

Globalising in Poverty

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***“ambitious people understand,
then, a migratory way of life is the price of getting ahead”***
Christopher Lasch

DEDICATION

*Institutions in promotion
of awareness on
poverty*

LECTURE

It is, to me, a fulfillment of an ambition to appear in the ancient city of Ilorin, and for that matter, the reputed University of Ilorin, this time to talk as if I had become one of the masters of the Breton Woods doctrine on which the newer universal values are set.

Ilorin, as you know, is the quintessential junction town with an alluring history of cross-cultural interactions and a melting pot of strong and contending but, yet, binding traditions. You cannot miss the muscle of this city on whose table the final feature of Nigeria was cast, even a while before the British colonial agents sprang their seizure of what became modern Nigeria.

The hospitality of the native and the determination of the sojourner in those early days of the fading 19th century, were loud statements in the formative values of this rainbow coalition, which is still gainfully coalescing, as our dream Nigeria.

As the home to such distinguished families - the Sarakis, the Adebayos, the Gambaris, the Belgores, the Lawals, the Abdullahis, the Adedoyins, the Idiagbons, the Abdulrazaqs and such highly honoured others too numerous to mention - I have always felt no qualms at portraying myself a Kwara

man. I am a Kwara man because I have this strong feeling that the coalition of traditions and the variety of deep academic culture represented by the University of Ilorin are illustrations close to my heart. They represent my conscious aspiration to build cosmopolitan characters of areas of Enugu State hue, where the emergence of strategic junction towns has sustained an elaboration of people-variety.

Even prior to my coming into government, I have always been fascinated by junction towns, which so unconsciously, reveal man's capacity to intermingle, crisscross and, of course, alter in their cultural depth. It also reveals man's weakness at sustaining a permanent stage of definite character trait if the necessity of extensive inter-relations compels efforts at cross-fertilization of values.

In that regard, Ilorin and indeed Kwara, remain the quintessential town and state to discuss ***globalisation as a counterpoise against poverty***, even though I cannot tell if the quantum of big wigs as Kwara can boast of, is not adequate to annul ***poverty*** in this part of Nigeria.

In reality, I was to be in Kwara last year. That was August. It was Kwara, of valid memories, that I was to give what has now become one of my widely cherished lectures: ***Godfatherism in Nigeria***. But as it turned out, the urge to state it could not survive the intuition not to pretend that what obviously were the manifestations of the godfather morass would conflict with yet unresolved matters among political gladiators outside my state. It was therefore our decision that it was not politically correct to be insensitive to matters at issue in each or every part of Nigeria.

In a way, I still owe strong apologies, which I hereby tender, to the Kwara State Council of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), which worked assiduously to realize the objective of the planned 2002 edition of their annual public lecture series. I assure the council that following the noble principles which informed the enterprise, I would still make myself available whenever else you would consider me worthy again to be your guest.

Having said that, therefore, I will proceed on the business under review by stating that the topic as assigned: ***Globalising in poverty***, is not just a challenge but also a curious attempt at pairing diametrically opposed phenomena. Considered from recent development trends in Nigeria, it is even more curious that as the global society widens with fuller participation

and exposure to gainful values of other systems, Nigeria had regressed economically and the native Igbo, Hausa, Epira, Nupe, Yoruba, Fulani, Tiv, Benin, Efik/Ibibio and the others have been the worse for it.

Globalisation refers to the phenomenon whereby, peoples, countries, businesses and other groups around the globe relate without difficulty. Globalisation is multi-dimensional, with social, political and economic implications, but the economic dimension has received the most attention because of its tendency to drive and set the pace for the whole process. The economic dimension of globalisation refers to the integration of domestic economies with the world economy and the consequential increase in the economic interdependence of the countries and regions through trade and free flows of the factors of production.

It is often argued that globalisation promotes trade and contributes to growth and development. But globalisation may also adversely affect a country's interests. Not all countries are benefiting from the process. For example, economies that depend on earnings from agriculture suffer from unfair competition with subsidised exports from advanced-economy nations, and international patent laws tend to favour the interests of multi-national corporations over those of developing nations.

Indeed, Nigeria with its population and natural resource endowment has a great potential to compete successfully in the global market. This potential however is not realised due to problems of weak infrastructure, inadequacy of technical manpower, and over-dependence of the economy on the oil sector.

