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Article

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JULIUS NYERERE'S UJAMAA AND THE PROBLEM OF ECONOMIC DEPRAVITY IN AFRICA: THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE

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Abstract

Without any iota of controversy, one can justifiably argue that the world is grappling with serious economic challenges that have seen prices of goods and services rising in most countries of the world. While many countries are looking for means of mitigating this economic challenge and getting positive outcomes, same cannot be said of some countries especially those in the Southern hemisphere whose citizenry are greatly impacted by the economic meltdown. While the developed countries most times are able to easily come out challenges of this nature, the developing countries get deeper enmeshed in it due to lack of proper creativity, economic planning, corruption and bad governance. The economies of these countries are described as depraved because of the inability to manage abundant natural and human resources, mitigate bourgeois culture and engender production as Nigeria empirically typifies. Against the background provided, this paper examined the tenets of ujamaa as gleaned from the political thought of Julius Nyerere with the aim of helping to turn the tide of depravity currently bedeviling economies like Nigeria's. The analytical, historical, critical and reconstructive methods in political philosophy were evoked to help place the research in perspective. The analytical method helped in the clarification of concepts like depravity, economy and universal oneness that are central to the research, the critical and historical methods were employed to examine the life of the pundit to be stereotyped – Julius Nyerere and how he applied *ujamaa* principles to erecting his ideal political community. The reconstructive method was handy in the remodeling of the

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Nigerian economy in line with the dictates of self-sufficiency, simple living and decentralization that are primal to Nyerere's thought. The paper concluded that it is only when the tenets of common brotherhood are not only introduced but applied that we can begin to have depraved economies empowered to compete with other economies within the global system.

Keywords: Ujamaa, Economic, Depravation; Governance; Nigeria; Africa.

Introduction

The most economically backward nations of the world are no doubt found in the continent of Africa. This was not always the case as pre-colonial Africa was one that through its cultural traditions took care of the economic depravities plaguing the peoples of the continent in contemporary times. The reason for the current economic depravities may not be unconnected with the economic systems bequeathed to the African states at independence, Nigeria being one. The system was not just alien and individualistic but exploitative and pauperizing as evident in the life of a contemporary African today. Most economies on the continent are abysmally weak, leaving in its wake a hungry, unemployed and beggarly citizenry. This could be mitigated with a viable alternate system that took into cognizance the African cultural experience in its applicability. Unfortunately, many leaders of the first generation were only interested in acquiring political power not minding how that could be best put to use for the benefit of the African people. It is the consequences of the dearth of political/economic ideology that has become the bane of Africa/Nigerian development hence the present economic quagmire that has encapsulated the average Nigerian citizen which in turn has led to protestations of different shades. Against the background provided, this paper attempts to add to the plethora of solutions to the problem of economic depravity on the continent with special focus on Nigeria by borrowing from the ujamaa economic system of the African sage Julius Nyerere and applying its principles to combating the challenge of economic depravity in Nigeria.

The Man, Nwalimu Julius Nyerere

Julius Nyerere lived between 1922 and 1999. After his teacher's training in Makerere University, Kampala he progressed to Edinburg for further studies. At the completion of his oversea studies, he returned to Tanganyika and was made president of the African People Association (APA) in 1954 which he later rechristened Tanganyika National African Union (TANU). In October 1 1960, he was appointed Prime Minister of Tanganyika and eventually the country's first indigenous president at independence in 1962. When in 1964 Zanzibar and Tanganyika became a union, he assumed leadership position of the country under the new name Tanzania. Julius Nyerere witnessed the mass impoverishment of the citizens under colonial rule due to the alien economic system adopted by the colonial government and resorted to decolonize the Tanzanian socio-economic space with a system more African in approach hence his interest in Ujamaa – an African centred solution to western individualized economic systems.

Socialism Versus Ujamaa

Many have argued that there is no much difference between classical socialism and Nyerere's Ujamaa and that if there is any difference it is only a difference of semantics and not of kind. This assertion missed the mark by appreciable degree because the historical factors that birthed ujamaa greatly vary from that of main stream socialism in varying degree. Some have defined socialism in various ways since Karl Marx made popular its doctrine.

