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Development and Disillusionment: Industrial Progress and Nigerian Realities in Gimba's *Letter to the Unborn Child* and *Oh! Uhud, Thy Haunting Spirit*

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Abstract

Asia has been one of the most dynamic region with renown rapid economic growth and development in recent times. In the past few decades, several developing economies in As a continent, Asia has unanimously transformed their economies and are acknowledged as newly industrialized economies through science, technological researches and innovations. Countries like Singapore, South-Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, China, Malaysia, Japan, India among others are recently acknowledged as the key 'Giants' in the global economies in foreign markets. However, Africa has derailed from this competitive industrialization drive due to self-made socio-political irregularities such as misappropriation of funds, embezzlement and non-implementation of workable policies which are the bedrock of economic development setback. This unenviable trend has been blamed for the unimaginable escalation of endemic poverty, hardship and stagnant growth and development especially in Nigeria. This study aims at revealing how literature captures the industrial outputs in Africa against their Asian counterparts through Abubakar Gimba's Letter to the Unborn Child and Oh Uhud,Thy Haunting Spirit. bearing in mind the economic and socio-political disparities of India and Nigeria and their recent state of development. The choice of postcolonialism as the theoretical mooring in this study gives an experiential impact of colonial subjugation. This therefore presents a comprehensive framework aimed at scaling-up industrial and developmental policies in Nigeria that will borrow largely from the newly industrialized economies in Asia. In conclusion, intercontinental collaborations and knowledge transfer in trade, science and technology should be encouraged for rapid development and industrialization. More so, the political leaders should acknowledge the historical depth of Asian, and replicate it in Nigeria and Africa at large.

Keywords: *Asia; Challenges; Development; Disillusionment; Industrial Success; and Nigeria.*

1.0 Introduction

The ceaseless quest for innovation in science and technology has push many continents, nations and individuals into researches for solutions to natural and man-made problems. With conscious effort, continents like Asia has become a global center of manufacturing during the last quarter of the 20th Century. This consistent growth has earned it a great success within an unimaginable time frame. The developing economies of Asia had aspirations of seemingly Icarian heights: to close, in a single generation, the huge gap in industrial development that detached them from their old colonial masters. This feat was to be achieved against the tides of rapid population growth and persistent trade deficits without the benefits provided to the earlier industrialized countries by colonial possessions. With the numerous

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economic challenges in Asian countries, there was a general awareness for the industrialization of these nations after the World War II as well as the political independence granted to some of these then colonized nations. The industrializations are expected to improve productivity of labour and income of the people which leads to a higher standard of living and in turn, results in further industrialization. Harry Johnson suggests that the "industrialization involves the organization of production based on the principles of specialization and division of labour among enterprises as well as within them, necessitated by as well as resulting in the application of new technology, mechanical and electrical energy to maximize returns and minimize per unit cost of production" (119). The industrialization involves those basic changes that may accompany the mechanization of enterprises, the building of a new industry, the opening of a new market and the exploitation of a new territory for economic expansion. These conscious efforts have brought about the economic development of the nations in Asia.

Although used often by Economists, the concept of 'industrialization' has existed in the West for centuries. Words like 'Modernization', 'Westernization', and especially 'Industrialization' are alternative terms frequently used while discussing economic development. Whereas economic development is a policy intervention endeavor aiming to improve the well-being of people which results to economic growth - a phenomenon of market productivity and rise in GDP. Amartya Sen explains that "economic growth is one aspect of the process of economic development" (746). With many ideas from scholars, the precise definition of economic development has been contested. While economists in the 20th century viewed development primarily in terms of economic growth, sociologists emphasized on the broader processes of change and modernization. In Karl Seidman view, he suggests that economic development is "a process of creating and utilizing physical, human, financial, and social assets to generate improved and broadly shared economic well-being and quality of life for a community or region" (5). Although, Daphne Greenwood and Richard Holt try to extricate economic development from economic growth on the foundation that economic development is a "broadly based and sustainable increase in the overall standard of living for individuals within a community" (3), and the measures of growth such as per capital income do not automatically relate with improvements in quality of life. Economic development is then a wider concept and has qualitative dimensions. Then, it is assumed that economic development implies economic growth plus progressive changes in certain important variables which determine well-being of the people, for example: health, education.

