

Restructuring and Resource Control in Nigeria: Lessons from the Life of Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) in Madinah

Bashir Abdul-Raheem

Department of Religious Studies, University of Lagos, Nigeria
babdul-raheem@unilag.edu.ng

Abstract

Sociologically, society is stratified into either homogenous or heterogeneous. Naturally, the heterogeneous society is always complex due to the fact that is densely populated by migrants besides the indigenes and thereby makes it susceptible to different challenges such as; insecurity, inequality distribution of economy, tribal chauvinism, sectarian crisis, political instability among others. It is a known fact that Nigeria is populated by over 250 different ethnic groups and in addition to that some states are distinguished by various mineral resources. Hitherto, Nigeria is clueless on how to properly and adequately harness these human and material resources. As a result of that clamouring for resource control and restructuring diffuses Nigerian atmosphere. The purpose of this study is to view restructuring and resource control from Islamic perspective. Therefore, the qualitative approach was used to examine the need and strategy used by the Prophet in restructuring Madinah and how its resource was controlled with a view to supporting the legitimacy of restructuring and resource control in Nigeria. Among the recommendations made was that restructuring and resource control are in tandem with precepts of Islam, the true federalism is antidote for clamouring against restructuring and resource control in Nigeria among others. The paper concludes that the inability to harness both human and material resources is the factor that makes Nigeria a victim of various challenges.

Keywords: Restructuring; Resource Control; Religion; Nigeria; Madinah; Prophet Muhammad.

Introduction

One of the advantages that homogeneous society has over heterogeneous society is that the level of development in the latter is faster than the former. The diversity of languages, cultural backgrounds, and religions are the major hurdles that perhaps retard the development in heterogeneous society especially when there is lack of unity, understanding and cooperation among the units of society. Singapore is a typical example of heterogeneous society that in spite of its diversity it rose from the third world country to industrialised nation due to its ability to efficiently manage its diversity (Leo, 2001).

It is common that some people usually blame the slow pace of development in Nigeria on the incursion of military junta in the Nigerian politics. However, it is not a gainsaying to assert that Nigerians are yet to enjoy dividend of democracy after twenty years of uninterrupted democracy in Nigeria. Insecurity, corruption of high magnitude, infrastructural decay, the larger population of Nigerians wallowing in abject poverty, alarming rate of unemployment, a steady rise number of illiterates, the springing up of internally displaced persons camps are the only dividend of Nigerian democracy. This disturbing situation and the effort to rescue Nigeria from the social debacle bring about agitation for restructuring and resource control.

The Niger Delta suffers most degrading environmental hazard due to the oil exploration activities taking place there. Their land and water have been rendered useless which makes farming and fishing impossible despite the fact that their two major occupations are farming and fishing. The aftermath of this is the widespread of poverty and joblessness (Dibua, 2005). Their condition was exacerbated by the abysmal low level of infrastructural development that this region is characterized with. Dibua (2005) opined that the Niger Delta people watch in dismay as the resources generated by their land are used to develop non-oil producing states and at the same time some elites are feeding fat on them. An attempt to right the wrong makes the Niger Delta people from time to time to agitate for resource control. Interestingly, their demand is justifiable by considering the standard practice in country like America which allows the oil producing states to have control over their resources (Atoyebi, Lawal, Adekunjo, and Kadiri, 2013).

The Life of Prophet in Madinah

Yathrib was the ancient name of *Madinah* before the advent of the Prophet. Geographically, *Madinah* was located a hundred miles east of the Red Sea coast and nearly three hundred miles to the north of *Makkah*.

Historically, the first inhabitants of *Madinah* were a tribe of Arab known as *Amelikite* and their co-inhabitants were the Jews who sought asylum in *Madinah* as a result of invasion of Palestine by the ancient rulers of Babylonia, Greece and Rome. Initially, the Jews outnumbered the aborigine of *Madinah* but they were later outnumbered when other tribes of Arab known as *Aws* and *Khazraj* who migrated from *Yamen* settled down in *Madinah*. *Aws* and *Khazraj* suffered a perennial political turmoil which claimed many lives and wanton destruction of property. The presence of the Jews in their midst was not a blessing because rather than maintaining the peace between the two tribes the Jews of *Banu Qurayzah* and *Banu an-Nadir* sided with *Aws* while the Jew of *Banu Qaynuqa'i* sided with *Khazraj* (Mazhar-ul-Haq, 1990).

