



A philosophical evaluation of Immanuel Kant's categorical imperative: The panacea to immoral politics in Nigerian public sector

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Abstract

The promotion of ethics in the public sector is one of the positive steps in ensuring excellent performance in governance. This paper discusses the challenges of promoting ethical behavior in Nigerian public sector through the lens Immanuel Kant's Categorical Imperative. Using data generated from secondary sources and descriptive analysis, it has been realized that uptake of ethics in the public sector within Nigerian context has been very minimal. The paper argues neglect of the cherished cultural heritage in the dos and don'ts of Nigerians incapacitate their ability to manage their social system effectively. This perceived monumental flaw metamorphosed into different dysfunctional social crises that undermine peaceful coexistence and development of Nigerians. This has been attributed to factors such as lack of commitment on the part of government to continue to situate stringent measure on ethical violations into the mainstream of government institutions, poor adherence to ethical standards by public officers, absence of rules and regulations that could enhance good ethics and performance in the public sector, poor political leadership and corruption. In the light of the above findings, the paper concluded by advocating the philosophical formulation for Nigerian peaceful coexistence, self-reliance, self-sustenance and development attainment through cultural norms and values were proffered for a mass education campaign on the extent and cost of corruption and unethical behavior.

Keywords: Categorical Imperative, Immanuel Kant's, Immoral Politics, Public Sector

Introduction

In any advance society, the people's fundamental faith in the integrity of the political institutions is what holds the system together even under difficulty times. Public servants, in every society throughout history have been under pressure to meet public expectations concerning proper patterns of behavior (Dunner, 1964). Their actions are subject to greater scrutiny than those of persons not on a public pay roll and they are the object of folktales, rumors, suspicions, and criticism to a much greater degree. This is true in both democratic and non-democratic nations. In general, higher

standard of honesty and morality are expected of public servant than others.

It may be an understatement to lament that modern day public service lacks moral entitlements to service the public. There is a general agreement among scholars that there is poor adherence to ethical standards (such as the one discussed above) by public servants in most developing countries, in particular, simple rules and regulations that could enhance good ethics and performance in the public service are generally ignored. Not only that, there is absence of co-ordinated and harmonized roles, responsibilities and activities among



institutions responsible for public service ethics. However, in Nigeria, public administration has had a chequered history resulting into scandals including fraud, abuse of power, governance failure and evasion of accountability among others. This has resulted into public sector reforms, as part of a broader initiative to improve service delivery, decision making, planning, accountability and monitoring which has also received substantial attention, interest and criticism in the past (Achimugu, 2010). Here in this country like elsewhere, the quest for social justice, responsible leadership and good governance has been endless, almost becoming a nightmare. "It is manifestly clear that there is today a dearth of leadership everywhere", (Buhari, 1999). This has engendered a situation of apathy, despair and hopelessness in life amongst typical Nigerians. As a result of these leadership crises Aniche (2005, p.28) asserts:

The present condition of Nigeria is one of deeper trouble than the worst impositions of the colonial era. Corruption has penetrated everywhere; riches are largely acquired by the clever surprise attacks of swindling tricks; looseness reigns; morality is maintained by penal measures and harsh laws, but hardly ever by voluntary principles; despair rots civil society; worst of all loyalty to faith and country have been replaced by cosmopolitan principles

That situation of tyranny has repeated itself in the Nigerian nation as exactly and aptly described by Suleiman, (1985, p.15) when he says that, the Nigerian nation is socially unjust because;

Certain people-mostly a tiny

minority who are relatives of those in power, or who are born into the families of those 'who matter' or who hang on to those who have means- are allowed virtually unlimited access to wealth and privileges, while the majority of the population are impoverished and dispossessed, through a systematic and political state policy.

This is evident in the views of Mallam Nuhu Ribadu, the former Chairman of Nigeria's Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC), over \$400 billion that had been looted from the Commonwealth by the leaders is "six times the total value of resources committed to rebuilding Western Europe after the Second World War (Ademola, 2011).

Suleiman (1985, p.16), laments this unfortunate situation in a more precise and vivid illustration of its ugly picture pertaining to education saying:

A nation is unjust and tyrannical if it deliberately closes the door of intellectual and moral development to some children simply because their parents are poor and are of no consequence. Denial of education to a child is perhaps the gravest and most far-reaching of all social injustices.

