

## **An Appraisal of the Nexus between State and Citizens in Contemporary Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

There is no gainsaying that although Nigeria has faced some challenging times in the past (especially during the civil war 1967-1970), at no other time have the citizens been made to bear the burden of the state than now. For instance, at no other time has the price of fuel been officially placed at N145, the value of US \$1 to Naira at an exchange rate of N350 and black market around N380-N400, human and other critical security issues so critical than now. Against the foregoing, this paper seeks to re-examine the nexus between the state and citizen in contemporary Nigeria using Social Contract theory. The paper observes that in spite of the fact that Nigeria is naturally endowed with abundant resources, it is unfortunate that its misdemeanor has placed state-citizen nexus in the country in its present state of quagmire. Instead of the state bearing the brunt of breaching the social contractual terms of giving the citizens adequate security, social well-being and happiness, it has shifted it to the citizens. This is a reversal situation in the opinion of the paper because, as it argues, citizens are freed from the contract when the state breaches it. However, from the backdrop of patriotism, the paper concludes that even when violent or non-violent civil disobedience were to be the reciprocal action of the citizens to the state in this context, violence should be avoided.

**Keywords:** Burden Bearer, Citizens, Citizen-State Nexus, Nigerian State, Social Contract.

### **Introduction**

On May 29, 2015, Nigeria witnessed a historic event that launched its name as one of the exemplary democratic States in Africa and even beyond. The fact that Nigeria never had such a memorable event where a sitting President was defeated by a candidate from an opposition party in a general election since independence underscores the fresh hopes and latent optimism nursed by the citizens on that 29th day of May, 2015 when President Muhammadu Buhari was sworn in as the sixth civilian President. This event climaxed the change mantra prevalent in the country for years. As such, it appears the citizens' hope for a better Nigeria had been realized. Regrettably, however, these beliefs encapsulated in their optimism seem to be a mirage. Presently, the price of a liter of fuel has moved from the pre-May 2016 price of N86.50k to N145.00k, value of \$1 dollar is officially N350, food prices transportation cost and electricity bill have also gone up. In addition to these hikes are exponential rise in other social problems already in existence. Thus, whereas Nwanegbo and Odigbo (2013) are of the view that Nigeria is presently rated as one of the poorest nations in the world with debilitating youths unemployment, the Vice President Yemi Osinbajo is emphatic that over 100 million Nigerians are still living below poverty line despite the policies of government to improve their welfare (Nwabughio, 2015). Osinbajo is also of the view that because past regimes' policies were not targeted to address the need of the people that is why they failed. Evidence of this can further be found in a situation where majority of the people lack access to adequate security, pipe borne water, health care facilities, electricity and affordable quality education. Stemming from the Vice President's view is the fact that the Nigerian State has not adequately fulfilled its core obligations to the citizens, a fact that is by the reality of rising

security challenges namely; Niger Delta militancy, Boko\_Haramism, Herdsmen/Farmers conflicts, kidnap cases as well as food insecurity.

Surprising however, is that after the Vice President's laudable observation and opinion in 2015, the current regime which he is second to the President is faced also with the challenge of rising unemployment in addition to all the above. For example, Nigeria Bureau of statistics has revealed that Nigeria unemployment rate reached 13.3% in the second quarter of 2016, up from 12.1% in the three months to March thereby reaching the highest level since 2009 (Trading Economics, 2016). The questions arising from the foregoing therefore are whether the citizens are the ones to bear the burden of the state in challenging times and whether the state should heap the consequences of its mis-governance and misdemeanor on the citizens as it is in Nigeria presently and even before. Also, if a state has failed largely to give its citizens adequate security, social well-being and happiness as encapsulated in the social contract, are citizens still obliged to be loyal, obedient and duty bound? These questions require urgent answers so as to save the Nigerian State from further crises and the impending civil disobedience that are legitimate but destructive. On this note, this paper analyzes the State – citizen nexus dilemma in Nigeria in order to remind the state of the need to fulfill its core obligations to the citizens, a step taken by most states in the world where citizens are enjoying better life, high self-esteem and relative domestic peace. It is structured to cover the following: introduction, conceptual analysis, methodology, theoretical frame work, citizens as burden-bearers of the Nigerian State's misdemeanor, state and citizen adjusting in challenging times: The debate, adjustment and growth in a changing Nigeria, conclusion/recommendation.