While to some socialism is an economic system, to others it is a political system or movement thus raising the age long issues of the symbiosis between the political and economic aspects of the state. For instance, Abraham Nabhon (2010:135) sees socialism as:

The movement that aims to vest in society as a whole, rather than individuals the ownership and management of all general goods used in large-scale production to the end of increasing national income and distributing it more equally without materially destroying the individual's economic motivation or his freedom of occupational and consumer choice.

Elsewhere he wrote that socialism as a political system is primarily concerned with the existence of social property in the means of production (Nabhon, 135). The point being made here is that man's quest to wanting to dominate others by means of property is endless as such some may not mind keeping everything for themselves without sparing for others. Thomas Hobbes reechoed this in Mukherjee when he said that there is a natural inclination of mankind that seems to remain in man. In his words "a general inclination of all mankind, a perpetual and relentless desire for power after power that ceaseth only in death" (Mukherjee, 2007, p.174). For this to be prevented, socialism has to be introduced by thinkers to curb this inordinate desire of man and to downplay exploitation that is quite visible in systems like capitalism, feudalism and even socialism stands out because it gives to everyone ownership of the means of production and controlled by the state. Again, socialism means collective ownership where everything belongs to everyone thereby reducing the tendency of primitive accumulation that permeates the capitalist system. The capitalist system is replete with lots of conditions that many socialists find deplorable. This may not be unconnected with its emphasis on the individual rather than the collective. Emphasis over the individual rather than the collective is the reason the capitalist system is viewed with some disdain by some theorists like Karl Marx, Walter Rodney and Samir Amin. For instance, it pursues private ownership and accumulation of wealth over that of the whole. To this end, Nabhon (2010, p.105) writes:

Private ownership is an institutional arrangement fundamental to capitalism. It involves the right of an individual to acquire, use or dispose of something of economic value in any legitimate way the owner wishes and the right to enjoy the economic rewards that result.

As explained above, if this was all there is to capitalism many would not find fault with its practice, but that it has embedded in its application tendencies that dehumanize men gave room to the many attacks on it by pundits and search for alternatives. Among the many grouse associated with capitalism are certain flashpoints integral to disuniting citizens and creating tension within the polity. Among these are:

- i. Surplus value
- ii. Reserve of labour
- iii. Concentration of capital
- iv. Declining rate of profit
- v. Centralization of capital
- vi. Monopoly

There are of course some other reasons the theorists especially those of the third world have reservation about the capitalist model. For instance, the surplus value has been

described as the chief reason there is tension in the capitalist system due to the contradictions in wage disparity arising from the gap between overtime and what is actually paid for. Since most capitalist source their raw material and other production requirements from same market and at almost similar prices, the only way of maximizing profit is shortchanging the workers by making them put in more productive hours for which little or nothing is paid for. There is always in this system a seeming disparity between actual overtime hours put into production by the proletariat and the amount of overtime paid them. Over time, this build up into value significant enough to cause the capitalist concentrate capital and eventually expand his business at the expense of the real workers who are the actual creators of such wealth. In Marx's (19775b, p. 272) words:

The historical movement which changes the producers into wage-workers appears, on the one hand, as their emancipation from serfdom and from the fetters of the guilds, and this side alone exists for our bourgeoisie historians. But, on the other hand, these new freemen became sellers of themselves only after they have been robbed of all their own means of production, and of all the guarantees of existence afforded by the old feudal arrangements. And the history of this, expropriation, is written in the annals of mankind in letters of blood and fire.

The surplus value becomes kernel of the contradiction that unmakes capitalism because of the exploitation of man by man as a result of private property. The above flash points highlighted only became so glaring due to the corruption emanating from the management of the surplus value. Thus far, a question that readily comes to mind is why spend time on the capitalist economic system rather than ujamaa which is the bedrock of this paper? The answer is not far-fetched. It is simply because without x-raying the many factors in capitalism that have kept African countries on their knees, one may not readily appreciate why there was a need by scholars and leaders like Kwame Nkrumah, Samir Amin, Walter Rodney, Obafemi Awolowo and of course, Julius Nyerere who devoted time searching for alternate economic systems for Africa thereby pitching tent with socialism but disagreeing on what form or shade it would take. It is this that led Julius Nyerere into evolving ujamaa - African variant socialism.