If anything the statements from Suleiman (1985) only demonstrate the relevance of the German philosopher Immanuel Kant philosophy of moral on politics and governance to our present day Nigeria. Its therefore need to be studied conscientiously. Starting from the early period of intellectual contemplations, philosophers and political writers have always rummaged on the possible relationship between politics and morality and to further complicate the debate, they were meant to grapple with the



problem of situating those notable concepts that are integrally related to the debate, concepts like right, good, virtue and vice, personal liberty and public interest. But the big question is, should politics be subjected to the dictates and demands of traditional moral principles?

Kant is undoubtedly one of the most influential figures in history of Western Philosophy. His moral philosophy is rooted in his formulation of the Categorical Imperative. The purpose of his Categorical Imperative is to serve as an analytical framework by which Kant theorized mankind could judge the morality of all human actions. Morality to Kant (1970) is an essential and integral part of any political culture. Any conscious effort to separate morality from politics will amounts to removing the very essence of politics and also increases its vulnerability to all shades of practices.

Though Kant rose to fame mostly on account of his work in the theory of knowledge and in metaphysics, he believed that ethics was the most important subject in philosophy. His views on the ethical life are good testimony to the esteem with which he regarded the subject. Like all classical ethical theories seeking to answer such questions as, 'What is the good life, for man?' or 'how should men act?' For Kant, ethical thinking places "right" before the notion of "good", in that sense what a person considers as good comes secondary to right. The prime ethical question for Kant is how one "ought" to conduct himself, rather than how one "is" conducting himself. Kant ethical theory is said to be deontological in nature since it places premium on duty and justice before the idea of good. But the modern teleological theories places emphasis upon the search for what is good.

The decadent state of Nigeria's ethical socio-political and economic situation in urgent need of rescue to redefine the philosophical undertone that should form the basis of contemporary Nigerian thought and action is the moving force behind this paper using Kant's ideas, hence the paper raise the question of the Kant philosophy that should be behind the contemporary Nigerian private and public life, the philosophy should guide the moral life in the society, economic life, social life, the country foreign policy and individuals political life etc.

The academic justification is that the proper policy implementation i.e. in this context is measurable and evidence through the improvement on wellbeing of the citizen's situations as Kant's was dedicated to issues of social justice leadership, governance and statecraft. In fact, his writings on these themes were quite distinguished, spectacular, prolific, and outstanding by all standards. It is against this background that this paper seeks to examine the challenges of promoting ethical behavior in the Nigerian public sectors with the aim of proposing some policy recommendations that if implemented could minimize the challenges. Specifically, the study seeks to:

- i. Examine the causes of unethical behavior among public officials;
- ii. Identify the efforts being made in the country to curb unethical practices in the public sector;
- iii. Create an awareness among public officers of the value of ethics in the public sector; and
- iv. Suggest ways of strengthening the influence of ethics in the public sector.

Immanuel Kant Biography (1724-1804).

Kant was born in Königsberg, East Prussia in 1724. He attended the Collegium Fridiricianum at the age of eight, a Latin



school that taught primarily classicism. After over eight years of study there, he went into the University Of Königsberg, where he spent his academic career focusing on philosophy, mathematics and physics. The death of his father had a strong effect on Kant; he left the university and earned a living as a private tutor. However, in 1755 he accepted the help of a friend and resumed study, receiving his doctorate in 1756. He taught at the university and remained there for 15 years, beginning his lectures on the sciences and mathematics, though over time he covered most branches of philosophy. In spite of his growing reputation as an original thinker, he did not gain tenure at the university until 1770, receiving his professorship of logic and metaphysics. He continued writing and lecturing at Königsberg for the next 27 years, drawing many students there due to his rationalist and hence, unorthodox approach to religious texts. This led to political pressure from the government of Prussia, and in 1792, he was barred from teaching or writing on religious subjects by the king, Fredrich William II. Kant dutifully obeyed the injunction until the death of the king five years later, returning to the writing and lecturing of his ideas. The year following his retirement, he published a summary of his views on religion (Ajom, 2006) (Chinonye, 2007).