If we then situate this scenario on the trend of pauperization of the society, not necessarily as claimed to be the fault of past administrations, but by the failure of the world system to repose adequate entrepreneurial confidence on our polity, we can rightly urge that the exclusion principles, result of which is abject poverty, ought to leave us out of the coming global village. That is, if taken at the retaliatory dimension, the assumed crumbling of state-nations following the power of the entrepreneurial initiative to tear down boundaries, should be fiercely resisted.

Those who hold this view were obviously doing so in reaction to the points of Marcus Olson in ***The end of egalitarian economics*** where he urged that "the indigenous characteristics of poor countries are strikingly

inhospitable to effective large-scale; organization, especially to large-scale organizations that have to operate (as government do) over a large geographical areas. "

In a way, this view of Olson's in 1997 was not remarkably different from that of Sir William Crocker of the colonial administration in Nigeria, 1929. Lamenting the probable impracticability of one- straight national administration in the then colonial areas, he had said, ***it would take a long time before there can be any hope of effective...homogeneity of feeling*** (in Africa); where, according to him, ***...experiences such as the influences extending over centuries of common corpus of beliefs and loyalties...*** can bring about a cohesion and direction, for matters important to the authorities to thrive.

Crocker's frustration, which appeared to inform the intransigence of the colonial order in imposing indirect rule even where there was never a centrality of administration, can enjoy the patronage of Olson. The later never wavers in the conviction that it was imperative to sweep territorial boundaries with bags full of economic gains; such that now propels recent attitudes for Africa to join the global train.

Of course, the regimes of social and political orders informing these attitudes were certainly not the same. Yet it cannot be ignored that the striking resemblance and eventual confirmation of the failure of the .old African values to sail along, either the values of pax-Britannica or Breton Woods institutions, reveals that there are more than meets the eye.

Not necessarily affirming any of these, Basil Davidson held that ***if the post-colonial nation-state had become a shackle on progress, as more and more critics in Africa seem to agree...the prime reason could appear*** (that) ***the State was not liberalizing and protective of its citizens... its gross effect was constricting and exploitative, or else, it simply failed to operate in any social sense at all.***

Evaluated side by side then, as the urge to assert and affirm as the liberation struggles of the 1930s to 1960s turned out to conflict with the designs of the colonial masters, the urge to eradicate poverty, now on the stride of African values, runs against the tide of the emerging global village, under the Breton Woods values.

By the way, when we talk about a certain Breton Woods value, which amplifies the state-nation hangover, we appear to be in discussion of what seemingly militates against globalising Africa.

Simply put, we are seeking to establish and possibly inculcate the canons of globalisation. That is that the socio-economic and political evolution of the globe has to be governed by the canons or the tripartite forces of **technology (including information technology), economic liberalisation** and **democracy**.

If we explore so deeply into these canons of the new order, we can see that what we have at stage have been so roundly classified as the propeller of fortune, lack of which reveals damning poverty.

Contending that the possibilities and reach of **information technology** can tear down territorial boundaries and alter the clout of governments, Davidson and Rees-Mogg hold that there is **no customs house in the cyberspace**. By this, they contend that the powers of the cyberspace were such that it was not a matter of government trying to restrict information at the disposal of the citizenry. Consequent upon this, information on farm goods, manufactures, trade and the others, would have to ride over border controls and policies in protectionism. This now presupposes that the African, in the backward, dusty village of Awhum in Enugu State or the stony patch-land of Bassa in Adamawa State, will gain equal information and knowledge of the manufacture in Michigan, as the American, as soon as the data are fed on the website.

Considered from the prism of Engel Moore on the **Devolution of Power** via the **information age**, the State faces a death watch and is terminally ill, in that the citizen would owe no such allegiance as obtained in the previous age where the universe of the individual is limited to the physical boundaries of the State.

Economic liberalisation as a canon of globalisation may look to me as a more familiar enterprise under the various administrations since the 1980s. Usually, globalisation is oftentimes narrowed to **economic or trade liberalization**, which come on the heels of the other two canons: **information (cyberspace) technology and liberal democracy**.

Oxfam argues that these two phenomena can have destabilising effects on

national economies and local communities. All too often, he argues, multinational corporations or the powerful cross-border operatives, dominate investment, production and trade, imposing changes, which favour rich countries and technology suppliers.