### **Methodology**

Being a qualitative research, the paper adopts historical and observational methods of inquiry. Historical method is associated with Machiavelli, Vico, Montesquieu, Savigny, Maine, Seeley and Freeman and stresses the use of historical evidence for a proper study of political phenomena (Johari, 2013). The implication is that the researcher needs historical evidence to build a relationship between distant occurrences, the present events and future predictions of what are likely to happen. The fact that this study takes root in history makes historical analytical method the chosen instrument of analysis. More so, since the subject of discourse is still evolving and many of us are participants in the events that are taking place in Nigeria, it therefore justifies observational method as a good fit for the work.

However, in spite of the limitations of the two methods, the ability of the researcher to combine them effectively is evidence of the interdisciplinary orientation of the paper. So the combination of facts from secondary and eye witness account makes the paper authentic and as such, an acceptable public document. For example it is already in common knowledge that Nigeria's economy has nose-dived and as a consequence, Nigerians are faced with so many challenges including high cost of fuel, electricity supply, non- payment of salaries etc. Based on the chosen methodology, the paper will be an invaluable resource for other researchers, institutions of governance, public policy makers and implementers, advocacy groups, politicians, and all and sundry.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This paper adopts social contract theory as a guiding framework. As one of the best theories that explain the origin of state, social contract theory gives an insight to the understanding of citizen – state or state-citizen nexus. In the main, social contract theorists like Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau believe that the State originated from some sort of agreement often called a "social contract" for the welfare of man and for the interest of all the members of the society. A government, according to these theorists, holds power by the consent of the governed alone and its legitimacy continues as long as the consent subsists.

When that consent is withdrawn there is no longer a justification for that government to remain Fajonyomi (2012).

However, John Locke's strand of the theory is adopted here because of its ability to capture social contract as a situation where citizens agree to organize government in order to regulate human conduct and as such agree also to surrender some of their inalienable right to the state which is obliged to protect and secure their lives in return. In the case of Nigeria where the state has failed to protect adequately the lives, property and liberty of its citizens, John Locke's view on this is that the citizens reserve the right to challenge its authority and if necessary, overthrow it, a condition which will make the citizens to still retain the supreme power, although latent, of hire and fire (Oji, 1997). To say the obvious, the theory which is of the view that both the state and citizen have reciprocal obligations for each other and that these obligations should be sacrosanct is the best in analyzing this paper. This is so because it does appear that the Nigerian State for long has been breaching social contractual terms and instead of striving to meet up with its responsibilities is further tasking the citizens to do more including what is part of its obligations. The fact that Nigeria's present challenges are hurting the majority of people the most goes a long way to give relevance to the choice of this theory. Therefore, keeping aside its limitations, the theory is timely chosen.

### **Conceptual Analysis**

#### **The Nigerian State**

There is no academic consensus that the concept of state has got one appropriate definition. As such, "if we can speak of the state at all, we must define it in terms of what is common to all states, while perhaps laying stress on those aspects which become more prominent in the process of historical development" (Johari, 2013:39). However, one of the most commonly used definitions of a state is that of Max Weber which describes the state as a compulsory political organization with a centralized government that maintains a monopoly of the legitimate use of force within a certain territory (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/>). Another commonly used definition is the one given at the Montevideo convention on Rights and Duties of states in 1933 which conceives state as a space that has the following: a permanent population, a defined territory and a government that is capable of maintaining effective control over the corresponding territory and of conducting international relations with other states ([http:// www.cfr.org/sovereignty/montevideo](http://www.cfr.org/sovereignty/montevideo)). By this definition, a state is a sovereign entity which holds supreme rule over its territory.

However, according to Kukathas (2008), to Karl Marx, state is an institution that embodies the conflict of interest found in the world rather than one reconciles competing interests. By this, Marx is of the opinion that the very essence of state existence is evidence that particularity has not been eliminated, and discrete interests have remained in destructive competition with one another. More specifically, this conflict remains manifest in the class divisions in society, and the state could never amount to more than a vehicle for the interests of the ruling class. Freedom will be achieved not when the state is fulfilled but when it is superseded.