The Berlin conference of 1885 ceded the control of Africa to different European nations thereby replicating their Eurocentric economic systems on the peoples of Africa. These systems were systems that evolved from their very own forms of live quite different and customized to fit the European cultural milieu and ethos. The same was applied to Africa without taking into cognizance the peculiarities in African societies thereby tearing apart the already working economic system put in place by traditional societies. This led to an economic crisis of great proportions that have kept Africa on its knees to date. This may be why Bayart writing about the above in Ivory Coast observed that; Ivorian society has no real autonomy. It cannot be understood without reference to the European society which dominates it (Bayart, 2009, p, 7). To this end, the colonial powers introduced into Africa false independences on systems alien to the African peoples by helping to reinforce what is already a given in Western societies – the dichotomy along the lines of 'us' and 'them', in a system that was hitherto communal. This is the reason for the present African economic crisis as production is negatively impacted hence the search for a new and alternate paradigm that Nyerere tried to fill with Ujamaa.

Conceptualizing Economic Depravity

When there is economic prosperity, it means the populace is experiencing what Aristotle described as the 'good life'. It is inconceivable to find a buoyant economy without a corresponding quality of life. The reverse is the case where there is economic depravity. In an economically depraved polity, the people find it difficult to meet their everyday needs like food, shelter and clothing, talk less of healthcare and social amenities that make for a good life. Many African countries are experiencing economic depravity as a result of their inability to contextualize and localize their main economic system where there was one. Nigeria at present seems to be among the chief sufferers of economic depravity as her citizens have within the last two years experienced the worst form of inflation, exchange rate differentiation, mass hunger, high interest rate and infrastructural decay that are pointers to ailing economies. Economically deprived countries are identified by the following features:

- i. Dearth of GDP growth of over 5% per annum;
- ii. Increased poverty, ignorance and disease;
- iii. Administrative incompetence;
- iv. Social disorganization;
- v. Mal-distribution of national income;
- vi. Failure to utilize fully productive potentials;
- vii. Backwardness in economic performance in comparison with economically buoyant countries;
- viii. Economic poverty in the sense of failure to assure adequate subsistence and material comfort to most of the country's population;
- ix. Lack of modern technical 'know how' to utilize potentials; and
- x. Massive institutional corruption and institutional constraint and backwardness (Nabhon, 2010, pp. 38-39).

The mentioned indices feature prominently in the Nigerian state hence helping to entrench its definition as a deprived economy. Economic depravity in Nigerian sense is a corollary of the capitalist system resonating in the everyday existential threats that confronts the people. A country with very rich oil reserves and abundant human resources yet cannot refine its own oil thereby leading to economic consequences for the populace. At the moment the Naira is at its lowest value when compared to the dollar; reducing the purchasing power of the people. More still, unemployment is over 30 percent and inflation rate in double digits. Rice, a staple food is now beyond the reach of an average Nigerian coupled with infrastructural decay occasioned by years of abandonment. The empirical definition of the term deprived is what Nigeria has become since 2015. The political class has not helped matters as they profess to have the solution but end up aggravating the situation in most cases. The abilities to feed, provide health care, secure the people, weak Naira, decayed infrastructure as well as declining agricultural output and production are the reasons Nigerian economy can best be described as deprived. These have now led to a new phenomenon called 'japa' where Nigerians who can afford it leave the country in droves in search of better living conditions abroad. Those who cannot afford the horrendous amount required for relocation take the bull by the horn by braving the waves of the Mediterranean seas just to get to Europe. Nigerians are leaving in droves because the policies of government rather than bring succour have strangled them even more. The wave of brain drains currently being experienced is unprecedented as it is something the country will never be able to recover from. It is in attempt to fixing economic concerns of this kind that

Julius Nyerere evolved for the people of Tanzania/Africa the ideology of Ujamaa – the African version of socialism.