The advent of the Prophet and his people in *Madinah* polarized the inhabitants of *Madinah* into three groups. The emigrants, the group which the Prophet belonged to, the *Aws* and *Khazraj* and the Jews. The safety of life and property and living peacefully with the Jews whose religion was different from Islam became the preoccupation of the Prophet as a theocratic leader of the state of *Madinah*. For easy administration, the Prophet perceived the need for restructuring the *Madinah* and this led to the enactment of *Madinah* charter (Mazhar-ul-Haq, 1990, Najeebabadi, 2000, As-Sallaabee, 2005 & Al-Mubarakpuri, 2011).

Obviously, the state of *Madinah* was in dire need of security by considering the circumstances that led to the migration of the Prophet and his people to *Madinah*. In other words, there was need for security against the external aggression. However, this objective might not have been achieved without the support of other three clans of Jews who were also the citizens of *Madinah*. In this case, the Prophet as theocratic leader sought their collaboration in defending the territorial integrity of the *Madinah* against external security threat. One greatest advantage of the restructuring was the enhancement of the security of *Madinah*. The *Madinah* charter signed by the Jews made their expulsion from *Madinah* possible when they conspired against the security of *Madinah* (Mazhar-ul-Haq, 1990, Najeebabadi, 2000, As-Sallaabee, 2005).

Madinah's economy was in the hand of *Madinah* Arabs (The Helpers) and the Jews. For equitable distribution of the economy between the Helpers and the Emigrants, the Prophet used the strategy of Islamic brotherhood as a mechanism of achieving this objective. Rather than making the state to control the economy, the Prophet allowed the Helpers to control it because they were the indigenes.

Spoils of wars provided another opportunity for revenue generation. However, the revenue that was generated through the spoils of wars was not controlled by the state but every individual who participated in any battle was entitled to his share of the booty. This method contributed to the rapid growth of *Madinah's* economy because individuals were given the opportunity of resource control (Mazhar-ul-Haq, 1990, Najeebabadi, 2000, As-Sallaabee, 2005)

The Prophet also extended the method of resource control to the Jewish communities neighbouring *Madinah*. The Jews of *Khaybar* and *Wādi al-Qura* after being conquered by the Muslims, the next step ought to have been taken by the Prophet was annexation of their communities. Out of sheer magnanimity, the Prophet refused to adopt the popular practice. Not only that he also went a step further by allowing them control their resources and pay royalty to the state of *Madinah* (Abdul-Jabbar (n/d), and Salahi, 2012)

Without gainsaying the security that *Madinah* enjoyed was the aftermath of restructuring embarked upon by the Prophet. In fact, it was the right step in the right direction and it is an indication of his foresight into the future. In the same vein, the economic fortune of the state of *Madinah* grew steadily to the extent that within the shortest period the gap between the poor and the rich was bridged which could be attributed to the method of resource control by the individuals.

The Nigerian Constitution and the Issues of Restructuring and Resource Control

Nothing makes Nigeria a federal state except its ethno-tribal nature. A federal state is characterized by the features such as; written constitution, supremacy of the constitution, equality of power between levels of

the government, equality in ethno-regional representation, fiscal autonomy, autonomy of each government and division of power and responsibilities (Ideobodo, Okolo and Eza, 2018).

The scholars have expressed different opinions on the words “restructuring” and “political restructuring” which shows that there is similarity as well as difference between the two words. Obiora Okonkwo (2018) cited in Ideobodo, *et al.* (2018) averred that restructuring means “changing an existing status quo in order to make it more functional”. However, Ahmed, Norafidah and Knocks (2017) cited in Ideobodo, Okolo and Eza, (2018) affirmed that political restructuring “entails both political re-configuration of the country and devolution of powers to the constituent units as it is practiced in other climes”. Similarly, Najakku (2016) cited Ideobodo *et al.* (2018), considers it as the re-organization and re-arrangement of the nature of resource control by the various governments and regions to foster unity and development. The two key words that show the difference between the words “restructuring” and “political restructuring” are devolution of powers and resource control according to the two definitions. Therefore, in this context the focus is on the political restructuring which is the burning issue in Nigeria presently.