With the competition in industrialized nations, scholars have argued that development is closely bound up with the evolution of capitalism and the demise of feudalism in contemporary times. Other scholars however have linked development to the postcolonial

state of these developing nations. Perhaps, this is the reason why Mansell and Wehn opinion that "economic development has been understood since the World War II to involve economic growth, namely the increases in per capita income, and the attainment of a standard of living equivalent to that of industrialized countries like Asia" (95). That is why Alexander Gerschenkron argued that "the less developed the country is at the outset of economic development (relative to others), the more likely certain conditions are to occur" (456). Hence, all countries do not progress similarly. From the 1940s to the 1960s, the state played a large role in promoting industrialization in developing countries following the idea of modernization. This period was followed by a brief period of basic needs development focusing on human capital development and redistribution in the 1970s. The neoliberalism emerged in the 1980s pushing an agenda of free trade and removal of import substitution industrialization policies.

Evidently, the Asian nations, who have infrastructure-based development, that systematic long-term government investments in transportation, housing, education, and healthcare are necessary to ensure sustainable economic growth in emerging countries. The economic growth at this point deals with the increase in the level of output, while economic development is related to the increase in output and evident improvement in social and political welfares of people within a country - a resultant of the Intra-Asian Trade even with the Western countries, which serves as an agent of industrialization. This is where Asia particularly charter for the regional specific challenges, thus, positively influencing the economic development of her people which encompasses both growth and welfare values.

With the variations in developmental pursuit, African countries like Nigeria is lagging behind unlike their Asian counterparts. Over the years, African nations lack to create developmental policies that will help bring about physical growth of the nation. Even in an effort to strive like other nations of the world, they find it difficult to implement policies that can birth a rapid economic growth and attract international investors to Africa. This is because nearly all nations in Africa, play politics in every national affair. An instance is seen in the attempt to export 72 tonnes of yam from Nigeria to Europe and America in June, 2017 but failed as the produce arrived their destinations in a bad shape. It is evident that Africa and Nigeria specifically, lack infrastructural facilities, quality control and export processing structure for such perishable goods. In Anna Okon's interview with Dr. Vincent Nwani, an economist, he reveals that it "takes Nigeria 33 signatures and 23 agencies to get exports out" (Okon 19). The regional integration has been on arms-length and has affected member nations accordingly.

In Nigeria, the economic challenges have created a high level of poor industrialization with its resultant poor economic growth and development. The standard of living in the country has drastically depreciated with a large number of the populace living a life close to misery. These national specific socio-economic cum developmental challenges have attracted criticism from renown writers over the years. Writers such as Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Tanure Ojaide, Sefi Attah, Chimamanda Adichie, Tony Kan, Nnoyelum Mba, Kingsley Asoronye, Jimmy Akoh, Abubakar Gimba, as well as these researchers among others. Achebe in A Man of the People decries of the misappropriation of the public fund by our greedy politician. Chief Nanga is used to reveal the roles politics in the development of a society as he gambles with the nations resources to his gain. Similarly, in Vicky Sylvester Mnguember's The Cabals and the Naked Dance, she gives a summary of how badly managed the Nigerian politicians mortgaged the nation. Thus, one sees the very root of the nation's economic underdevelopment from their electoral process, to countless rigging and bribery. In like manner, Adichie in Americanah reveals how young Nigerians struggle to leave the country for a greener pasture abroad. The news from returnee attest to the unending quest for one to leave for countries that add value to live in Asia and Europe. Then, the questions are simple: What is the industrial miracle behind rapid development of Asia? What is preventing development in Nigeria? The answers to these questions bring us back to the drawing table presented in Abubakar Gimba's Letter to the Unborn Child and Oh Uhud,Thy Haunting Spirit under study.

2.0 Theoretical Mooring

The selected theoretical mooring for this study is the postcolonial theory. Postcolonial is a Mid-20th century theoretical phenomenon that aims at revealing the human "interactions, through description, narration, and dramatization of European nations, and the peoples they colonized. It has been highly defined on historical, identical, ethnic, gender, and language issues. It focuses mainly on racial and racist relations" (Amina 19) of the colonized and the colonizer in recent times. Post colonialism gives account of the historical space of man within self-rule. But as a theory that swayed high after colonialism, post colonialism served as a two pronged word which could be used to describe the state of being of a society or entity that has come out from certain imperialism. That means that the society or entity is neither in its original state, nor has it assumed the full identities of its erstwhile imperial power. Therefore, it is more or less an evolving entity.