Kant's most seminal contribution was in making politics subordinate to morals and the need to treat all individuals as means and ends. Kant led a quiet life as professor in his native town Konigsberg. His fame rested on three philosophical treatises Critique of Pure Reason (1781), Critiques of Political Reason (1788) and Judgment (1790). Its political ideas were developed after French Revolution of 1789 in Towards External Peace (1795) the Metaphysical Elements of Justice (1797) and the Conflict of the Faculty

(1798). He subscribed to the idea the politics thought to be governed by moral principles even though he made a clear distinction between moral natives and legal motives.

Kant's substantive views on morality are presented in The Metaphysics of Morals, published (1797) in two parts, The Metaphysical Principles of Justice and The Metaphysical Principles of Virtue. In the general introduction to the book and the introduction to the second part, Kant explains the grounds of this division. The principle of justice commands only the external performance or non-performance of specific actions. Duties of justice are legislated externally in the sense that it is both possible and morally permissible to enforce them by means of sanctions. They are correlative with the rights of others, and their purpose is to secure the external freedom of all. They are of strict obligation, meaning that specific actions are commanded or forbidden. The principle of virtue, by contrast, commands internal attitudes and especially the adoption of moral ends. Duties of virtue are legislated internally in the sense that we require them of ourselves. They are of broad obligation, meaning that it is not strictly speaking the actions but the adoption of their maxims which is required. Their purpose is to secure internal freedom, or freedom of the will. Because all moral duties secure either political liberty or freedom of the will, Kant calls the laws of morality collectively the "laws of freedom."

Popular tradition portrays Kant as rigid and moralistic, as devoted to system and rule in his life as he was in his work. This picture must be tempered by the less familiar set of images handed down to us by his friends and students: of a genial host famous for his powers of conversation; of an immensely popular teacher whose students claimed that



they “never left a single lecture in his ethics without having become better men”; and of “the Old Jacobin” whose passionate defense of the French Revolution astonished and inspired his contemporaries.

Kant led a life filled with routine and discipline. Restricted to a quiet life by a modest income, delicate health, and a demanding work load. He twice contemplated marriage but never got married. He delivered his last lecture in 1796. Towards the end of his life he lost clarity of mind. He became Senile. He finally died on 12th February, 1804.

Background to Immanuel Kant Political Philosophy

It is altruism that an individual’s political thinking is conditioned in part by his environment and in part by his psychological make-up. Kant was deeply engaged in the political and philosophical controversies of his day, and his political philosophy is best understood in its historical context even though its application travels far beyond late eighteenth-century Prussia. Unlike French philosophy that was empirestic, German by way of taking part in politics mainly because of a different and an authoritarian political structure. Kant, undoubtedly a striking personality of the period with his faith in human rationality and perfectibility, described the enlightenment as

The liberation ‘man’ from self-imposed Tutelage. Tutelage is the in capacity of using one’s own understanding except under the directing of another. This tutelage is self-imposed when its cause lies not in the lack of understanding but in a lack of resolution and of courage....Dare to use your own understanding. That is the motto of Enlightenment. Self-thinking was

to seek the highest touch stone of truth in one’s self, i.e. one’s own reason (Hallowell, 1950, p.118).

In the general background of the period of the French Revolution of 1789 exerted considerable impact on Germany. It aroused German political thinking from its deep slumber and paved the way for modern political thought (Gooch, 1920; Rriss, 1970). Many, in Germany, welcome the revolution at first regarding it as the dawn of the new age. But the disillusionment set in with the onset of reign of terror. Kant and Goethe, the then two leading minds in Germany assessed correctly that while the revolution answered a great political need in France, the situation in Germany was still not ready for revolutionary activity. The bourgeoisie had come into existence in Germany, as in Britain and France, but it had not become emancipated from the dominance of the princes and aristocracy. Germany was relatively poorer as compared to Britain and France and despite the self-confidence of the bourgeoisie, political freedom was restricted. Freedom of speech meant freedom to criticize religion, but not the government.