By these definitions, the Nigerian State is a colonial creation which although was established on 1st January, 1914 through the instrumentality of Lord Lugard, its first Governor-General, became an independent sovereign state on 1st October, 1960. Nigeria as a state is located in West Africa and has boundaries with some neighbouring states like Benin, Niger, Cameroun and Chad, and has a government. As argued by Crowder (1973) although any country is, in a sense, an artificial creation, in the case of Nigeria, the British suddenly united peoples of differing social, political, cultural and economic groupings who already were aware that they were different from one another; a point that is captured in the common saying that Nigeria is

a mere geographical expression. To state the obvious, one of the inherited challenges from colonialism that still persists is this conscious fact that Nigerians are not one people but just peoples of one state in modern perspective. According to Omenka and Terkula (2016:63), that Nigeria is a multi-ethnic and culturally diverse society is an incontestable fact. The country is composed of peoples with diverse backgrounds. With over 250 distinct linguistic groups, Nigeria has been prone to the intense politicization of ethnic, cultural and religious differences.

Nwosumba (2011), in agreement with this fact, adds that these differences are mainly the causes of altercations and bifurcation that the Nigerian system is characterized with. This, as this paper stresses, is no doubt, influencing state-citizen relations in the country. The facts of inequitable distribution of public good among the peoples of the country, marginalization of some groups, cronyism, and hatred of some groups go a long way to underscore the foregoing point. All these are against the principles of social contract and prove that the Nigerian state is not obeying the laws of social contract to the letter. Instead of harmonizing all interests of the peoples, the Nigerian State still intensifies the antagonistic class contradictions implanted in the polity by the colonialists. The colonial state, as Onimode (1983) reveals, through its colonial economic policies and practices hinged on autocracy and merciless exploitation first personified these social contradictions by accelerating the decadence of the pre-colonial communal mode of production and reinforcing traditional class differentiations. This strategy therefore highlighted possessive individualism against communalism and introduced corruption as well.

The foregoing analysis therefore lends credence to Marxian theorization that state is an instrument of exploitation and oppression by one class over another (Johari, 2013). The sense arising from the picture therefore is that without the use of state power, the colonial state would not have achieved its ambition. In today's post-colonial state of Nigeria the scenario has remained, the difference is that it is no more a relation between an imperial power and its colonized state and its peoples but between a sovereign state and its citizens. The account in Akani (2002) confirms that the Nigerian post-colonial state and its institutions are still means for mindless corruption and primitive accumulation of wealth. The Nigeria State is also selfish. Observations on events in Nigeria are enough to further attest that the relationship between the state and citizen is lopsided and against the poor, vulnerable, less-privileged, deprived, opportune less and hopeless. The fact that many Nigerians belong to this group is not in doubt. More so, the notion surrounding this attestation is that the state has largely failed in its obligations to the citizen. This paper in one way or the other takes a balanced.

By and large, a comparative look at Nigeria and most states, especially the advanced, shall continue to prove that Nigeria is underdeveloped and so citizen-unfriendly. It has neglected its obligations to the citizens and rather heaped the consequences of underdevelopment namely, mass illiteracy, chronic poverty, endemic health challenges, mass unemployment, worsening food insecurity, national insecurity, chronic hunger and starvation on them. Its leadership is by every standard sanctimonious and so less-trusted by the majority of its citizenry. The Nigerian State in being and doing these has landed both the citizens and itself in a state of dilemma.

### **Citizen**

The term citizen is so common in the ears because it is an everyday word most often used for so many reasons. Although there might be different criteria for being a citizen according to states, there is a notion that a citizen is a legally recognized person, member or resident of a

state. In line with this, Mariam Webster (<http://www.meriam-webster.com/dictionary/citizen>) defines citizen thus:

- an inhabitant of a city or town; especially; one entitled to the rights and privileges of a free man
- a member of a state
- a native or naturalized person who owes allegiance to a government and is entitled to protection from it.

This explanation however brings the relevance of this paper to bear because in a situation where the citizens owe and pay allegiance to the state as in the case of Nigeria and sovereign power as adumbrated by John Locke is not retained by the same people simply means that the people are not free citizens. If by extension the meaning of the concept encompasses, in the main, that a citizen is entitled to the rights, and privileges of a free man, as well as the protection of the state which he owes and pays allegiance to, indicators available in Nigeria simply prove to a large extent, that Nigeria-State citizen contract needs to be reconstructed.

