

NATIONALITY, CITIZENSHIP AND CORRUPTION

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ABSTRACT

Our discussion centres on Nationality. Citizenship and Corruption. According to Eyo (1997) the word Nationality stems from the Latin verb "nasci" (to be born) and it originally means a group of people (born in the same place. A portion of mankind may be said to constitute a Nationality if they are united among themselves by common sympathies. which do not exist between them and any others which make them cooperate with each other people, desire to be under the same government by themselves exclusively. Thus, a Nigerian. citizen is an individual who has full political and legal rights in a state. Ayida (1990) emphasized that citizenship can be defined as membership of a given state or a nation. Nigeria is a multi ethnic and multi cultural society with citizens of different ethnic and cultural back grounds. Hence, current evidence in Nigeria shows that there is corruption everywhere. Corruption in Nigeria occurs in different degrees and Forms among individuals and groups for reasons best known to them. However most individuals and groups encourage corruption as a result of prevailing value system in Nigeria. Some individuals and groups who engage in corruption make use of ethnic and citizenship advantage positions. Thus, there is need for this work on Nationality, Citizenship and Corruption.

Key words: Nationality. Citizenship and Corruption.

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CONCEPTUAL AND OVERVIEW

NATIONALITY.

According to Haralambos and Halborn (2004) Nationality has to do with membership of country by a person. To Wallerstein (1991) the term nationality is ideological and it is used to imply something about a group of people's past and to suggest how they should behave now. Thus, a group which is persuaded that it is a nation group may take action to secure its own state.

Individuals usually seem to identify more with their nation than with any other grouping as the case in Nigeria. A nation is supposed to be a socio-political category linked somehow to the actual or potential boundaries of a state. Castle (2000) defines a nation as a cultural community of people who believe that they have a common heritage and a common destiny.

CITIZENSHIP.

According to castle (2002) citizenship involves the possession of certain rights as a result of being recognized as a member of a particular state. He emphasized that in a well integrated nation - states the national (who identifies with the community) and the citizen (who possesses social and political rights in the territory) may be combined.

Nwankwo (1990) emphasized that a citizen is an individual who has full political and legal rights in a state (by birth, naturalization, marriage, registration etc). The state has the right to make rules to governing membership. In case of the state, membership is known as citizenship. Therefore, citizenship can be defined as membership of a given state. Furthermore, citizenship is term by which we express the status of individuals who possess full political and legal rights in a state.

WAYS OF ACQUIRING CITIZENSHIP

According to Nwankwo (1990) citizenship may be acquired through the following ways:

1. **By Birth:** the commonest way in which individuals acquire citizenship of a state is by been born to parents who are citizen of that state. Eg I am a Nigerian because my parents are citizens of Nigeria.
2. **By Naturalization:** this is a voluntary process by which an individual can opt out of membership of one state and into membership of another state. Some countries however, do not recognize the right of individual to renounce his citizenship of that state and so you may find occasional confused circumstances where a man may be the citizen one country according to the laws of that country and the citizen of another country under the

laws of the other. In such a case, the citizen concerned is said to possess dual citizenship. Nigeria for instance, does not allow dual citizenship.

3. By registration: citizenship may be acquired by registering the birth of a child according to the law of the state, where he/ she is born and where the parents are resident but not national of the state. The child whose birth is so registered becomes a citizen of that state by registration.
 4. By Confirmation: (Honorary Award): This type of citizenship is confirmed on an alien /non indigene) by the government of the awarding state, probably because the recipient had distinguished himself or herself in a manner commendable to the government of the state concerned. Brazil conferred honorary citizenship to Nelson Mandela when ^{he} was in prison because of his strong courage and determination to free his people from ^{the} apartheid regime in South Africa.
 5. By Marriage: On becoming married, for example, a woman may acquire the citizenship of her husband. For instance, if an American woman is married to a Nigerian man, she would automatically become a Nigerian citizen by marriage.
 6. By conquest: citizenship may be change by conquest for example, the French subjects who lived in Quebec became British subjects in the mid- eighteenth century as a result of the conquest of Canada by Britian. This means that if a state is conquered by another state, the conquered state might be forced to take up the citizenship of the conqueror or the conquering state. Citizenship acquire in this way is said to be by conquest.
- Citizenship may be changed and loss by renunciation: Illegal acquisition of dual citizenship, Government withdrawal of confirmment & deep involvement in criminal &subversive acts.

RIGHTS OF CITIZENS

According to Igbo (1997) rights are certain basic conditions of happiness which an individual must enjoy in order to live a satisfactory social life. The ^{sum}total of these rights is what we call civil liberty. Citizenship confers certain rights on the individual, and imposes certain duties. According to Nwakwo (1990) the rights of citizens are divided into:- (A) social rights.(B) economic rights, (C) political and (D) legal rights.

(A)SOCIAL RIGHTS

The social rights of a citizen are:- (i) Right to Education. (ii) Right to Association. (iii) Freedom of Religion/ Conscience. (iv) Freedom from discrimination on the basis of sex, tribe or religion. (v) Right to Life.