Ujamaa

At independence premier African leaders were interested in finding political and economic systems that could harvest the essentials that constitute the 'good life'. In this vein, leaders and scholars like Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana developed an African strand of socialism ensconced in *conciencism* which was aimed at seeking a connection between the African people and their dehumanized past ravaged by their colonial experience. Leopold Senghor on the other hand sort reprieve in '*Negritude*'- the sum of the cultural values of the black world which when put into practice could galvanize the social, economic, political and cultural features most required for the progress of the African people (Ering, 2001, p. 90). In the same vein, Julius Nyerere found in Ujamaa the needed solution to the African socio-economic and political backwardness. The term 'ujamaa' is a derivative of Swahili which literary translate in to what Westerners refer to as socialism. Julius Nyerere feels the concept 'socialism' left as it in its Western coloration is too vague and far removed from the African reality. It can only be addressed and made to suit the African cultural milieu hence the need to bring socialism home to the people in their native language which ujamaa best describe. The word simply means a return to the extended family system. The family unit is everything to the African. The family unit is the beginning and end of life that is the reason everyone calls the other 'brother' in the loose sense in Africa so as to help see the one in the other. When we talk about family in Africa, we are not just referring to the term as it is the case in western conception where it is used to refer mainly to a nuclear one. In Africa, family goes farther than a man, his wife and children even to generations yet unborn. This is the reason a traditional African sees his brother in the other hence the popular African adage 'I am because you are and because you are therefore I am.' Kwame Gyekye (1996, p. 75).) shares the view when he held that:

One outstanding feature of the communal structure of the African society and the ever-present consciousness of ties of kinship is the emphasis on the importance of the family. It is a matter of common knowledge that when one speaks of the family in an African context one is referring not to the nuclear family consisting merely of husband, wife and children, but to the extended family which comprises a large number of blood relatives who trace their decent to a common ancestor and who are held together by sense of obligation to one another... the family itself is held as a fundamental – societal as well as a moral value.

In this sense, the family remains the centrifugal force that propels all members of society towards profitable ventures ensconced in values dear to its members. It is this sense of family that gives the African his creed to common brotherhood. To this end, for any socio-economic system to churn positive results in Africa, the family must be at its epicenter. So, when Julius Nyerere used Ujamaa to define his variant of socialism he was chiefly referring to the mutual involvements of all the people in the community in productive activities aimed at wealth creation. In Nyerere's (1969) words, "we in Africa have no more need in being 'converted' to socialism than we have of being 'taught' democracy. Both are rooted in our past... in the traditional society which produced us".

Nyerere in this context is repudiating Marxian socialism because to him it is nothing but a product of internal contradictions replete in the capitalist mode of production occasioned by a long line of countless negations that must culminate in a revolution between the two dominant classes – bourgeoisie and proletariat. It is the irreconcilable difference between the classes that triggers a revolution that will eventually herald socialism. Put starkly, without revolution there will not be socialism. Again, it is only from the ruins of capitalism that socialism can germinate. If nothing else, this completely put Western socialism in complete variance with what Nyerere described in ujamaa. Ujamaa does not require the stages put forward by Marx but rather it is a product of the lived experience and form of life of the African people. It is a product of their communalistic past as it shapes a future of hope and beneficial tomorrow to their common patrimony. George Ehusani (1992, p.221) captured it differently and better when he wrote that, “the African values community living not only because it is good for kinsmen to do so,” but because life is his ultimate concern, and that life can only grow in relationships. Outside the community, there is no life”. Consequently, ujamaa signifies a set of ideas and principles, a mass ideology, a programme of action and African brand of socialism rooted in the collective past of Africans and traditions that birthed them. The traditional African society serves as the torch bearer to future leaders on how to model society for collective good and on how everyone is expected to be every one’s keeper. Ujamaa, as enthused by Yekini in Asouzu (2002, p.252) commands that:

The traditional attitude of mind be projected outward to incorporate not only every Tanzanian, but all mankind. Thus, the crusade will not only rediscover and revitalize native values but extend its gains beyond the present parochialism but the entire human race.

One may ask why did Julius Nyerere choose to erect his strand of socialism on African family system? The reason is not far-fetched as Africans the world over, are known for their kin sense of family and kinship. The chief feature of this African spirit is that no one is a no body in Africa because everyone has his worth as a human being.

Features/Principles of Ujamaa

Ujamaa, Nyerere’s variant of socialism is not without some defining principles that distinguishes it from main stream socialism. These features include hard work, rejection of individualism, self-reliance and common ownership.