The reality of gross insecurity arising from 'bokoharamism', militancy, kidnapping, other forms of terrorism and their like suggests that the citizens are not free in their land. Unlike in the United States, Britain, China, Japan, for instance where state – citizen nexus is people – oriented and based, Nigeria has ostracized the citizens so much from having their entitlements – adequate security, social well-being and happiness, to mention the obvious. The consequences of this for Nigeria are further conflicts, crises and intense class struggle, a point which justifies the potentially testable proposition that sharp conflict is characteristic of polities in which emerging classes or strata denied political, social or economic rights struggle to achieve these rights (Dowse and Hughes, 1972). To buttress this point further, where as in Nigeria the government is not at home with public opinion as exemplified in the frustration of the recent Nigeria Labour Congress strike pertaining to the recent hike in oil prices, in the United States, "government was actually prevented from adopting a more conciliatory and flexible attitude towards the Soviet Union during the high period of the Cold War, by its apprehension about the domestic mass public" (Dowse and Hughes, 1972:274). The juxtaposition of realistic and surreal situations arising from this context implies therefore, that while one state is responsive to the voice of the citizens, one is high-handed and irresponsible the Nigeria state's high handedness is not hidden because it is a product of private appropriation of public resources for many years which also has made room for massive corruption. In state where high handedness is not the order of the day like the USA and most developed states, social contract is obeyed to a large extent. High handedness and breach of social contract in Nigeria has resulted to Nigeria being an unpredictable state.

As confirmed by Scholars, the welfare of the citizens and the material development of the nation seem to be moving in opposite directions, the rulers have failed to deliver the goods because of failing to understand that emphasis should be on the citizen qua citizen of Nigeria (Dudley, 1974; Amucheazi, 1980; Ike and Edozien, 2003). This type of relationship is presently generating a heated debate on state – citizen nexus (Oraegbunam, 2014; Fajonyomi, 2012). This paper however is a contribution to the debate.

#### **Citizens as Burden-Bearers of the Nigerian State's Misdemeanor**

Although state – citizen relations were established ab initio on the premise that reciprocity should be the guiding principle, in Nigeria, the state is almost insulated from the citizens hence the existence of "Nigerian brand of development," "brand of democracy," "Unique people and their unique ways of doing things and other such names of deceit. Oraegbunam (2014) in examining critically the state-citizen relations in Nigeria observes a breach of a social contract and inadequate realization of the classical purpose of a state. To buttress further, Oraegbunam itemized fundamental rights violations, insecurity, unemployment,

religious violence as some of the indicators of the breach. The study further identifies inefficient leadership, cult of mediocrity, corruption, religious intolerance, tribalism, unreliable judiciary and materialism as the root causes of the breach, anomalies that have double effect on the citizens, namely, lack of confidence on the state and general unpatriotic spirit. In accord with Oraegbunam is Agu (2016) who is of the opinion that due to the fact that benefits of democracy have not reflected in all manner of development indicators social discontent has pervaded the democratic space.

In explaining further, Jega (2010) refers to the period 1999 – 2010 when the return to civil rule just yielded stupendous dividends of democracy in terms of riches, power and prestige for only an exclusive and small group of elite and for the majority it has also, in the main, yielded poverty, disempowerment and frustration. As such, an overwhelming majority of citizens' hopes and aspirations nursed following the return to civil rule on 29th May, 1999, were dashed. Following from this, Nwosumba (2015) agrees with Jega that this is a situation where a formidable crisis of rising expectations had set in resulting to frustration, cynicism, pessimism as well as aggressive behaviours and violent tendencies especially among the youth. On ground, state – citizen relations in Nigeria further worsened. For the fact that fuel price hike from N86.50 to N145 in one month and Naira value to a dollar from N199 in June 2015 to N350 in May 2016 are now realities, it is therefore obvious that the majority of Nigerian citizens are bearing the brunt of Nigerian state's high handedness, breach of social contract and resource curse,

