capable of generating massive growth in agricultural production, what the government needs is to empower them by providing the needed funds and infrastructure. The government can also provide adequate training of personnel, introduce new methods and technique and also provide hybrid crops and animals for improved productivity. The government should challenge organized groups to take up this responsibility which they can conveniently execute.

c.) Subsidiarity and Participation in Infrastructural Development.

The provision of basic infrastructures has over the years been laid on the shoulders of the federal and State governments and only partially on the local government. This trend can change with better result achieved if the principles of subsidiarity and participation are employed. The provision of basic amenities like water, electricity and good roads can be a shared responsibility between the government, non-governmental public sector, individuals, local groups and other organized social organizations. The success of this participation of non-governmental bodies is visible in the provision of portable water in Nigeria where government contribution is very negligible in many states, cities and villages. In this area it could be said that excluding the natural provisions and efforts of individuals, small organized local entities and non-governmental voluntary agencies, provision of portable water will be almost non-existent. This fact corroborates the position that if the government can hands off from infrastructural provision at the lower levels and empower small social entities at the local level a lot will be accomplished in this sector.

In the area of road construction and maintenance the federal and state governments spend huge sums on the so called federal and state roads with little results. This appropriation of responsibility has left local communities, individuals, town, unions and organized groups redundant, thus leading them to sit back waiting for the government to construct and repair roads to their doorsteps.

In the Nigeria of the 1960s and 1970s the local councils through their workers maintain the roads, communities through the age grades and other groups construct and maintain their roads with tools like hoes, diggers, spades and cutlasses. Some local government councils had bulldozers, graders and other relevant construction machines that did road construction and maintenance at the rural areas. Today with the tacit relegation of subsidiarity and participation, the federal and state governments have taken these responsibilities to the exclusion of the local councils and communities with the result being multiple impassible roads across the country including in rural areas.

It is sad that in most cases the government forbids the lower levels of authority or organized public sector or individuals participating in roads maintain seeing it as their sole prerogative. The federal government only reluctantly permits state governments to repair the federal roads and state governments also frown at organized groups or individuals repairing federal or state roads thereby leaving such roads dilapidated and sometimes impassible.

Employing the principles of subsidiarity and participation is imperative in this sector in order to have good roads. The government at the highest level should handle construction of major roads, bridges, drainages and railways while construction of smaller roads, rural roads

should be left to the state governments, local councils, town unions, organized private sector and well spirited individuals. The maintenance of roads especially minor repairs should be handled at the local level by local authorities resident in the places where these roads pass from and not by federal agencies like FERMA in Nigeria. When individuals, town unions, local councils and organized private sector who are the immediate beneficiaries of these roads take the responsibility of repairing the roads, the chances of their being abandoned will be minimized. When this is the case they have no body to cry to for the repair of their roads except mobilizing themselves to team up with other relevant bodies to carry out the task. The Government should partner with these small social entities, providing the needed funds and other relevant equipment and technical assistance to support the execution of the work.

In the area of power generation, transmission and distribution the Federal Government should partner with states, the private sector and capable individuals to explore the great potentials in this sector. Since 1999 the Federal Government of Nigeria have spent more than three trillion Naira to boost electricity supply with so much spent on the IPP (Integral Power Project) Scheme yet Nigeria cannot boast of steady power supply. The Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN) only recently (Wednesday, 3rd February, 2016) disclosed that Nigeria has for the first time in the history of her electricity generation generated about 5,074 megawatts (MW) of electricity (This Day, 05/02/16) . If half of this amount were to be given to state governments, local governments communities and the private sector to provide electricity in their various localities through any means of power generation, hydro, solar, coal, or nuclear, more than 10,000 megawatts would have been generated and electricity problem would have been a thing of the past in this country. In the early 1980s, the Imo State Government of Nigeria had a power generation plant called Amaraku Power Station which supplied electricity to more than five local government areas. That initiative could not be sustained. In the present, Akwa Ibom, Lagos and River state governments in Nigeria have power generation gas turbines with capacity of more than One Hundred and Fifty Megawatts each. These initiatives is a practical demonstration of the principles of subsidiarity and participation which should be encouraged with financial banking at all levels of the social strata and diversified into various areas of power generation.

Communities, private establishments, educational institutions (universities, secondary of primary schools), health institutions as well as governmental agencies and organized private sector should be encouraged through the principles of subsidiarity and participation to take part in power generation and distribution by having solar farms, gas turbines and other affordable means of electricity production and transmission. The government while handling major nuclear, hydro and gas means of power generation should support lesser social entities with funds and technical knowhow to generate electricity in their various localities and establishments. This will

lessen the burden and inefficiency of the Federal Government and make electricity readily available to the populace thereby triggering massive growth in productivity and socio-economic wellbeing.

d.) Subsidiarity and Participation in the Educational and Health Sectors

The educational and health sectors render social services to the citizens. This is another area that has been taken over by the private sector more from the economic perspective than as a social service. Before the advent of the private schools and private hospitals and clinics the government and voluntary agencies provide the educational and health needs of the people. The voluntary agencies mostly religious bodies were non-profit oriented and strictly run their schools and hospitals as social services rendered to the society with little token to assist the running of these institutions.

With the government takeover of these social institutions, these sectors would have collapsed if not for the intervention of the private sector where individuals, organized private sector and voluntary agencies have built private schools and hospitals on profit oriented basis. It may not be out of place to assert that at the nursery/primary school level more than 60% of Nigerians pass through private schools, while at the secondary school level about 40% go through private school and at the University level about 30% of Nigerians pass through private universities despite the high cost. Hence the educational sector is being driven by private schools. According to the records of National Universities Commission (NUC) as at January 2015, out of 138 universities in Nigeria 59 are private universities, while 79 are government owned with the federal government having 40 and state governments owning 39. The health sector also is flooded with private clinics and hospitals to meet the very big short falls created by the failure of government.