Another impeding factor was the small size of most German principalities as that meant much closer supervision of the subjects by rulers than in larger countries. Bureaucratic control and the lack of economics of scale hindered economic development sapping the self-confidence of the bourgeoisie. But in spite of such formidable local impediments, Kant, transcending such localism could embark on the boldest attempt to grasp the spirit of the enlightenment and think of a higher state in human evolution (Cassier, 1945).

German intellectuals were drawn to political issues after the French revolution in 1789, and Kant was no exception. Key elements of



his political philosophy were presented in essays such as 'Theory and Practice' (1793) and Perpetual Peace (1795) before its formal exposition in the *Metaphysics of Morals* (1797). Kant's most seminal contribution was in making politics subordinate to morals and the need to treat all individuals as means and ends.

Methodology

The method adopted for this study is essentially the content analysis. That is, the study relied on secondary sourced data from various textbooks, journals, pamphlets, government documents, internet and newspapers. The data gathered were subjected into descriptive analysis and deducing conclusion from the results.

Literature Review

The complex nature of morality makes it vulnerable to conflicting analysis, positions and debatable issues which have remained unresolved. But be that as it may, some working definitions have been given that could aid one in having insight to what morality stands for. The term morality is said to have appeared in the fourth century CE in the writings of Saint Ambrose, from the Latin *mores* (traditions, folkways). It is concerned with personally held ethical beliefs, theories of obligations and the social elements that reinforce it. The idea of morality is equally used to refer to a system of principles and judgments shared by cultural, religious and philosophical communities with common belief of what constitute right and wrong. Human being is constituted in such a way that not all actions befit his nature. Some kind of actions is antithetical to his nature and militates against his well-being. While some other kind of actions promotes his general well-being and leads to happiness and self-fulfillment. In other words man is expected to engage in actions that are considered

morally right and refrain from actions that are considered morally wrong. Ananda (1985), Asok (1995). Seteolu (2011).

One good example of a well-articulated moral principle is the one by Aristotle in his "Nicomachean Ethics". Like Plato, Aristotle emphasized on the importance of virtue to our understanding of the nature of morality. For him we should act according to what virtue requires and this can be done with the help of reason and understanding (Aristotle.) Aristotelian ethics is guided by a teleological concern which bothers on the notion of happiness. Happiness in this sense has to do with one's total life style as against few activities man usually engages in. Kraut (2002).

It is also worthy to note that the term ethics and morality are most often used interchangeably terms but do not mean the same thing. Morality encompasses a wide variety of areas related to the field of ethics. It will not be out of place if one presupposes ethics when dealing with moral issues. The relationship between ethics and morality is similar to the one between logic and thinking or the relationship between theology and religion. In each case the latter is the basis of the former, we already have a sense of ethics and we already make moral judgment even without reflecting explicitly on the principles underlining our moral judgments. Ethics is therefore the systematic study of the fundamental principles underlying our morality. Sedgwick (1995).

Another contributor to our understanding of the nature of morality is Jeremy Bentham's utilitarianism as expressed in his book *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*. Bentham argued that what is good for human being is the attainment of pleasure, what is right therefore, and what is morally worthy and virtuous are those actions that maximize pleasure and reduces



pain.(Bentham 2015) such a theory is undeniably individualistic but can serve as a theory of general conduct, as theory of legislation and government.

Two concepts, public sector and public service will be clarified here. The word “Public Sector” according to Faphohunda (2002) is a term used to embrace all organizations that are owned, controlled and managed by the state or government. The state owned organizations are of two categories which include the Government Ministries and Extra Ministerial Departments like Judiciary and the Government parastatals include institutions like Universities. On the other hand, the term “Public service” loosely describes the collectivity of specialized government institutions or agencies established by law, financed by Public money and staffed by professionals and career bureaucrats for the purpose of executing public policies (Caiden, 1971).

Theoretical Framework

Many theories are relevant in the analysis of moral (ethics) in the public sectors. However, the theory that is most applicable to the Nigerian public sectors is the political economy approach which is based on the dialectical materialism. Three critical elements are central to this approach, thus; the centrality of the material conditions of the society, the dynamic character of the social reality, and the relatedness and complex nature of the elements of the society. The theory holds that the mode of production is fundamental to the material conditions of society because it forms the basis for understanding social life. It states that man’s economic activity is fundamental to his other activities in the society. Again, that this economic activity of man provides the basis for his social relations in the society. Russ (2005).