In addition, there is also hike in electricity bill, a shocking situation that is not justifiable following that the supply of electricity to the consumers has seriously reduced. This is contrary to what Electric Power Sector Reform (EPSR) Act 2005 mandates the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission, NERC, to do. NERC is empowered by the EPSR Act 2005 to ensure an efficiently managed electricity supply industry that meets the yearnings of Nigerians for stable, adequate and safe electricity supply (Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission, 2016). In concrete terms, this is a breach of contract. That state executives always have light whether there is hike in bill or vandalization of gas supply pipe lines or not goes a long way to prove that the Nigerian State is a non-respecter of the social contractual terms. Suffice it to say also that the majority of the citizens while suffering from electricity short supply and attendant income generations deprivation, the state is more interested in sapping them of the - savings and incomes they make from other means. For example, while the barbers, hairdressers, welders, and their like cry everyday for lack of adequate power supply, state executives, in fact, the Nigerian leadership is busy buying more state-of-the-art vehicles especially SUV, Prado Jeeps at exorbitant rates.

Taking a cursory glance at Nigeria, it is not hidden that the cost of food and food stuffs are escalating following the global food price rise, Nigeria's foreign exchange rate policies and other reforms. It is a known fact, that where as a bag of foreign rice was about N8,500 to N9,500 in November 2015, it is by June 2016 about N16,000 to N18,000. However government of the day in placing a defense on its reforms insists the aim of all these hikes is for the good of the people and the state, an insistence that tends to justify its policy changes that are hurting the poor the most. As it is now, there is no palliative mechanism on ground that is helping the masses cushion the negative consequences of these hikes and reforms. It is the view of the President Buhari led government that all these changes are the realities both the government and the governed must adjust to because in challenging times, things tend to change. This is an aspect of the change mantra.

In providing basic social services such as primary health, portable drinking water, education (especially primary education), social infrastructure like housing, schools, roads, ports,

telecommunications, electricity, railway and others, the Nigerian state has largely failed. More so, the state has not, as expected, ensured adequately the welfare of its citizens through job creation, provision of security (human, food, job etc.) equitable distribution of public basic goods and corrupt free society. By implications, what this means is that Nigeria's present state of quagmire is largely the consequence of this failure. The result however, is a reversal of the social contract that state owes it as a duty to do all the above and in addition give the citizens happiness. Contrarily, the Nigerian citizens are the burden bearers of the State's misdemeanor. This can be seen in the case of the Police, Road Safety Corps and now the Army whose personnel stand on Nigerian roads constructed with the citizens' paid taxes, wearing uniforms and identity cards as well as carrying guns bought by the State with people's taxes who instead of giving the tax payers adequate security and safe conditions, extort money from them. This is done publicly with every amount of impunity attached to the way and manner it is done. Thus it is the conviction of this paper that these personnel are corrupt and should also be prosecuted by the EFCC, ICP (acronyms used because their meaning are widely known) and their like. Logically, however, the extortion would not have been possible if not for the authority of the state. Aside the insignia of office mentioned above, especially the instruments of coercion, the personnel would have been ordinary citizens but for the fact that they represent the state, citizens are forced to obey. The point therefore is that rather than protecting the citizens, the State through this and other means coerces and militarizes the polity even in a democratic setting in the name of maintaining security.

In this same context, take another instance where a (commercial) commuter bus driver shares N500 at ten different security checkpoints, meaning N50 each checkpoint before reaching his destination, the possibility that he will increase the fares for passengers is there. Coupled with the hike in fuel prices, the cost of transporting humans and goods are meant to be hiked also. The far reaching implication of this kind of situation is astronomic rise in the prices of goods and services. In fact, when translated, it means hardship to the masses. This further hurts the citizens the more and makes them feel unhappy.

#### **State and Citizen Adjusting in Challenging Times: The Debate**

It is a compulsory situation that introduces itself both at individual and group levels that adjustment must come whenever there are challenges. That Nigeria is facing enormous challenges currently is not in doubt (Jamo, 2013, Udo, 2015; Agu, 2016). However, like in Great Britain during the great depression years (between the 1920s and 1930s), when adjustment became a necessity so it is in Nigeria today following the slump of the economy due to low oil prices in the international market as well as other domestic challenges mentioned severally in this work.