It is on this note that the argument gets stronger in support of the view that economic liberalisation and poverty reduction are not particularly consistent policies in an economy where structural imbalances are pronounced or where the people lack basic services. Also, given the import dependent nature of production structures as that of Nigeria, unfettered economic liberalisation will tend to ruin domestic industries and destroy supply capacity as a result of prohibitive imported input costs, while imported finished goods will continue to flourish at the expense of local substitutes.

Couched in various expressions, this further solidifies the position that the openness of the Nigerian economy has resulted in an adverse trade situation, which has impeded the development of the country. The result, it is held, is that Nigeria has become a net importer of food, although it abounds with rich natural resources and has a largely agrarian population. When the data are occasionally marshaled, we discover that the value of food imports rose from N57.7m in 1970 to N1437.5m in 1980, N1646.5m in 1987, and N88bn in 1996. Food accounts for 10% of total imports.

The question now is; why does the trade regime or economic policy make it difficult to address the problem of widespread poverty?

- The high demand for foreign exchange to pay for imports diverts available revenue from social service provision. Over-dependence on oil increases the country's vulnerability to commodity price shocks.
- Economic liberalisation has created fierce competition for local industries because of the influx of cheap manufactured goods, which have killed domestic initiatives as well as increased the level of unemployment.
- High imports of food have resulted in low incomes for domestic farmers, thus forcing them to explore other avenues for sustaining their livelihoods.

Nigeria has been unable to, participate effectively in the global economy because of pervasive poverty, pandemic corruption, marginalisation, the

persistence of structural vulnerability and over-dependence on oil, the dispossession of the mass of the people, and the crippling burden of debt.

Our local pundits, countering the factors of the Breton Woods practices hold that the way lies in the following:

- Institutional strengthening and skills development policy analysis, monitoring and evaluation, negotiation of technical trade issues, development of strategies for implementing existing trade agreements.
- Engagement with civil society
- Linking national development and regional integration.

If this is the case, then Nigeria and many other countries are increasingly being cut off from the globalisation movement. Nigeria described as belonging to the category of countries that are non-industrialised and technologically dependent.

Technological development is directly related to the general level of development in a country. Success of the countries of the Pacific Rim in building technologically advanced countries is due to the heavy investments they made in education and skills training programmes.

- The low agricultural output of the Nigerian economy can be attributed to low levels of technology currently being applied in agricultural production. Traditional farming systems account for 90% of agricultural output.

- Lack of innovation in products and production processes, owing to inadequate investment in basic industrial research. This in turn is caused by the lack of serious commitment to establishing research and development centres.

- Weak linkages among government, the private sector, and the universities for the purposes of exploiting research findings as well as declining standards of education and skills acquisition.

Economic policies in rich countries remain highly discriminatory against the products produced in the poorest countries - especially in agriculture and

textiles. The expectations of poor countries in the Uruguay round.¹ of international trade negotiations (1986-94) were that rich countries would open up their markets in these two sectors. However, protection in most rich countries remains extremely high, through a variety of instruments.

This has not been seen to help the poor countries with low productivity capacity. **"For instance,"** argues Joseph Stiglitz, Nobel laureate in economics, 2002, (neither) **"theory nor evidence supports that opening markets to short-term, speculative capital flows increases economic growth."** Instead, as he further stated, **"there is considerable evidence and theory that it increases economic instability and that economic instability contributes to insecurity and poverty."**

Indeed, most recent analysis show that Stiglitz was not mistaking the entire clamour and the attendant complication it could bring to the African and other Third World economies. He would not even be taken in on the supposition that tariff-regimes could help the dependent economies. **"Even often-praised tarrification (has) proven to be double-edged swords."**

Of course, we cannot deny that most rich countries apply higher tariffs to agricultural goods and simple manufactures, the very goods that developing countries produce and can export. In agriculture, tariffs of very rich countries are heavily biased against low-priced farm produces from developing countries. In the 1990s the average tariffs on agricultural products were 15.7% in Europe and 10.8% in the United States. Tariffs against developing country manufactures are also high. The average rich-state tariff in the 1990s for manufactures from developing world was 3.4%, compared to 0.8% on rich-state manufactures. Bangladesh exports about \$2.4bn to the US per annum and pays 14% tariff. France, on the other hand, exports more than \$30bn and pays 1 % in tariffs. Poor countries also pay higher tariffs, e, the higher the level of processing, i.e. 5% tariff on coffee beans (exported from developing economies) and 15% on ground coffee (imported into developing economies).