Dialectically, Nigeria has passed through three stages, namely, the pre-colonial, the colonial and post independent phases that correspond to her political development. Fundamentally, these phases do not connote with the Marxian three stages of dialectical materialism. The important point here is that the political structures, the social structures and the belief system of Nigeria dovetailed these phases (Ujo, 2004).

According to Russ (2005), the material foundation of Nigeria has influenced her political development, including the public sectors services (i.e. the bureaucracy), the social systems and the gamut of the superstructure formation of the country. The country’s public sectors are influenced by the economic structures; hence the crises in the former are a reflection of the contradictions in the latter. The manipulation of public services, unethical practices and other forms of social vices are the manifestations of the intense intra-class struggle among desperate politicians or stakeholders to control the political power which is needed to safeguard their economic interests in the state. One major implication of this is that any recommendations on the ethics in the public sectors that do not reflect the contradictions in the economic structure will be mere cosmetic, and eventually an exercise in futility.

Kant’s Categorical Imperative.

The German philosopher Immanuel Kant is undoubtedly one of the most influential figures in history of Western Philosophy. His moral philosophy is rooted in his formulation of the Categorical Imperative. The purpose of his Categorical Imperative is to serve as an analytical framework by which Kant theorized mankind could judge the morality of all human actions. Morality to Kant (1970) is an essential and integral part of any political culture. Any conscious



effort to separate morality from politics will amounts to removing the very essence of politics and also increases its vulnerability to all shades of practices.

In Groundwork of metaphysics of morals (Kant, 1996, p.108). Kant outlines a method for determining how we should behave the categorical imperative. He offers a number of formulations, the differences intended to capture different aspects of moral relationships, simplifying a great deal, what is morally right is what would be chosen if we were to view a situation from an autonomous standpoint, unaffected by emotional and other attachments. If we abstract from those attachments then we will necessarily see the world, from a universal perspective, moral reasoning entails universalizing a 'maxim' (a maxim is a claim that we intend to form the basis of a moral law). If we universalize that maxim then it cannot become a moral law.

The principles of right were principles of politics based on law. For Kant it was never right that ought to be adapted to politics, on the contrary it was politics which ought always to be adapted to right. Justice must be Universal and it could be brought about only by law. Every action which by itself or by its maxim enables the freedom of each individuals will to coexist with the freedom of everyone else in accordance with a universal law is right.

If freedom had to be restricted in accordance with right and if justice was to prevail, it must do so in accordance with this universal principle of right. The universal principle of right was basically on application of universal principle of morality.

Kant provide a simple example; as a shopkeeper knows he can get away with over charging a customer, but feels moved to inform the customer that she has been over charged. So the 'maxim' is: 'I should

always be honest' (Kant, 1996). This maxim can form can make the same judgment and the shopkeeper in a different situation can apply that maxim. Universalization entails abstraction from people and situations. Perhaps the customer is a friend, and friendship moves shopkeeper to be honest, or an alternatively, the customer is a child and the shopkeeper feels bad about cheating a child, or may be the shopkeeper just knows it is wrong to overcharge. These cannot justify the maxim because they depend on the particular identities of the agent, or on particular emotions.

This indicates that the task is not to make Case Judgments, but think 'historically': we imagine a society governed by universal laws. Such a society Kant describes as a 'kingdom of ends for if we universalize we must necessarily treat other human beings as ends not means (Kant, 1996).

Kant Notion of Perpetual Peace and Cosmopolitanism

In the science of Right (1790), he discussed the rights of nations, International laws and also the Universal right of human kind. Inspired by Rousseau's emphases on the dignity of the human being. Kant insisted that ethically, people ought to be treated as ends in themselves and that means ruler had no right to treat his people as objects for his ambitions and wars. The people had rights but did not own any duty to the Sovereign. According to Kant it was sovereign who had duties towards the people.

Only in a republican state would all human being be free; equal independent and autonomous. The overall optimism of the enlightenment and the rise of republicanism and constitutional liberation convinced Kant that perpetual peace can be envisioned within the plurality.