Resource control has been viewed from different perspectives by different researchers. However, what can be deduced from the definitions of Arowolo and Ako (2011) cited in Ideobodo *et al.* (2018) is that resource control is the legitimacy of sub geographical entity to exercise control over its mineral and human resources with proviso of paying royalty to the center. This structure is advantageous because it creates opportunity for rapid economic growth and development and makes the government more efficient. It was argued that the type of federalism that Nigeria operates is pseudo federalism because all the features of a federal state were overtly or covertly incapacitated and they are not well-positioned as it is being done in countries such as Australia, Canada and America. Ideobodo *et al.* (2018) criticized that the constitution was imposed on Nigerians by the military administration in a bid to facilitate the transition from the military rule to the civilian rule and as result the Nigerian citizens were not adequately involved and represented. Based on this, the constitution has denied some ethnic groups the equal representation and the formula for sharing the national cake. For instance, Nigeria has 774 local governments; south-east has 95, north-west 186, north-east 113, south-south 125, south-west 137, and north-central 112. Assuming Nigeria is polarised into the north and the south, the north will have 411 local governments while the south will have 363 (Ideobodo, Okolo and Eza, 2018). This implies that the north is having larger share of revenue than the south which generates larger percentage of revenue. The germane question is; where is the balance and equality? Interestingly, one of the features of true federalism and reason why Nigeria is referred to as federal is the attempt to achieve equality in ethno-regional representation. So, if there is agitation for political restructuring by some Nigerians, they are only demanding for the true federalism of which Nigeria claims to be.

Security Challenge as Factor for Political Restructuring and Resource Control

Nigeria as a nation is bedeviled with the critical security challenge most especially since the returning of democracy over two decades ago. Unfortunately, this security challenge is gaining momentums day-by-day in the sense that when one security challenge is about to be subdued a new one emerges. During the Obasanjo Administration, the issue of kidnapping and the Niger Delta Militants were the major security challenge. Immediately Yariadua took over Book Haram insurgency emerged as a new security challenge and this was contended throughout the Jonathan Administration. When accolade was about to be given to the Muhammadu Buhari Administration for its seemingly victory over Boko Haram menace, the Fulani herdsmen and armed bandit emerged as a fresh security challenge in addition to Boko Haram and kidnapping. The insecurity situation has unleashed untold hardship on both human and material resources. Billions of naira has been spent in tackling the menace of security challenge while Nigerian had become refugees in their own country.

Aliyu (2012) cited in Inweke and Inwanchukwu (2014), identified three factors militating against our security namely; poverty, inequality and mass unemployment. According to him the state can enjoy deserved security only if the state is up and doing in its legitimate responsibility by making its citizenry

feel the sense of belonging to a common sovereign political community. It is believed that poverty and unemployment are the outcome of inequality in economic distribution. Political appointees have seen politics as business enterprises rather than act of governance. Categorically speaking, members of National Assembly are the most paid political office holders all over the world. What gives credence to this is the comment made by the former governor of Central Bank, Mallam Lamido Sanusi, that 25% of Nigerian budget is spent by the members of National Assembly (Ben Agande and Shaibu 2010).

It is undisputable fact that the ubiquitous unemployed youths are being recruited as members of Boko Haram, armed bandits, Fulani herdsmen and kidnappers. Recently, eleven monarchs were dethroned by the former Zamfara State governor, Abdulaziz Yari, for allegedly sponsored the armed bandits (Sheu, 2018). It has been debated that the nature of security operation in Nigeria makes curbing of security challenge difficult on the premise that the order has to come from the Inspector General of Police. This renders the governor, who is the chief security of the state a toothless bulldog. The frustration as a result of collapse of security in Zamfara State makes the former governor to declare his resignation as the chief security of the Zamfara State;

We have been facing serious security challenges over the years, but in spite of being governor and the chief security officer of the state, I cannot direct security officers on what to do or sanction them when they err (This Day, June 16, 2018)

For security to be effective in Nigeria the state police have been advocated for and this cannot be achieved without political restructuring and resource control. The Alafin Monarch suggested that restructuring will go a long way in tackling the security challenge in Nigeria (Akinselure, 2019).

Infrastructural Decay as Factor for Restructuring and Resource Control

Nigeria will be rated very low when compared with other nations of the world in terms of infrastructural development despite of her abundant human and mineral resources. The infrastructural being talked about here is road network both in rural and urban areas, steady supply of power, modern health facility, etc.