The argument arising from this background is whether the state – citizen nexus contracted at the establishment stage of state obligates the former to make adjustment weight to be too heavy for the later whenever there are challenges. In other words, should the state upon failing to manage the resources of the people well and failing in discharging its core responsibilities make the citizens to bear the brunt? The answer is no. This answer is based on the agreement by many that by social contract, men are conscious of the fact that the state has a rational purpose and that purpose is the promotion of social good on the largest possible scale (Odoziobodo, 2003). In other words, as Odoziobodo argues, where those in leadership positions exploit the obedience of their subjects to pursue goals which are at variance with the purpose of achieving the good life, which will not guarantee satisfaction to the largest possible members of the state, then the people can only call them to order by massively disobeying their directives or laws. Furthermore, the argument is that men obey the laws of

state because they hope that by so doing, those conditions which are germane to the realization of their rights, their own responsibilities and happiness would be provided and as such, becomes obvious that the state must endeavour to avoid or eliminate antithetical actions that can deter it from making their citizens enjoy these rights. In doing this, the state enjoys the full obedience and loyalty of the citizens. It is on this premise that Ike and Edozien (2003) assert that development is about people and business about ethics. By this, they are of the view that the economy is at the service of man, not man at the service of the economy meaning that all economics must be within the bounds of moral order. This, as they conclude, refers to the network of relations involving production, distribution, and consumption which are links of service between the brother-hoods of all people.

In a similar vein, Britain's social security system is seen by many as the main component of welfare in the state hence the name welfare state which Britain is known with. "The system of social security was first introduced in Britain in 1946 as part of the Beveridge reforms which created the Welfare State" (Moore, 1993:19) and Beveridge's argument is that the aims of the Welfare state should be to eradicate the five giants of disease, ignorance, squalor, idleness and want through government action. This argument was borne out of the inter-war years experience when there was world depression between the 1920s and 1930s. The depression led to some adjustments across the globe including Britain. So unlike the economic thinking of the 1930s that government spending should be decreased in order to solve economic depression, Beveridge followed Maynard Keynes argument that government should increase its spending when there is rising unemployment so that it can actually limit the amount of unemployment to recommend social security practice to the British governments in 1943 (Moore, 1993).

In other words, the British government in adopting the Welfare State system whereby it ensures to a large extent, the welfare of the citizens became and is still responsive to its citizens needs. Since the Beveridge's report, there have been important legislations and administrative changes that have been made. Some of them according to Moore (1993) include:

- National Insurance Acts of 1944 and 1946 which introduced National Insurance and created the Ministry of National Insurance.
- Family Allowances act 1945 (created the National Assistance Board.)
- National Insurance Act 1959 which introduced graduated pensions.
- National Insurance Act 1966 which introduced earnings – related benefits, which were withdrawn in 1982.
- Family Income Supplement Act 1970: the forerunner of family credit.
- Child Benefit Act 1975: Child Benefit replaced family Allowance and Income Tax Relief for children. Payable for all children including the first.
- Social Security Act 1986; introduced the first major changes in social security since 1948. The changes included introduction of income support, family credit and the social fund.
- Child Support Act 1991; came into effect in 1993. The Act required absent parents (usually fathers) to contribute to the maintenance of their children. This is adjustment and growth in a changing world. Britain lived up to the expectations and an aspiration of a majority of its citizenry is still trying. Social contract has been obeyed to a very large extent in the example cited above. By so doing, the citizens are loyal and patriotic. They pay their taxes promptly, do not vandalize public amenities and facilities, and hardly sabotage the state, very productive and ready to die for the course of state, corruptless, transparent, accountable and largely reliable. The

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examples in this section therefore prove to high degree that state-citizen nexus is based on reciprocity as it thrives without the former making the later to bear its burden in challenging times.

In accordance with the foregoing points, Crone (2011) in believing that although there are a number of barriers that prevent some social problems from being solved or at least slowed down, which include; power (one of the largest), vested interests, legitimation, redefining the social problem and disagreeing with social policy, nevertheless, opines that possibilities of solving them are available. This is what the British example here proves.

Against all these impediments, Britain was able to discharge its responsibilities to its citizens even in challenging times. This is not largely true in the case of Nigeria because the instance where an incumbent president redefines politics as “a-do-or-die-affair suggests that in order to control the affairs of the state, a leader can possibly sever the age-long citizen-state relations which border on reciprocity. Instead of giving the citizens adequate security and social well-being to attract their loyalty, obedience and patriotism in contrast Nigerian State hoodwinks and coerces the citizens to obey the order of the state already being redefined. The result among others is that citizens are compelled to adjust when the government in power compels them to do so. This is unjust.