Moral practical reason within us pronounces the following



irresistible veto: There shall be no war, either between individual human beings in the state of nature, or between separate states, which although internally law-governed still lives in a lawless condition in their external relationships with one another. For war is not the way in which anyone should pursue their right....It can indeed be said that this task of establishing a Universal and lasting Peace is not just a part of the theory of right within the limits of pure reason but its entire purpose (Kant, 1990,p.17).

The universal and lasting establishment of peace constitution not merely a part but the whole final purpose and end of the science of right as viewed within the limit of reason.

Kant and Liberalism

The rights based tradition of liberalism has sometimes been characterized as entailing the priority of the right over the good. These terms are attributed to Kant, but the precise definition was given by moral philosopher Hamman Barbaba. He defends the right as 'that which is obligatory' and the good as 'that which is worth pursuing' (Hamman, 1983).

There are many different forms of goodness: aesthetic: friendship, the pursuit of truth are but a few Kant's political theory can be categorized as right based because the purpose of the state is not to realize goodness but to ensure that people respect each other's right.

For example, the attempt to create an equal society; where equality is end in itself would constitute any enterprise. Oakeshott argues that a political community is a civil association of individuals with desperate aims and the state works to permit the continuation of that.

A Philosophical Evaluation of Immanuel Kant's Categorical Imperative: The Panacea to Immoral Politics in Nigerian Public Sector

Given the plural nature of the Nigerian society in terms of ethnic and geographical factors, the indirect politicization of the public functions has the unintended effect of exposing career bureaucrats (and other public servants) to tremendous communal pressures, a good deal of which usually result in such negative outputs and unethical behavior such as sectionalism, nepotism, estheticism, or even outright disloyalty at times. The Nigerian state over the years have sailed like a troubled and sinking ship in a turbulent sea being tossed up and down in sight of no shore to anchor. Nigeria's to mitigate the heightened tension in such a sinking ship have adopted the posture of suffering and smiling, praying and hoping that the ship will one day anchor and offer them some respite. For many years Nigeria has been seen by many critical observers as a collapsed state which thought not in a state of war is a nursery bed for impunity and lawlessness. The situation of the country paints a picture of a jungle state where everything goes where the highly placed individuals and organizations can commit any crimes and go scot free; where plundering and looting of the public wealth is allowed and even considered a blessing, the life of its citizens are worthless and to destructing it in consequential (Emmanuel, 2015).

The Nigeria ethical, socio-political and economic problems are discussed everywhere and by Nigerian of all age brackets, the lamentation appears unending and has been blamed on bad leadership (Achebe, 1983). On Corruption (Ochulur, 2010). On ambivalence of human interest (Asouzu, 2003); on the overabundance of



human and natural resource and on the resilient (over tolerable)

The havoc that immoral politics has wreaked and is wreaking cannot be over emphasized. Its effect is evident in the level of corruption in the country, especially on the part of the political office holders. Many Nigerians have seen politics as a lucrative business through which they can gather wealth within very short period of time. The public funds that are meant for the developmental projects are diverted to their personal purses just because this was their target of seeking political post in the first place. The citizens that supposed to enjoy those facilities will continue to suffer because those who are the custodians of public fund have decided to embezzle the money. The fact that many of the Nigeria political office holders are leaving the office with robust bank accounts and many properties as well as series of cases of financial misconducts leveled against them before the appropriate agencies shows that the majority of the Nigerian politicians are kleptocratic leaders. (Ademola, 2011).

The increasing rate of the unemployed in Nigeria is also traced to immoral politics in the country. The various institutions of learning in the country are turning out graduates every year without the creation of employment to engage these numerous youths. This is because the politics of the nation is not producing visionary leaders who could plan towards the creation of industries and diversification of economy of the country that can bring about creation of employment. The immoral politics has only been producing self-satisfying, selfish, egoistic and kleptocratic leaders who are into politics because of personal interests. Nigeria is a country where human and natural resources are greatly available, but poor orientation about leadership has led to

the mismanagement of these resources thereby leaving the country in an undesirable and deplorable state that makes the citizens of the country to be looking for a way of escaping from the land to another 'promising pasture' through any means (Ademola, 2011).