One of the factors that facilitate the growth and development of a nation is the road network because of its impact on the transportation system. However, transportation system is the hearth of economic growth of a nation. Movement of raw materials from rural areas to the manufacturing companies and movement of finished goods to the consumers largely depend on the availability of good transport system and this can be seriously affected when there is no good road network. It is very disappointing that in spite of her huge resources Nigeria cannot keep abreast with other nations of the world in the area of good road network. This has devastating effects on Nigeria socially, economically and materially. Jeremiah (2016) asserted that "Nigeria is one of the countries with highest number of deaths resulting from road crash". Similarly, the report from the World Health Organization (WHO) indicates that Nigeria has highest rate of road accident in the world (Jeremiah, 2016).

The high price of commodity has usually been blamed on the increase in the fare of transportation which is caused by bad road. Furthermore, the motorists pay through their nose to maintain their vehicles. Inadequate facilities and lack of enabling environment for medical personnel are the two major factors attributed to the poor health care delivery in Nigeria. Lack of medical personnel has never been a problem for Nigeria because outside Nigeria medical doctors who are Nigerian are performing creditably well but the problem is from the government that pays lip service to the medical issues. The British High Commissioner to Nigeria, Ms. Laurel Beaufile, observed that the challenge in the health care sector has made Nigeria to be ranked as poorest health care system in the world. As a result of poor health care delivery, Nigeria loses \$1 billion yearly to medical tourism (Ojerinde, 2018).

Electricity is one of the facilities that have greater effect on human activities in the homes, offices and industries. The unemployment rate in Nigeria is partly blamed on the lack of steady supply of power

because many industries that have capability of employing greater percentage of people closed down and relocated to neighbouring countries while others closed down completely. Mayah (2010) relying on the report of Manufacturer Association of Nigeria (MAN) affirmed that between 2000 and 2008, 820 manufacturing companies closed down. Adeloje (2010) reported that from the survey carried out by MAN in January 2010, 834 manufacturing companies also closed down in 2009 alone. Udochukwu and Ogbonnaya (2014) expressed dismay about the number of manufacturing companies closed down in 2009 alone because the rate is too high as it superseded what happened within eight years. Those that manage to stay pay heavily on diesel in order to make their business stay alive and thereby increase the price of their products.

These are some of infrastructural challenges that Nigeria is unable to find lasting solution in spite of her abundant human and minerals resources. It is quite appalling that in 21st century when majority of nations of the world have left behind the problem of infrastructural development, Nigeria as a giant of Africa still battling with this challenge. This is a good indication that the issues of political restructuring and resource control need to be addressed.

Possibility and Practicability of Restructuring and Resource Control in Nigeria

“Necessity is the mother of invention”. This expression is an affirmation of the fact that the existence of a problem makes finding solution inevitable. The main reason for clamouring for restructuring and resource control is a as result of various challenges which are acting as albatross against social, political and economic development of Nigeria as a country. Obviously as there are protagonists there are also antagonists and each try to substantiate their positions. It must be pointed out that states with little or without mineral resources will be apprehensive as regards their fate of continuous existence as a state. The failure of many states to pay the salary of their workers when the federal allocation became meager is an indication that many states will cease to exist if the idea of resource control and restructuring become a reality and this is a stark reality. For this reason, the clamouring for restructuring and resource control might be an exercise in futility. However, the current situation in Nigeria cannot continue like this forever because all is not well with Nigeria. Therefore, the way forward is to make a wider consultation among the various federating units. Islam gives priority to consultation because of its effect in finding solution to a nagging and perennial problem. Al-Raysuni (2012) avers that consultation is a tool for reconstruction and reform as being notified by the Qur’an and tradition of the Prophet.

In the Nigerian context the consultation can be equated with the National Conference which was organized during the Jonathan Administration. Unfortunately, the recommendations made were yet to be implemented because certain quarters didn’t want to endure undesirable consequences. It is noteworthy that if Nigeria has to resolve the various challenges confronting her since independence undesirable consequences must be endured so that the goodwill and unity can be achieved and sustained.

Conclusions

Without mincing word, Nigeria is blessed with both human and minerals resources which is a great advantage for her to be among the advanced nations of the world. However, the inability to harness this potential has made Nigeria a victim of various challenges. It is high time that Nigeria took the bull by the horn in order to do the needful for the sake of preserving her unity. Inequality in the distribution of economy and imbalance in ethno-regional representation and other perceived inadequacies are making the citizenry losing faith in their mother land and thereby looking for greener pasture elsewhere. The ordeal of Nigerians in South Africa calls for serious meditation about the future of Nigeria.