(B) ECONOMIC RIGHTS

Some of the economic rights of a citizen include:- (i) Right to own Property. (ii) Right to pursue any business allowed by the law. (iii) Freedom from the compulsory

acquisition of one's property except with adequate compensation. (iv) Freedom to work and earn a salary.

(C) POLITICAL RIGHTS

(i) Right to Vote. (ii) Right to be voted for (to stand election) (iii) Freedom to be appointed and to hold any political or public office. (iv) right to form a political association or a political party as may be directed under the law.

(D) LEGAL RIGHTS

Some of the legal rights of citizens are:- (i) Freedom of access to the law courts. (ii) Freedom from subjection to torture or other inhuman or degrading treatment. (iii) Freedom from slavery or forced labour. (iv) Freedom from deprivation of personal liberty except in accordance with the law. (v) Respect for private and family life and for private correspondence. (vi) Freedom of expression. (vii) Freedom of movement. The individuals were given civil rights by the law which is protected in the constitutions by the Habess corpus acts of 1979

DUTIES AND OBLIGATION OF A CITIZENS/ INDIVIDUALS OF A STATE

Duties are responsibilities of citizens which they have to carry out because they enjoy rights and liberties provided and protected by the law of the state. Unless the citizens perform these duties and obligations, the government will breakdown, and their rights would therefore be invalid. Legal duties of a citizen include :- (i) Obedience to laws. (ii) Payment of taxes. (iii) Defending the country. (iv) Services to the nation as a Juror/witness in the court/NYSC.

CORRUPTION

At present, Nigeria is facing acute and chronic problem of corruption. Corruption according to Umez (2000) is dishonesty, an immoral behaviour. According to Clark (2001) corruption is said to have taken place when the participant follows what would be termed unacceptable ways. Clark (2001) emphasized that corruption while being tied particularly to the act of bribery, is a general term covering misuse of authority as a result of considerations of personal gain, which need not be monetary.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.

It is the position of this work that it is possible to analyse and understand nationality, citizenship and corruption in Nigeria from conflict perspective because corruption in Nigeria is a Mark of exploitation of the masses by the few minority. In this act, individuals and groups used various dubious ways in cheating and exploiting the others.

CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA ON THE BASIS OF NATIONALITY AND CITIZENSHIP

According to Igbo (1997) Nigeria is a multi ethnic and multi cultural society. With an estimated 250 ethno linguistic groups. Some of these groups are larger than the others. The major ethnic groups consist of the Hausa Fulani in the North, the Yoruba in the west, and the Igbo in the east. Other lesser but prominent ethnic groups include the Tiv, the middle belt, the Edo in the mid-west and the Efik, Ibibio and the Ijaws in the East. These ethnic groups always feel cheated, neglected and marginalized and consequently each ethnic group see themselves as we and others as there and corruption in Nigeria more or less takes the same line.

What is certain is that Nigeria is currently experiencing corruption. There is corruption everywhere in Nigeria. Each ethnic group, tribe, and individual engages in corruption practices in order to favour their members and enrich themselves and the individuals for his selfish personal interest. The leaders in various positions of authority favour only their brothers and sisters, and those from their areas and ethnic groups.

The federal and state governments are ~~not doubt~~ fully aware of the seriousness of various corrupt practices in Nigeria by emphasizing their negative impact on national development. Also the government is fully aware of the complaints and feelings of various communities, states, ethnic groups and individuals, large or small on the issue of corruption. To this end, some policy measures have been introduced in Nigeria in order to curb corruption but like other well meaning policies, they have been abused and human rights are violated and denied in Nigeria.

There are high incidences of human rights abuse and denials. According to Igbo (1997), the Nsukka analyst 1994 pointed out that the major ethnic group as well as the minorities have at one time or the other cried for justice and fair play in the distribution of nation's economic resources and political power. On the political front, the Nsukka analyst argued that since the end of the civil war, unlike the Hausa Fulani and Yoruba, the Igbo have not had a decent share federal cabinet posts. It argued that whenever an Igboman occupies a position of consequence, he is removed either ignominiously or through bribery and corruption or through a military coup.

Similarly, on employment, persons are employed on the basis of their ethnic linkages and where you come from and not on the basis of qualifications. In this case, the most qualified persons are dropped on the ground of coming from one ethnic group or the other and if he / she cannot give bribe. In some states like Enugu, Anambra etc. there is issue of indigene and non indigene in employment. If you are working and you are not a citizen of such state the government will disengage you and request you to go and work in your state of origin. In some cases, the worker has to engage in bribery and corruption in order to either retain his/her job or secure new job in the state of origin.

CONCLUSION

Nigeria is where it is today ^{because} ~~be~~ of corruption. One of the major factors why Nigerians are corrupt is the prevailing value system in the country. Nigeria has value system that encourages corruption. According to Ogbeama (2004) this value system creates dishonesty, free rider mentality, disobedience to law and disregard of experts opinion within the general public. According to Umez (2001) most importantly it produces at the general level, a corrupt mass and corrupt and inept leadership which ultimately misappropriate public funds, thereby creating problems of development . Both leaders and the led are basically the Same given the value system that trains them.

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