- i. **Rejection of Individualism:** One defining feature of ujamaa is its deafening call to reject individualism. This call resonates because of the capitalist system tendency to divide the people into camps on the basis of purchasing power only in as much as the bourgeois class continue to maximize profit at the expense of the working class, everything is ok. Individualism is alien to the African because of its capitalist poise that encourages the exploitation of man by man and selfish class interest lifestyles. Individualism has created a wide gulf between the rich and poor and has sown the seeds of discord among the people (Uduigwomen, 2000:198). Individualism according to Nyerere encourages pillage and exploitation which is at variance with African ethos. The consequences of individualism stare Africa in the face as a once self-sufficient continent has become beggarly with the majority of its people merely eking out a living. We are faced with economic problems from all points making the people multi dimensionally poor. Poverty has created a time bomb from a sea of pauperized citizenry waiting to detonate at the slightest provocation.

- ii. **Hard Work:** The African is a hard worker. No African is lazy because of the abundant land open to him to toil on. Land – a chief resource in Africa is open to all to be converted into material value. Knowing this, most African societies cultivate a work ethics that encourages waking up early to the field and returning late in the evening all in the bid to create wealth. “Treat a brother as visitor for two days on the third day give him the *jembe* (hoe)” is an African adage that lets one into the African reality and his emphasis on hard work where free lunches are highly discouraged. Everyone must earn or contribute to the production process in the community. Even an elderly person who may appear indolent may not be so because such a person may have contributed in the real sense, in his younger years to the creation of wealth for the people. In old age because of the interest and emphasis on hard work you might still find him making meaningful contributions to the homestead where he feed chicken, mend fishing nets and proffer solutions on the challenges encountered by the younger generations in their respective fields. More still, no one was unemployed as everyone was traditionally a professional in defined or combination of fields in their own right. While some are fishermen, others may be palm wine tappers. While others may be carvers, you find others that are weavers, pastorals or farmers as the case may be. Every traditional African in a traditional society is employed and must contribute his quota to the collective pool. Even in contemporary times, those in rural areas are gainfully employed. Unemployment challenge is only a major challenge in semi-urban and urban areas of African societies.
- iii. **Common Ownership:** In line with the traditions of African communal past, there are some vital aspects or resources of community that an individual is never allowed to own. These resources include land – the chief resource, drinking brooks, bamboo grooves, sources of drinking water, rivers and lakes as well as raffia palms used for making thatch roof. All of these belong not to individuals but to the community as whole. The reason for this is simply because they are too essential to be privatized and can be used by naturally selfish individuals to inflict hardship on members of the community or on those he may not like. The community in its wisdom makes itself the custodian of these vital resources just for the good and use of all irrespective of affiliation. Anyone who has need for these resources especially land only needs to approach the community and demand for it. this may be what Kwame Gyekye (1996, p. 96) captured when he writes that:
- It is true, however, that land, a fundamental property in African societies, is communally owned. The chief or head of the lineage or clan is the custodian of the land. His position is that of a trustee, holding the land for the clan or the whole community.

There are no private beaches or islands in traditional Africa as such no one must own a natural source of drinking water, bamboo groove used as building material, wild economic trees etc. common ownership is emphasized to the degree that one needs not wait to be invited before joining a meal if he meets anyone having one because food is harvested from land not owned by an individual but by the entire community thus making the food harvested from that land ‘our food’ and not ‘my food.’ This system of common ownership provides “social security against sudden death, crop failure, natural disaster and group feud and incursions” (Ehusani, 222). Succinctly put, Nyerere’s Ujamaa rejects individualism because it is a western form of life aimed at dividing instead of uniting the people. Ujamaa encourages hard work because it is for the good of community and emphasizes common

ownership as a means of fostering belongingness where class stratification and racism are nonexistent.