With this situation on the ground the government has not stopped investing massively in these two sectors with little visible result. Subsidiarity here would mean the government empowering the voluntary agencies, individuals and other interest groups with funds, infrastructure and personnel, then allowing them to run these institutions under government supervision to meet standard. There is a clear sign that the government cannot properly run and maintain these institutions. If the private ones are stable and flourishing, then the problem of the failure of government owned ones must be laid on poor management. If the smaller social entities can do it better than the government, the principle of subsidiarity and participation demands that the government should relinquish this responsibility and assign it to these more competent bodies. Hence the government with its huge resources should build and equip schools

and hospitals, provide the personnel who should be under government payroll and then hand them over to non-profit oriented voluntary agencies, communities and tested organized social groups to manage them.

e.) Subsidiarity and Participation in the Maintenance of Peace and Security

Socio-political and economic development is only possible in an atmosphere of peace and security. The provision of adequate security and maintenance of peace is another important social service which citizens demand from their government. The top-bottom command structure of the Nigerian security agencies (Nigeria Police, Nigeria Army, Nigeria Immigration, DSS, etc.) with centralized command structure creates inefficiency.

The recognition of the village vigilante security outfits in recent times underscores the importance of subsidiarity and participation in addressing Nigeria security challenges. Nigeria with a population of over 180 million will be difficult to secure with a police force of less than one million personnel. DSS of less than 500,000 cannot mount surveillance on all the nooks and crannies of the country and through preemptive action forestall every imminent danger.

So much money has been posted into security with very little to show for it. In Nigeria security votes in many states constitutes almost 35 percent of the administrative cost of governance in recurrent expenditure. A state like Ondo state, South West Nigeria spends N600 million monthly on security votes totaling N7.2 billion annually (Punch Newspaper), Anambra has N850 million monthly and N10 billion annually (News Express Newspaper) while Edo state appropriate N900 million monthly as at 2008 (PM News) The above states are among the least when compare with states like Delta and Akwa Ibom that were annually spending N24 billion and N21.6 billion respectively (Sahara Reporters). If only one quarter of such funds are given to the local vigilant groups, the town unions, the local council or community administration, great success would have been accomplished. In every locality the good and bad people are known by the members of the community, their homes are known, their friends or acquaintances are known and also their coming in and going out, their activities are easily monitored by members of the community. In various communities strangers are easily pointed out and their movements taken note of. The locals do not need the DSS or the Police or Army to show them who a thief is. They do not need the Police or DSS to tell them people's means of livelihood or the source of their wealth. This means that the locals can provide adequate intelligence to Police, identify, arrest and prosecute criminals. If this is so, it then means that the provision of security and maintenance of peace should be a shared responsibility. The local authorities, town unions, local

vigilante security outfits, age grades and other small social organizations should participate in ensuring peace and security of their locality.

Subsidiarity and participation in this case means that the government should entrust to the various local authorities and small social entities, the maintenance of peace and provision of security in their locality, the government should empower them with the needed resources, training and equipment to oversee the provision of security and maintenance of peace in their localities through traditional institutions and local security outfits. The government should play supervisory role and provide superior power when needed and when the local security outfits are not capable of subduing the challenge at hand.

The admission of subsidiarity and participation principles will ensure efficiency, adequate security and peace and maximum co-operation from the locals. These individuals and lesser social organizations will feel recognized and discharge this duty with a sense of belonging as when people are working for their own good rather than standing aloof waiting for the government through its security agencies to do the whole work for them. With subsidiarity and participation the locals who have a better knowledge of the environment and its people will be more effective than an external power with little knowledge of the environment and the people. With subsidiarity and participation every member of the community will have the security consciousness of a secret intelligence officer or law enforcement personnel and will be ready to co-operate with the government security agencies in volunteering information when needed. Individual and other organized bodies can also be assisted to float security outfits by governments and also assigned responsibility with regard to area of coverage.

CONCLUSION

The principles of subsidiarity and participation are tested principles at the heart of American federalism. They also constitute the guiding principles of the European Union which insists that decisions and actions should be taken at the level where they are most effective and closer to the people they mostly affect. These principles, as has been outlined above, very much elicit the support and co-operation of all the members of the society. With the involvement of all the social strata of the society redundancy, extravagance and bureaucratic bottlenecks are avoided, freedom, creativity, enthusiasm and co-operation is promoted, then the provision of the common good is collectively achieved. The subsidiarity and participation principles ensure that all hands are on deck in working for the common good. Since every individual, family, small social, cultural and economic organization as well as local authorities, voluntary agencies, labour unions and other organized groups have something peculiar to contribute to the welfare of the human society none should be absorbed by higher bodies. None should be relegated to the

background with the bigger entities usurping their duties. African nations should emulate the Asian Tigers where there is no loss of energy accruing from redundancy and over-centralization. When the subsidiarity and participation principles are adopted and decisions and actions are taken at the level where they are most effective and lesser social groups are supported and encouraged to exercise their freedom and initiative in the areas they are most competent, there will surely be massive creation of wealth accruing from improved production of goods and services, improved agricultural outputs, advancement in educational and health sector and maintenance of peace and security in the society. It is therefore the submission of the paper that the principles of subsidiarity and participation should be adopted and implemented to serve as veritable catalysts to advance Africa's socio-political and economic development.

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