However, while President Buhari’s led government is preaching adjustment from the former ways of doing things in Nigeria to a changed way, for instance seeking and taking medicare in Nigeria, producing and eating indigenous rice, studying and publishing in Nigeria, seeking and taking holiday in Nigeria etc, courses that promote local content, the President recently (in June, 2016) embarked on a 10 day medicare/holiday trip abroad (precisely London). The questions arising from these contrasting scenarios are thus; is anybody, governed or governing, above the law? In this sense, are Nigerian doctors not qualified and good enough to take care of their President? In fact if charity does not start from home who then will believe that the adjustment mantra of the present regime is meant to serve the interest of both the led and the leaders. These questions however underscore the views of Obadiah Mailafia that there is regulation anarchy in Nigeria in which regulations are not transparent, straight and so not fully and equitably carried out. Regulations are not even clear to say the obvious (NTA good morning Nigeria programme, 2016). This, as the analyst concludes is economic terrorism. From the foregoing analogy, it therefore becomes obvious that Nigerian citizens are bearing the brunt of the misdemeanor as government policies are forced on them even at their own detriment.

#### **Adjustment and Growth in a Changing Nigeria:**

Rethinking Social Contract from the analysis made so far it is acceptable to say that Nigeria is changing both in economic, political, social, cultural and religious fronts. That the state has largely failed to fulfill its obligations to the citizens that is, providing them with adequate security, social well-being and enabling opportunities is also not in doubt. These therefore implicate the obvious fact that while both the Nigerian State and its citizens are facing development dilemma, the State is largely to be blamed for breaching the social contractual terms to a large extent. Notwithstanding that a contract is a contract as is usually said, meaning that its terms must be obeyed by the contractor and contracted alike, the Nigerian scenario appears to the different. Nigeria as a state is represented by those in governance and as such can be agreed to be better than the mass of people who are in one way or the other ostracized from the main stream of governance and proceeds of good governance which include adequate security and social well-being. The consequences of these anomalies are heavy on the citizens who even are no more the custodians of state power. The situation

where the Nigerian Labour Congress could no longer carry-out a successful national strike in order to influence governmental decision as to reduce the recently hiked price of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) from N145.00 to N75 or even N100 shows that power does not belong to the citizens any longer. This changed relationship therefore calls for an adjustment on the side of the citizens in order to survive and grow. After all, it is only lifeless or immobile objects that perceive imminent danger to their lives and stay without seeking for safety and/or survival, for human beings, adjusting to the exigency of the moment is most likely.

This paper is not thinking of this adjustment from a negative viewpoint rather it is from a positive, dynamic and futuristic perspective. It is thinking that certain coping mechanisms and strategies can go a long way in cushioning the heavy negative impacts of failure of development in Nigeria on the people while they wait patiently as the state leaders urge and pray for the time when the government can deliver the public good promised always.

Civil disobedience would have been the best option to fight for a redress since Labour Union's peaceful strike has failed but for the fact that the government of the day is adducing so many reasons why things are so bad in the country and promising a better tiding for the citizens in no distant time, there is need that citizens should tarry awhile with the belief that after all, for every democratic government to worth its salt, it must strive to give contentment and satisfaction to the greatest number of its citizens (Odoziobodo, 2003). It is through this means that government can control the citizens' loyalty and obedience which correlatively attract support and legitimacy for the authority. On the other hand, if the government fails in its obligations citizens have the legitimacy of civil disobedience. This implies that both governments and the citizens may, under some circumstances, resort to violence (Dowse and Hughes, 1972). Yet, for the reason that civil disobedience must have a political undertone as Odoziobodo (2003) stresses, it has the propensity of being violent and so should be avoided now that Nigeria is facing a lot of challenges that are capable of putting it on the precipice of collapse.