Rich-state policies subject imports to a wide variety of quotas, particularly for clothing and footwear and labour intensive products in which developing countries would have competitive advantage.

Back home, they pay large subsidies to domestic food producers. West African cotton producers have increased efficiency of their cotton sector,

achieving competitive production costs, but can't compete with subsidised farmers in rich countries.

Well, whichever way it presented itself, Nigeria was going to paddle the globalisation (***economic liberalization***) boat and we are sailing. After about some false starts by his immediate predecessor, General Abdulsalami Abubakar effectively started the second stanza of the privatisation exercise in October of 1998, putting about 19 public enterprises on the sales slab.

Actually, as an ***economic liberalization*** strategy, ***privatisation*** has become the vogue among nations. Its conceptual basis arose from the fact that the economic man, not as in the communist ethos, has the freedom to operate from any society. And it is supposed that he works harder and more efficiently when the profit or gain in view is his own, rather than when he lives on wages or measured periodic incomes, as is the dominant mode among welfare regimes or command economies, which predominated in Africa. ***Privatisation*** is seen to create an enabling environment where people can reach their fullest potentials in the pursuit of individual or group fulfillment.

Against the background of this exercise, which rides the global conviction that regime control of all initiatives, gives room for consuming inertia, the promoters of globalisation (***economic liberalization***) propel the argument of clear enterprise riding the resurgence of a culture of conquest, not as gunners but as ideas-platoons capable of toppling ineptitude. This is furthered by the belief, and they are right, that the deadweight of inertia is the mother of the sluggard who would be poor if he is ignorant and who would be a liability if a world with conscience will not look the other way.

It is not definite that the global scheme projecting ***economic liberalization*** as the trump card against backwardness has deliberately projected Africa as the poor group of States that must be dragged along the speed lane of Western capitalism. It could not have been so if we refer to the earlier urge of Andrew S. Groove ***...if the world operates as one big market, every employee will compete with every person anywhere in the world who is capable of doing the same job. There are lots of them and many of them are hungry.***

Personally, I have my ideas of matters in competition, and as such view the

global trend in opening the whole universe, what with the reach of the swift, big enterprises as the world conglomerates, with some hesitation. In that regard, I marvel at the possibility of confusing efforts in protecting locality interests against the possibilities of challenging local initiatives to rise beyond the deadweight of inertia.

In time, it should not be forgotten, history and technology, as they say, shape nations and generations. On this, we enchant the postulations of James Davidson and William Rees-Mogg in *The Sovereign Individual* "...**.the factory age produced one shape of different nations, (but) the information age is producing another, less violent, and therefore more elitist and less egalitarian than the one it is replacing**" (the factory age).

Economic liberalization in our present circumstance is therefore the divestment by government, acting on behalf of the public, of its active shares in certain enterprises at the commanding heights of the nation's economy, such as NEPA, NITEL, NNPC, etc, and the sale of same to private sector operatives. If you want to bring it home again, call it privatization, but say we are into it to offer ourselves for gainful exposure and keen competition with global operatives.

The presumed compensatory substitutes to the public - the real owners of these institutions –are dual:

- a) the government will use the enormous realisation from the sales to provide more infrastructure and other public needs, and
- b) the government will assume supervisory and regulatory roles over these enterprises in the interest of the public to ensure greater efficiency and economy in the delivery of services to the public by the enterprises.

Liberalisation, as an economic strategy to aide the severely impoverished part of the globe, would perform quick, even though brutal, surgical operation on such diagnosed malaises as **over-subsidisation, bloated wage bills, highly restricted import regulations, poor penchant for healthy export orientation, poor administration of justice, corruption and non-market-determined currency values.**

This brings me to the political will attendant upon the political decision process of the various polities facing the dilemma of **liberalization**. That is

the third plank or cannon of globalization, which now deals with matters of people being governed by persons and policies of their choice. Put in more familiar term, ***liberal democracy, sans popular leadership***.

We cannot pretend that we have not had our difficulties situating democracy along the global trend of total power to the people, just as we view the relinquishment of the power of the state to a few persons with such disdain and chagrin. Defined from the global prism of the same Breton Woods super masters, liberal democracy has to come of unfettered choice. Unfettered in the sense that no voter in times of election would have come under any influence other than personal decision to cast votes, for or against.

By the compelling interest in globalisation, we tend to agree, in principle that the way to true leadership, justifying our democracy, is to expose the entire citizenry to the values of **economic liberalization**.