Another undeniable effect of immoral politics in Nigeria is the alarming rate of poverty in the country. As identified earlier, Nigeria is a country richly endowed with resources, yet the nation is a beggar-country today, this is because as the country acquires money from her resources, the money goes into private accounts and she gets poorer while very few of her citizens especially political leaders get richer. The effect of poverty on the nation is greatly provoking, where people are not able to get the basic needs of life. The majority of the citizens of the country are dying of hunger; ironically we have few individuals who are strikingly rich by sucking from the abundant wealth of the nation to the disadvantage of the majority.

It's in line of this that (Kukah, 2007) posited that value system is a coherent set of acceptable modes of behavior adopted by person, group, organization or society as standard to guide behavior and preference in all ramifications. Their acceptable mode of conduct, set of norms, goals and objectives bind to serve as framework of reference for individual to achieve a meaningful life. They need to stick to the value system that surreptitiously determines success. In the pursuit of sustainable development, there is need to revive those socio-cultural practices that have collapsed. For example, the Americans valued their individual freedom, choice of education, family, privacy and country; while the British valued work, ethics, family and country. The Japanese valued work, innovation, peace and family.



The Singaporeans valued integrity, service and excellence, etc. What did Nigerians value? Nigerian value system should have its components in education, ethics, moral, skills, respect for human dignity and sanctity of life. It needs to be the foundation of Nigerian development processes (Kukah, 2007).

One of the by-products of immoral politics in Nigeria is insecurity. Seeking for political positions by all means has driven many Nigerians to employ the services of hire assassins to eliminate their opponents. Little is to be mentioned about the distribution of illicit weapons to political thugs during the electoral processes by the wealthy and popular politicians which would never be retrieved from them after their evil assignments have been completed. The thugs would now be using the same weapons to terrorize both the donor and the innocents of the country. We need to allude to the argument of a moral political Scholar who asserts that injustice, corruption and insecurity are Siamese triplets that are inseparable in Nigerian politics. This implies that the removal of one will invariably lead to the removal of all. Rasheed (2005).

It is imperative to state that many years after Nigeria's Political Independence, there have been persistent efforts by all Nigerians to enthrone a functional and stable democratic government in Nigeria where the fundamental needs of the people will be maximally enhanced and also guaranteed. However, in all these efforts, nothing tangible seems to have been achieved as democracy has remained very elusive and highly unattainable. To compound matters, there has been incessant political instability. Going by this trend, scholars of diverse socio-economic cum political proclivities have continued to maintain that democracy has completely failed and is therefore

unrealizable in Nigeria irrespective of the efforts being made. They, in the course of this attributed the failure to myriad of reasons among which are extreme intolerance and violence (Awolowo, 1968), absence of national ideology (Azikiwe, 1979), past political history (Omoruyi, 1994), abundance of natural resources (Omeiza: 2008), non-adherence to the rules of political games (Dudley 1966), non-existence of people-oriented, socially conditioned values, norms and attitude (Dudley, 1973) and lack of trust (Osaghae, 1994). Osaghae for instance had argued that the major reason for the failure of democracy in Nigeria is the lack of trust. To him, Nigeria's political association has been based on regional, ethnic, and sometimes religious lineage to the extent that these associations have always resulted in total chaos hence failure. He therefore stressed that the conduct of competitive election is not a yardstick for measuring democracy.

The image of the nation as whole is tainted because of immoral acts that have been incorporated into the national politics. The indigenes of the country are facing embarrassments outside the nation because Nigeria is taking a very strong position in the list of the world corrupt nations. The objective assessment of the Nigerian politicians justifies the ignominious comments about the country's political system. On the poor image of African democracy which is not different from what is obtainable in Nigeria. The above assertion further establishes the fact that Nigeria has lost her place of honor among the comity of nations. It is very imperative to have a change of orientation about politics and governance in order to be able to redeem the image of the nation. This redemption would not come suddenly except Nigerians learn to



inculcate morality into the politics of the nation.