Some may argue that this paper is suggesting the unlikely following the Nigerian historical antecedents where the leaders' sanctimonious character has proved to be continuously present in all leaderships and governments be they military or civilian, a situation which has made the majority of Nigerians not to trust the promises of their leaders. Following this, it will be difficult for violence to be avoided in Nigeria since it is clear that violence is only one of a range of methods of making the feelings of the ruled known and aggressive behaviour one of a range of responses to frustration (Dowse and Hughes, 1972). This argument underscores the fact that since the Nigerian leaderships and governments are susceptible to promise and fail it is most likely that aggression and violence may not be avoided entirely. These seem to contradict the position of the paper that citizens should avoid violent forms of redress and seek for adjustment in order to grow but that is not so because the fact that changes are dynamic, citizens may trust the government of the day and wait.

After all before the presidential election victory of President Barack Obama of the United States of America, most people never believed that an African American could achieve that in a country where the non-African politicians had for long, dominated the political scene. Also, the recent electoral revolution in Nigeria where a sitting President (Goodluck Jonathan) was defeated by an opposition candidate (now President Muhammadu Buhari) suffices that politics actually is an art of the possible. Lending credence to this fact, the paper rather believes that while the citizens are waiting, they must explore other peaceful means through which they can seek for redress. Such means include organizing peaceful rallies, meeting the

government representatives, letter writing and other means. More so, while waiting, citizens must find ways of coping with the challenging time in the country.

However, since the survival of social contract is predicated on the principle of reciprocity, the Nigerian government should remember that some of the reasons why citizens obey state laws and cooperate with it are because of what they stand to gain and the fact that for men to attain justice in their state, it is imperative that they must obey the laws of their state” (Odoziobodo, 2003:16). The point here is that while the citizens await the time the public good would be delivered as advised above, the Nigerian government is also advised to adjust its priorities and make sure it does not disappoint the mass of the people any longer. Elsewhere in the paper, the United States and Britain examples have shown that a responsible and responsive government even in challenging times can respect the social contract laws. Government can only achieve this through responsible, responsive, accountable and transparent leadership. This is in other way round what many refer to as good governance. Good governance is an antonym of bad governance and so should be entrenched into the Nigerian system. The Nigerian State can only be agreed to have redeemed its obligations when insecurity of lives and property, massive unemployment, exponential poverty, worsening food insecurity and a host of other development challenges are drastically reduced to the barest minimal level. Once happiness, sense of protection, high self-esteem return to the majority of Nigerians, only then can the State’s adjustment programmes bring development and growth to the polity. So, what Nigeria needs is integral development which “must cater for the whole human person, and encompass the people of the nation as a whole” (Ike and Edozien, 2003:4). Before this can happen the citizens must learn how to cope with the challenges.

### **Conclusion/Recommendation**

From convincing evidence, it is indicative that citizen-state or state-citizen relations in Nigeria are in a dilemma. However, the situation where the Nigerian state has largely failed in discharging its core obligations calls for a re-think of what is to be done. As has severally been argued that the failure of the State to provide the citizens with basic socio-economic imperatives or normative social objectives namely; the primary and secondary imperatives of the state can make citizens seek for redress in the form of civil disobedience whether violent or non-violent. On the contrary, Ogbonna-Nwaogu, Okereke and Bello (2009) quoting the Nigerian constitution are of the view that the redress can be in court. However while this could obtain in a place where the state respects the rule of law greatly, in Nigeria it appears to be more difficult because of endemic corruption, class cleavages, ethnic and religious interests and other external factors. This further underscores the reasons for the state-citizen nexus dilemma in Nigeria since 56 years of its statehood. To this end, there is need for adjustment.

Since change is inevitable in the world, adjustment and growth are also inevitable. This is so because for one to lead an effective and fulfilling life, the person must adjust and grow (Napoli, Kilbride and Tebbs, 1988). This by extension is also applicable to the state. This is concerned with the practical application of psychological, socio-cultural and economic principles. On the part of the government, there is need for reciprocity that is to say that government should also become more frugal, accountable, thrift in spending and as well be responsive to the yearnings of the citizens who are presently, as always, bearing the burden of the Nigerian State misdemeanor. This is to avoid the violent reactions of the citizens in the mean time. To this end, selfish and myopic interests of over ambitious individuals and groups which have affected so negatively the citizen-state nexus in Nigeria should be expunged from

our polity. This is a reminder that patriotism and loyalty are the responsibilities of the citizens to the state, a situation which can only be engendered by a strong and confident leadership that fulfils states obligations to the citizenry.

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