Here, I am not oblivious of the fact that there is a palpable consensus among the Nigerian elite that ***economic liberalisation*** alias privatization is about the only way to jump-start the nation's ailing economy. Our economy has been identified as being burdened by the overweight of stunted growth, a near-bankrupt treasury, rapidly depleting foreign reserves, mounting budget deficit, decaying infrastructure, institutionalised corruption, galloping inflation, etc. And it is held that these economic ailments can be stymied by selling those enterprises assumed to be the sole causes of these problems to private investors, direct portfolio, local and foreign investors, alike.

In the wake of ***privatization*** - which has now formed our major initiative in ***economic liberalization*** - the real sectors: agriculture and industries/manufacturing, whose activities have a positive multiplier effect on the economy, outside those solely involved in buying and selling, will witness enhance competition and positive growth which, coupled with an enabling political environment (democracy), will accelerate the wheels of export trade. The overall effect ought to, among others, be a favourable balance of trade, and, for us, liberation from the culture of mono-commodity export dependency.

For the fact that Nigeria has remained in the grip of this mono-commodity culture -dependent on sale of petroleum products -for over four decades, is

an ample demonstration that there has been no responsible political commitment to modernise and transform the economy into a viable and self-reliant one.

Besides, it is known that the lull in the productive base is the sure source of the misfortunes of our Naira -constantly under the scrunch of depreciating value. Because the productive base reflects its strength once our economy becomes sound in the productive base once we can export quality goods and services and once we can earn foreign exchange therefrom, this would reflect on the value of the Naira positively.

To me, restating the final position of the protagonists of **privatization** can best render the honey in the refrain: 'private sector-led and private-sector driven economy thrives better than government-driven economy'.

However, the inherent contents and odds are not as simple and smooth as the protagonists are wont at canvassing. The joys of privatization, which may, arguably, be equity-friendly, cannot be masses-targeted in an economy where the gap between the rich and the poor is an intimidating gulf. In Nigeria, the severity of this ever-widening gap has obliterated a middle class, and thrown up two seemingly antagonistic classes, the volatile poor (deep down poor) and the insecure rich (super, superfluous rich). These ride an aberrational social mobility system where premium is placed on patronage rather than performance, knowledge and merit.

In such a situation, privatization would only serve as a vehicle for accelerating and exacerbating the widening gap between the rich and the poor; it being a programme in which only those who have the money power to purchase shares, or make core investment, or buy up the enterprises outright, can participate.

If the above scenario approximates or, in fact, represents the actual participatory structure of the Nigerian economy, what does the immediate precipitation of a privatization programme portend for the Nigerian economy of tomorrow? That is a Nigerian economy in a globalising world, If one were to suggest the answer that it could be unfathomable woes for the poor masses and a superfluous opulence for the rich, it might smack of an uncharitable turn of mind. But that is what it shall come to be if cautions go unheeded.

The current blitz which wheels the campaign in favour of outright privatisation is supersonic and relentless, with an ensuing ruthless reduction and simplification (that is ruthless pauperization) of the entire citizenry. My fear, if not dread, is that this would end up in its implementation as offering exclusive joys to a smug, snobbish, and misinformed political, media, legal and business elite ever ready to exploit and sneer at the poor masses: "**our brothers and sisters below the belt-way; down, down they; without food, without clothing, without shelter; but ready to explode and tear the rest of us apart**".

The hard pill in that is that without painstakingly addressing certain fundamental issues of socio-economic imperatives, sub-structurally focused to bridge the poor-rich gap, the implementation of economic liberalisation programme now in Nigeria is probably going to be another sound opportunity lost.

My fear arises mainly from the trend of poverty in our society. As I pointed out somewhere, recently, the downturn in the standard of well being in Nigeria was so drastic and phenomenal. In 1962, the level of economic development of Nigeria was at par with that of the current Asia tigers. Over 84 per cent of Nigerians were safely above poverty line. But you know, the bubble burst as poverty level rose from 28.01 per cent in 1980 to 46.03 per cent in 1995. In 1996, 65.05 per cent or 67.01 million Nigerians were severely degraded by poverty. At the last count in 1999/2000, 87 per cent or 93 million Nigerians could not make ends meet. That is that they cannot eat good food, they cannot clothe properly and they cannot live in clean and decent places.