Recommendations

- a. Islam supports restructuring and resource control because it was practically demonstrated by the prophet as a theocratic leader of *Madinah*.
- b. Nigeria should endeavour to operate the true federalism rather than pseudo federalism that is currently in operation

- c. Nigeria should stop paying a lip service to the issue of unity at the expense of enduring undesirable consequences.
- d. Drastic physical infrastructural development, large scale of employment opportunity, adequate security of life and property and equal representation of every ethnic group are the alternative to agitation for political restructuring and resource control.

References

- This Day (2018, June 16). Gov, Yari resigns as Zamfara State's chief security officer. Retrieved on 8/9/2019 from www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2018/06/16/gov-yari-resigns-as-zamfara-states-chief-security-officer/
- Abdul-Jabbar, U (n/d). *Khulasah nūrul-yaqīn fī sīrah sayyid al-mursalīn*. N/P
- Adeloye, L. (2010, October 31). Harsh operating environment claims 834 Nigerian manufacturing companies-investigation, Sunday PUNCH Newspaper, p.11
- Akinselure, W. (2019, June 28). Restructuring, antidote to secession. Nigerian Tribune, p.4.
- Al-Mubarakpuri, S. (2011). The sealed nectar. Riyadh; Maktab Dāru-us-salam.
- Al-Raysuni, A. (2012). *Al-Shura: The Qur'anic principle of consultation*. USA; International Institute of Islamic Thought.
- As-Sallaabee, A.M. (2005). *The noble life of the prophet*. Riyadh; Darussalam.
- Atoyebi, K. O., Lawal, A.S., Adekunjo, F.O. & Kadiri, K.I. (2013). The implications of resource control in Nigeria. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*, 2(2); pp 53-57
- Augustine, Okezie (2010, January 25). 'Breeding religious extremists' *Nigerian News World*, p12-18
- Ben Agande and Inalegwu Shaibu (2010, December 22) N/Assembly expenditure: Sanusi insists, he's ready to quit if... retrieved on 8/9/2019 from www.vanguardngr.com/2010/12/nassembly-expenditure-sanusi-insists-says-hes-ready-to-quit-if
- Dibua, J.I (2005). Citizenship and resource control in Nigeria: The case of minority communities in the Niger Delta. *Africa Spectrum*, 40 (1); pp 5-28
- Ideobodo, N., Okolo, M.C. and Eze, K.T. (2018). Political restructuring in Nigeria: The need, challenges and prospects. *Global Journal of Human-Social Science*, 18 (5); pp 19-33
- Jeremiah, K. (2016, January 29). How poor road triggers death rate, maintenance cost in Nigeria. Retrieved on 8/9/2019 from www.guardian.ng/features/how-poor-road-triggers-death-rate-maintenance-cost-in-nigeria/
- Leo Tan W. (2001). The development of education in Singapore since independence –A 40- year perspective. Retrieved on 3/08/2017 from siteresources.worldbank.org
- Mayah, E. (2010, October 30). Nigeria to witness Rujugiro's success story. Daily Sun Newspaper, p.9
- Najeebabadi, A. (2000). *The history of Islam*. Riyadh; Darussalam.
- Nweke Prince O. and Nwachukwu, Tochukwu Stephen (2014). National Security Issues in Nigeria: Which way forward? *International Journal of Youth Empowerment and Entrepreneurship Development*. Vol.1 (1), 96-106.
- Ojerinde, D. (2018, December 10). Access to good medical care still poor in Nigeria. Retrieved on 08/09/2019 from www.punchng.com/access-to-good-medical-care-still-poor-in-nigeria/
- S. Adil (2012). *Muhammad, Man and prophet: A complete study of the life of the prophet of Islam*. United Kingdom; The Islamic Foundation.
- Sheu, U. (2018, December 1). As Zamfara sanctioned traditional rulers over alleged ties with bandits. Retrieved on 8/9/2019 from www.dailytrust.com.ng/as-zamfara-sanctioned-traditional-rulers-over-alleged-ties-with-bandits.html
- Tanko, Y. (2011). Business in islamic banking. Zaria; Darul Ummah for Publishing Agency.
- Udochukwu, B.A. and Ogbonnaya, I.O. (2014). Economics implication on constant power outages on SMEs in Nigeria. *Journal of Energy in Southern Africa*. 25, (3); p61-66