However, the concept of postcolonialism applies to the term describing the theoretical framework that provides a feature framework for the state of being of states, nationalities and entities deriving from the outcomes of the imperial experience. Thus, it tries to "re-examine

the history of colonialism from the perspective of the colonized to among other issues, participate in the goals of political liberation; having certain common characteristics such as diaspora, transnational migration and internationalism" (Habib 197). The history of the colonized forms the yardsticks for the analysis of the coexistence of both the colonized and the colonizer. Though it is certain that there is a transfer of traits between the duo especially from the colonizer, which may come in form of "ideological influence that has compelled the settled to accept the ideals of colonizers and that on the other hand, it has supported colonial resistance to its oppressors" (Tyson 418). The ideological traits tend to guide the formally colonized in order to present himself before the colonizer as civilized, thereby gradually erasing the socio-cultural traits he is known for. In this regard, the formerly colonized persons; which constitute the population subjected to the political domination of another 'superior' population, is faced with the colonial mentality which is deliberately "compelled on the settlers to embrace the notion of the superiority and the inferiority of the settler. This ideology has resulted in people known as the colonial subject, who have not resisted colonial subjugation" (Tyson 421). It is on this note that Abubakar Gimba's Letter to the Unborn Child and Oh! Uhud are reviewed.

3.0. The Development and Industrialization Lessons for Nigeria in Abubakar Gimba's Letter to the Unborn Child and Oh! Uhud, Thy Haunting Spirit

The independence of Nigeria gave the citizens the aspiration of rapid growth and development. Taking the nation out of the shackles of colonialism, the dream of self-rule by our Heroes part was for a better Nigeria as efforts were made to bring to light the undermined and untapped resources in Nigeria. However, even in the present, the challenges of Nigeria still count down to the basic social amenities such as good water, power, good health care and others. The healthcare for instance has for long been neglected and in some cases, unequipped. This has led the populace to seek for good medical care in developing countries of Asia with "…the possibility of your mother boarding a plane, to some more hospitable clinic that have attained some affluence and success in bringing a high degree of contentment to their people…" (Gimba "Letter…"14). This medical tourism was has increased due to the deliberate negligence of our health care facilities over the years. Thus, medical tools of the ancient part are still in used by the poor mass, while the affluent, board planes to Asia for good care.

Similarly, the narrator reveals that his medical adventure to India is on medial "admission into the Apollo International Hospital Indraprastha, New Delhi, India, was different" (Gimba "Letter…" 5) from what is obtainable in Nigeria. This great developmental variation in the health sectors of India and Nigeria is unimaginable and has made one to wonder the what

our resources are used for. According to the Gimba, the unfortunate environment of Nigeria has brought him to India as a refugee seeking for aid of any sort "… thus I became a refugee, a medical refugee and a victim of my motherland's governance and social environment" (Gimba "Oh! Uhud…" 31).

As such, the quest for greener pastures encourage massive migration of people like Nigerians to a particular part of the world and the "eventual settlement of Nigerians in host countries in diaspora" (Gimba "Letter…" 15). The migrants tend to set up a home, inter-marry and procreate disregarding the cultural and ethnic differences. In diaspora, the "children are delivery into dual nationality" (Gimba "Letter…" 14). All these are causative of the poor state of Nigeria with "the lazy atmosphere of ...frightens me Though" (Gimba "Letter…" 16). That is why Gimba compares the condition of Nigeria to "a parable, a case of paradise lost, only to be found in a parasites' den" (Gimba "Letter…" 18) while the counterpart India is on its world game.

It is unfortunate that a country like Nigeria and a self-acclaimed "Giant of Africa" still struggles in every sector of the economy. The bad governance and deliberate misappropriation of fund by relevance authorities have hampered the growth of the country. The numerous blessings of the nation such as varying mineral resources and "…the men, money and materials to reach for the skies, and partake in adorning ourselves with almost all the treasures are there, but instead, we remain earth-bound at an accelerating speed, like a failed space rocket condemned to an inglorious end" (Gimba "Letter…" 19). No wonder Chinua Achebe attested to this in a judgmental finality that the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. Here, he reveals the unwillingness and inability of African leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal example which are the hallmarks of true leadership.

The leadership problem is promoted by the actions of other sectors of the society who are entrusted with responsibilities of providing social and public services. These individuals include "the nurses, pharmacists, doctor and health sector workers… Many a public office holder, high or low, are in the practice, through some are more adept at it than others. The office aides or assistants do it. The clerks do it. Staff of the registry and accounts department of institutions do it. So do the police, the customs, the immigration departments, schools, and even the military" (Gimba "Letter…" 28). These individuals who have been acknowledged for their intellectual pedigrees, invariably misuse the privileges accorded to them in overseeing the public affairs.