I am bothered because when we talk about **globalisation**: that is when we talk about **economic liberalization**, when we talk about **information technology or cyberspace** and when we talk about democracy, we are, in all, talking about total participation - level playing ground, equal take-off ground.

My worry, attendant upon the reality of the limitations of our own practice, is that we have hardly considered the basic question of sustainability of our own programme alongside our peculiar environment and in conformity with the social force which battle down powers allover the world.

To me therefore, if we must implement **economic liberalisation**, we must,

per force, let the many socio-economically attenuating measures which President Olusegun Obasanjo had enunciated on assumption of office come into fruition. Such measures include the **poverty reduction programme, a resuscitation of the collapsed education system, a recourse to full, immediate and result-oriented agricultural programme** - to place food on the tables of Nigerians - **and an aggressive programme of manufacturing/industrial pursuits**. Thus, before the end of the first eight years of democracy in Nigeria - that is 2007 - an implementation of a liberalization programme would have become realistic.

I have two main reasons to hold this view. One is that the economic liberalization programme as it sailed through in many parts of the world, rode the possibilities and strength of the above named basic social pillars. By the way, we talk about hyper competition in employment, in trade, in manufacture and the others, but how realistic is the attempt when you pair a rather rudimentary economy with the sophistication of the social and economic system underpinning Western Europe and America?

My second reason is that I live under the fear that the sophistication of the emerging global values, if it rides the most cherished but far-fetched Western style, may leave many of our citizens behind because as Andrew Groove holds, and I quote him again, **"if the world operates one big market, every employee will compete with every person anywhere in the world who is capable of doing the same job, ... there are lots of them, many of them are hungry."**

No doubt we are hungry but how competent are we to compete? What head start do we have to even gain a room to play a role?

But then, while we wait because the truth of life and the reality of our history dictate it, we must pose the question: what can be done to the ailing public enterprises as a measure to stem further wastage within the interregnum? How do we prop our infrastructure to provide for the emergence of such values, which would aide our joining the technological age, the **open market economy** and culmination of the civil society?

Actually, it is in discussing democracy that we can bring matters of **civil society** and eventual **open economy**. Originally, the idea of the **civil society** rides the platform of political and social awareness of the people; if for purposes of popular participation every segment of that society is

unhindered in expression and interaction for fuller development.

According to Irvin Ingrid, civil society ensues as economic indices provide for the leveraging of the classes, which may not be pronounced in stratification or gulf-regime but in mobility and openness to admit those who meet a set of criteria. In a way, the idea of restricted entry to classes or groupings of class left many with the impression of regimentation and exclusivity.

Usually, this arises from the historical track of the State in question as the values from time in the formation of the nation state concede the influence in setting the criteria for inclusion or otherwise by elements of the sovereign. This is the point of objection in the newer values of globalisation.

In fact, whereas it is viewed that democracy opens the society, the contention is that the sovereign state, particularly one that is conscious of its borders and exclusive values tends to obstruct the overall opening of the society to the wide globe. To this effect, McGrew holds that if globalisation is indeed a furtherance of the values of liberal democracy, even if the other round, then the insistence on the sovereign running on the recognition of a population within a particular national boundary is antithetical to the new order.

Put differently, globalisation promotes variety and government of the people but such people would not be rightly defined as coming of specific geographical boundary or 'of clear and cultivated socio-economic characteristics. This argument may so resemble the strong argument against protectionism and the preparedness of the powers that be to tend to take it to the limit to gain access to other countries.

Of course, realism conveys to us that the sovereign boundary is really coming down and as the **Wall**, such as that of Berlin, comes down, sovereigns will lose grip of the erstwhile local population. In fact, they cannot help themselves as every other day pronounces global encroachment into the erstwhile local mechanism underpinning traditional control of the individual and group.

You can now see that these whole scheme projected, quite gainfully as we can see, portend one reality. And that is that the **global economy, the global political order and the global channel of values (global**

information order), reveal a coalescence of erstwhile variety to a single universal trend. Inescapably, these are eroding old feelings and distinct comprehension of people's worldview.

Now, against the backdrop of **poverty in Nigeria**, globalisation clearly presents a dilemma. I feel this way because my understanding of the cannons of the new order reveals an opening society where competition attendant upon digital professionalism holds sway. It is not that I do not see Nigeria as being 'capable of development up to the level of proficiency to play side by side with the West; it is past systems of managing the environment that have left the people and place stagnated and uninspiring.