Whatever the reasons there may be for the apparent stagnation of the Nigerian state when compared with the Asian Tigers (Hongkong, Singapore, Taiwan and South Korea) who were once on the same par with Nigerian, there is urgent need for a built for an ethical, socio-political and economic re-engineering of the state. There is the need for a total re-orientation and value design to redirect the Nigerian ship that appears to be making an unending voyage in the wrong direction.

In the *Science of Right* (1790) Kant discusses the right of nations, International Laws and also the universal right of human kind. Inspired by Rousseau's emphasis on the dignity of the human being. Kant insisted that ethical people ought to be treated as ends in themselves and that means a ruler had no right to treat his people as object for his ambition and wars. The people had right but did not owe any duty to the sovereign.

In the same vein he reiterated that;

It was sovereign who had duties towards the people. Only in a republican state would all human being be free, equal independent and autonomous. The overall optimism of the enlighten and the rise of republicanism and constitutional liberalism convinced Kant that perpetual peace can be envisaged within the plurality of nation state (Kant, 1790, p.17).

If ideas change the world and philosophical ideas are catalyst of social positive change, the time has come therefore for Nigerian to justify the assertion of Kant's to provide the hub for this social re-engineering, to

articulate urgently the philosophical ideas of Kant that will keep afloat the sinking Nigerian state.

Secondly, the philosophical moral theories of Kant have also advanced individual moral behavior and better system of government which safeguard freedom and human right, peace and security in the human society as well as economic progress and wellbeing. Thus Kant moral philosophy has contributed immensely in organizing the human society in the best possible way that can help its members to actualize their potentialities. The free will of individual was uppermost in his thought. Kant tried to discover the abstract principle which underlines moral law and politics. Those he found in the right of each individual to will and to impose limitations upon himself. Kant's political theory can be categorized as 'right base' because the purpose of the state is not to realize goodness but to ensure that people respect each other's right. For example, the attempt to create an 'equal society' where equality is an end in itself, would constitute an enterprise.

It is not out of place therefore, that in the face of then current ethical socio-political and economic challenges facing contemporary Nigeria, Kant's moral philosophical ideas should step and take the bulls by the horns and bail the country out of these pressing problems. His moral theory should be practiced to provide guidance out of the disturbing and unbearable situation the country is experiencing.

Conclusion

The decadent Nigerian situation demands an urgent solution. This solution should not be the surface but must be deep rooted and comprehensive. For a total overhaul of the Nigerian state the appropriate philosophical ideas of Kant must be employed to be a catalyst to positive ethical,



socio-political and economic change. The paper revealed that there is a big lacuna at the basic of Governance in Nigeria. It is the submission of this paper therefore, that the Nigerian need a total re-orienting to get things right and Kant moral philosophy provide the hub for this total value re-orientation.

Recommendation

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are hereby advanced:

Firstly, If we agree that the Nigerian problem is principally caused by bad leadership, corruption and unpatriotic behaviors, then what Nigerian need as is a total reorientation, a total re-designing of the social values that can bring about moral revolution and inculcate a culture of hard work for the common good, patriotism, spirit of self-sacrifice and dedication to duty which was asserted by Kant most seminal contribution was in making politics subordinate to morals and the need to treat all individual as means and end which was emptily discussed in the Ground Work of the Metaphysics of Morals among others..... Secondly, there is need for the application of Kant philosophy to inculcate in all the sanctity of the common good which must be promoted and respect by all. Nigerian needs Kant philosophy that advocated for servant leaders at all segment of the social strata. Who will be hungry to leave legacies wherever they work and not looters who will be proud of what they acquired for themselves while in office. For such breed men and women of Integrity who can raise their heads high in and outside Nigeria and who will be transparent and be ready to be probed after service and not people who will rush to get court injunctions to prevent their being investigated or prosecuted.

Lastly, Kant moral philosophy will inculcate in the young the spirit of hard work and the pride of displaying the fruits as an honest hard work and the shame of holding the proceeds of corruption. Kant moral philosophy when implemented effectively will eradicate the sense of impunity that is currently going unchallenged and be able to create a sense of shame and remorse in times of wrong doing. One that will quell excessive quest for illicit wealth, question illicit wealth, breeds accountability and restore the integrity of the social intuition.

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