It becomes a disgrace for Africa, unlike other developing nations of Asia, who have reached the economic steps to "descend from mountain top, to avoid a disgraceful tumble…" (Gimba "Letter…" 28). Undoubtedly, this reveals the industrial strength of Africa among nations of the world. Like Asia who shoulder their developmental responsibilities and face their economic, social, politics obstacles, Africa has "shun theirs and circumvent them ...walk back or flee from the obstacles" (Gimba "Letter…" 53). These responsibilities and obstacles are the ugly realities today which politician capture as campaign agendas. The comparison of Nigeria to India is glaringly undisputable. Although not perfect, India and her people are more "industrious, humble, and unassuming… even if not giant strides that made Nigeria such an embarrassment, a frustration, a great disappointment and an anguish" (Gimba "Oh! Uhud…" 35-36). This could have prompted President Muhammadu Buhari's opinion in 2017 that Nigerian youths are lazy. But till date, little has been done to boost the developmental space of Nigeria. Statistically, India has nearly ten times the population size of Nigeria, "the political accountability of India seemed quite admirably different from Nigeria" (Gimba "Oh! Uhud…" 37). This evidently accounts for the rapid development as politicians always bear in mind of record keeping, which limit their selfishness and corrupt practices.

In science and technology, India has tremendously focused on making herself a recommendable world class. Their technological inventions compete with other nations' and have recently joined the league of nations in the production of military arms and ammunitions. That is why "it is a nuclear power, a product of its citizens. It has missiles in drones. And it is deeply, with credibility, into space exploration" (Gimba "Oh! Uhud…" 40). As such, these rapid growth has earned India great international respect which is in sharp contrast to Nigeria, which is unable to "produce even its own car after many years of assembly factories that have now decayed away and had all the while been managed by foreigners. We launched a satellite project by contract far from our shores" (Gimba "Oh! Uhud…" 40). The developmental gap is ridiculous. Like India, the Nigerian roads, airspace and waterways are in mockery states. According to Gimba, a very sharp contrast to Nigeria's premier Airport "the Murtala Muhammed International Airport… In comparison to Delhi, sounds ridiculous, if not laughable" (Gimba "Oh! Uhud…" 41). The structures and facilities of Murtala airport is decaying and falling apart, while other nations in Asia are improving especially in Hydroelectric power generation to power such facility without any interruption.

Notably, one of Nigeria's developmental problem is data collection and availability. That is why real development had eluded us due to hunch and calculations of individual political position and satiation of personal greed. The resultant effect in Nigeria is the "mass poverty just as we do: the streets of New Delhi are lined with homeless poor Indians, just as the streets of Lagos, Kano, Ibadan… with 173.6 million people? The comparative figure of India's

population of 1.255 billion… China with a population of 1.355 billion" (Gimba "Oh! Uhud…" 69). These Asian nations have transformed into nations that have written its name among the leading economics of the world, regardless of their population. With great determination, focus, and appropriate data, "India has earned for itself laurels of respect and honour in the comity of nations" (Oh! Uhud… 68). While Nigeria, like other African nations, receives the "due courtesy from other Nations out of fear of any disrespect that could be pinned on them as racial discrimination or sheer rudeness to the nation of the largest population of black people on earth" (Gimba "Oh! Uhud…" 69). The due respect shown to Nigeria romances the ego against the industrial realities against them.

In this regard, good planning becomes a determinant to the transformation that has turned Asian nations into beautiful paradises. India's stride skywards with "its enviable I.T mastery and its focus and other principles of planning to which that country adhered to" (Gimba "Oh! Uhud…" 73). It becomes evident that the miracles in India, Malaysia, China among other Asian nations is due to the single-mindedness of these countries' political leadership and economic planning. Thus, their meteoric exit from backwardness to the Second World countries contrast the Nigerian regressive developmental ladder "perhaps to the Tenth World" (Gimba "Oh! Uhud…" 76). This calls for quick attention so as to remedy the situation of Nigeria. The leadership and its policies should be redressed as no country would attain a greater height without these structures uncared for. Literature as a mirror to the society capture these social problems as a material of fiction but calls for positive change as prescribed by the Abubakar Gimba.

Conclusion

The issue of development and industrialization is at a timing pace globally in the last two centuries. In Asia, it came as a result of the diffusion of modern technology and its likes from the Western Europe. But in Africa, there is a retarded growth even after independence which coincides with that of some nations in Asia. Evidently, the problems have risen to an unbearable state which calls for urgent action as in the case of Nigeria. The individual sectors of the government are on a deplorable state, while the policies of the government do not capture the basic needs for development and industrialization. In conclusion, intercontinental collaborations and knowledge transfer in trade, science and technology should be encouraged rapid development and industrialization. Furthermore, African political leaders should acknowledge the historical depth of the Asian path, and replicate it in Africa.

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