Much as I hold that Nigeria as any of the Third World States will enter a battle of unequal combatants in the evolving scenario, I do not join in the claim that globalisation should be halted. Rather I root for the argument that instead of setting Africa back on the flimsy excuse of catching up with the rest of the world, it is far more attractive for the backward states to be adequately challenged to get up and walk.

I hold this view because experience has revealed that rather than work at catching up, the tendency to be laidback, complacent and contented, had ensued instead. This had provided the leeway to backward states perpetually seeking exercises of uplift from the economically strong states instead of putting in measures to escape the vicious hand of poverty.

To me, this makes the relevance of the state still attractive for the Third World where a certain peculiar leadership, arising of liberal democracy has to set in motion such economic programmes to pull their territorial entities up to meet the challenge of globalisation.

Here now lies the challenge of the new democratic order in Nigeria. In fact, this challenge comes in three- pronged attack of the consuming reality of our world. These are the three main cannons of globalisation.

Consequent upon this, the Nigerian government must not waste more time in evolving a well articulated and deftly implemented restructuring, such that would ride the crest of result-oriented enterprises.

Things, we know, are hard and the citizenry have been driven to the edge of the wall by lack and institutional neglect but facing the .fact of our

national life, we must begin to adjust to join the world train.

Frankly speaking, it can be mouth-watering to understand that it is projected that the sum of fifteen billion Naira would be realised from the sales of such enterprises as projected in Our economic liberalization policy - **privatization**. That vast sum is a compelling attraction, especially if it will be utilized for the maximization of public-oriented interests, but the contemporary harvest from the sales, in terms of social accountability, may not have been some un-arguable positive experience.

At the moment, a few discerning minds still harbour palpable and stubborn fears concerning the implementation of the privatisation programme, chief among which are as follows:

- that the rich and the influential members of the society will again corner the wealth of the nation as has been the case with the oil sector;
- the legal framework and regulatory institutions are not going to be set up against a backdrop of our harrowing economic experience;
- we have entered the third millennium with a distorted and poverty-ridden economy yet we are moving rapidly to adopt an instrument, the operationalisation and effects of which could be harmful to our rural population, but which can however foster equitable prosperity and social justice within only a balanced growing economy-at best it's like testing the firing power of a gun on oneself;
- in the past fifteen years or there about, the economy of this nation has not been growing, so it cannot adequately fulfill the fundamental objectives of privatization;
- since the larger population is still ignorant and hungry largely due to over centralization, the attributes of creativity and initiative in economic matters are still low;
- our banks are not virile and focused, and with their aberrational and soaring interest rates, the common man will lack the liquidity to meet the demands of effective participation in the economic liberalization programme;

- who is now articulating, discussing and communicating the policy of economic liberalisation with the rural dwellers?

- and our private sector is not socially responsible in that it has no limit to its interests in profit maximization and exploitation, all at the expense of the citizenry, nor are our citizens vigilant enough to place a healthy tab on the performing officials in the supervisory and regulatory institutions.

To allay these fears, we must address the following economic programmes:

- reduce the debt pressure so that the economy can move forward by retaining enough resources to invest in areas that stimulate economic growth;

- raise per capita income to more decent levels;

- reverse Nigeria's net negative capital flow through precipitating a level playing field and competitive environment;

- deal with poverty and unemployment decisively.

- resuscitate agriculture to make Nigeria self-sufficient in food production; increase manufacturing capacity.

- reverse declining standards in education as a means of preserving and further developing the country's manpower base; and

- improve radically the environment of security and the system of justice delivery so that the enthusiasm of international investment community can be kept aflame.

I guess I would have achieved one objective in my focus. It is to guide and warn topnotch citizens and policy makers of the imperatives of circumspection in this age of globalisation, which apparently cannot wait for us even as it must come through our territory.

The reality of our blighted rural environment, the damning squalor of the urban setting, the stagnation of the economy and the attendant degradation of man in Nigeria, cannot present an impressive frame to confront issues in the highly competitive, globalising, world.

It is time. It is time once again to set the stage to re-float the society through such values which will open the people to the now universal values of the sovereign individual -he who is a Nigerian but who can hold his own end in a vastly sophisticated world.

That done, may be at the parting point between now and the year 2007, then we resume our stride in the evolving new order, saying, as is always the case in Enugu State:

To God Be The Glory.

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