Ujamaa: A Critique

There is no doubt ujamaa has very important principles necessary for social and economic transformation of Africa if properly applied. The principles of ujamaa embedded in the traditional and cultural life of the African could help economically deprived countries like Nigeria negate her economic woes by launching a recovery. Be that as it may it is not to say that ujamaa is so water tight that it does not have its shortcomings. One may argue that if it is such a viable political system, why has it failed to resolve the internal contradictions evident in the economic misadventures of Tanzania its birth place? If ujamaa could not solve the simple agrarian problems in Tanzania, how can it now point to the rest of Africa especially Nigeria out of her present economic doldrums? The issue is not in the lofty, noble and African tailored principles of ujamaa but in its applicability to everyday basic economic concerns of the people. To apply the principles of ujamaa one needs the people in government who most of the time have been tainted by the fanfare that goes with political office and position in Africa. This is unarguably the reason ujamaa has failed to deliver on its promises. In this regard Bayart (2009, p.66) wrote that:

Following the Arusha Declaration in 1967, the policy of ujamaa increased state and party pressure: the independent farmers movement especially the Ruvuma Development association – were broken up, for a time cooperatives were outlawed, the marketing of harvest was nationalized and homes were forcibly regrouped.

This cast a shadow on a system that was believed had what was needed to fix Africa's economic challenges. As earlier noted, the failure of ujamaa in Tanzania is a direct consequence of selective application and not of its cherished principles. If the principles were applied devoid of personal and individualized interests and biases in Africa and Nigeria in particular, it can stem the declining trend that defines Nigeria's economic reality at present.

Ujamaa and Economic Depravity: A Nexus

As mentioned in the previous paragraphs, the features of ujamaa if properly and sincerely applied will inadvertently lead to economic prosperity for Nigeria. These features are needed to stimulate economic growth and prosperity in Africa and Nigeria in particular. To begin with, it is pertinent to mention some factors responsible for Nigeria's economic down turn. One of the most visible factors is simply Nigeria's return to the principle of individualism that negates the spirit of communalism and communal centred living that is entrenched in her traditional cultures. It is quite easy for societies that have been individualistic in outlook to put their individualism to positive use than for societies that have been communal to learn the tenets of individualism embedded in imposed economic systems like capitalism. The current African/Nigerian leadership would rather steal from the people for personal gains than create wealth for the whole by so doing promoting an agenda that tends to create a gulf between the 'rich' and 'poor,' the 'us' and the 'them' making the 'them' to be so subordinated to the 'us' for survival. How can the 'good life' be promoted in conditions of this nature where the rich are a negligent number and the poor the vast of the majority? How can economy that has the likes of Dangote – the richest black man on the continent of Africa, Alakija – the richest black woman in Africa, to mention but a few, remain the world's

poverty capital if not that individualism has taken root in the country and Nigeria in particular.

Nigeria's economic depravity can be blamed on one major factor namely; the pursuit of individualism. Individualism is rekindled any time the elites promote laws and policies that are alienating thereby entrenching inequality. It is an established fact that almost all known buoyant economies dole out one form of subsidy or the other for their citizens. For instance, while Germany subsidizes energy, China subsidizes iron, United States subsidized agriculture, while UK focused groceries. The only subsidy the Nigerian citizen gets from oil has been removed by government thereby plunging more people into multi-dimensional poverty that they can hardly recover from. The gap between the rich and poor today is so wide to fit another planet. So is the magnitude of the effect of subsidy removal on the Nigerian citizen. This again is blamed on emphasis on individualism. According to Bayart, "individualism in the post-colonial state has orchestrated procedures of accumulation and the world of political make-believe which have all been vehicles for the production of social inequality" (Bayart, ix). This has led to exclusive factionalism and patrimonialism that are self-serving and setting depraved economies on path antithetical to recovery. So, when Nyerere calls for a rejection to individualism it was because he knew the implication of individualism to the African must end in contradictions too rooted to be easily resolved.

Implicit in ujamaa is the call for economic self-reliance which according to Nabhon "is a strong belief that you are capable of successfully dealing with the challenges life throws at you, taking guidance from yourself, rather than from other people or other things" (Nabhon, p. 59). Self-reliance is a component in African traditions that helps to build communal entrepreneurial spirit because it looks inward for solutions rather than go beggarly. This is one of the reasons anthropologists as quoted by Lord Macaulay felt threatened by self-reliant dimension to African cultures that Nyerere wanted replicated in Ujamaa. In the words of Lord Macaulay (1835):

I have travelled across the length and breadth of Africa and I have not seen one person who is a beggar, who is a thief, such wealth I have seen in this country, such high moral values, people of such caliber, that I do not think we would ever conquer this country, unless we break the very backbone of this nation, which is her spiritual and cultural heritage and therefore, I propose that we replace her old and cultural ancient system, her culture, for if the Africans think that all that is foreign and English is good and greater than their own, they will lose their self-esteem, their native culture and they will become what we want them, a truly dominated nation.

This assertion of Lord Macaulay speaks volume of the true reliant spirit of the African that has now become elusive. Nigeria has a lot local content that can be transformed into material value. The process of transforming local content can in the process create opportunities for the many youths that are currently unemployed or underemployed. This has not been taken off for better living self-reliance is thus development on the basis of a country's own resources, involving its populations based on the potentials of its cultural values and traditions (Nabhon 60).

Put differently, when one speaks of self-reliance as Nyerere does, he is merely referring to the principle of self-help helping to create a resilient spirit among the local people that otherwise would be redundant if dependent on foreign aid. At present Nigeria's over reliance on foreign goods and solutions is responsible for the country's economic socio-

political and economic woes. This is because rather than produce what is required by the populace the country seeks to import or have it delivered as aids thereby killing the local manufacturing industries. Again, it is obvious that the leadership has completely dollarized the Nigerian commercial space to the extent goods and services are priced in dollar before being converted to the local currency the Naira. This has further devaluated the local currency due to the pressure it heaps on the Naira in its wake. The many students that leave the shores of Nigeria for overseas studies are doing so in defiance of Nyerere's call to self-reliance. This has become the trend because the leadership has not showed the way. If leaders continue to send their children and wards abroad to study it means they are also asking citizens that have the wherewithal to do same. Again, were the local institutions positioned to do well and compete favorably with institutions in other climes, there would have been no use seeking overseas studies as what is being sort after can be gotten locally. The reality is that this is not the case with most of our institutions of higher learning hence the continued rejection to the call to self-reliance. Nyerere would rather have African countries come up with legislations that encourage self-reliance and local content utilization.

In Nyerere's words, "we have to learn to stand on our feet and not rely on other people to do things for us... self-reliance is not just a slogan; it is a necessity (Nyerere 1968:27)." It is very injurious to Nigeria to continue to seek solutions to her problems from Europe and America in her bid to overcome her economic challenges. It is imperative to employ self-reliance because you cannot develop people, you must allow the people to bring about their own development. In essence, allowing others develop the people breeds laziness for Africa and a lazy citizenry cannot surmount challenges of any kind hence the need for self-reliance in Nigeria. The reason why Nyerere wrote that "independence cannot be real if a nation depends on gifts" (Nyerere, 67) is because he wanted African countries to be authentic and pragmatic in their approach to dealing with their challenges. Nigeria's over reliance on foreign input both in terms of ideas is a direct consequence of her present economic misfortunes that only a return to self-reliance can address. The solution rests in ujamaa. According to Nyerere (1968, pp.23-24):

Under ujamaa, everyone in the society will have a stake in the nation's wealth, and everyone will have an equal right to benefit from it... of the means of production will be in the hands of the people, either directly or through their government.

It is by putting into practice these words of Julius Nyerere that African states, in general and Nigeria in particular can begin to bridge the gap between the rich and poor. Where this is the case, social inequality and its attending problems will drastically be mitigated for the good of the collective.

Conclusion

There is no doubt Nigeria is experiencing the worst economic challenge in her history. There is also no doubt that the government is doing its best in fixing the problems. But the solutions proffered by successive governments seem not to be working thereby impoverishing the people more. The reason why the solutions are not working might be tied to the fact that that are mostly given by foreign governments, World Bank and other Britton wood institutions. While acknowledging Nigeria government's efforts, it is quite glaring that the solutions are not working as the challenges keep getting worse defying all foreign proffered solutions. It is against such impracticable and inapplicable Western sponsored remedies that it becomes so inexcusable not to look within the African continent for remedy.

In the light of the above, Julius Nyerere stands tall due to the fact that he has over the years advised African countries to turn to African solutions to solve African problems. His Ujamaa ideology – the veritable solution to African economic woes is the answer to Nigeria's economic downturn if applied and pursued with all sense of purpose.

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