

UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN



THE TWO HUNDRED AND THIRTY-THIRD (233RD) INAUGURAL LECTURE

**“FIXING THE THORNS IN OUR ROSES:
SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION FOR
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT”**

By

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The Vice-Chancellor

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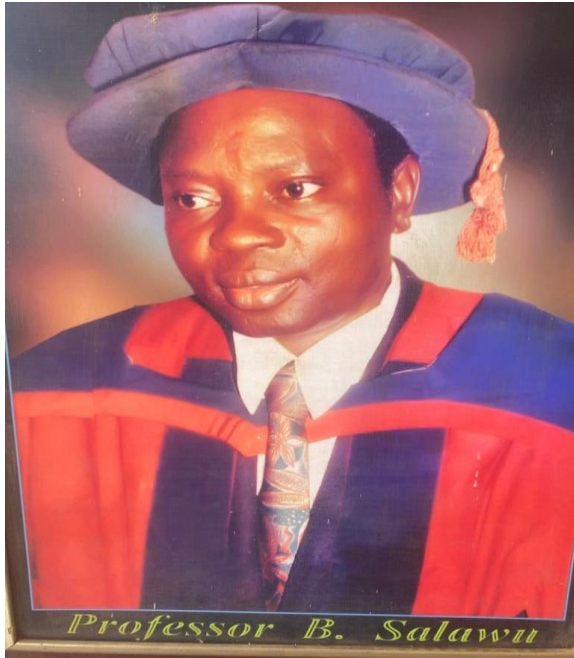
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My Family members, Relations and Friends
My Lords Spiritual and Temporal
Gentlemen of the Press
My dear students of Sociology, Psychology, Criminology, Social
Work and other students here present
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

Preamble

I stand here today before this beautiful audience to give unlimited thanks and glory to the Almighty Allah for giving me this uncommon opportunity to deliver the 233rd inaugural lecture of the University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Kwara State. Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, I have so many reasons to thank and adore the Almighty Allah, the Creator and Sustainer of the heaven and the earth and all the living and non-living things in them. One of the main reasons why I always bow for the Almighty Allah, which is related to today's occasion, is that the Almighty Allah by His unlimited powers made the impossible to be possible in my life,

an experience I want to briefly share with everybody in this Auditorium.

Ladies and gentlemen, I want to put it on record that if the Almighty Allah had not intervened in my life journey during my infancy, I would not have been here today to stand before you to deliver this inaugural lecture. At two years old, I was taken to my maternal grandfather's compound (Ile-Onibode), Offa to live my life. The reason for doing this by my parents was best known to them. But all later events showed that it was nothing but destiny designed for me by the Almighty Allah.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, during our days as small children, the household was important in the management of the family system. During the period under review, the common practice was that when the children in the household clocked the school age, there would be a household meeting to decide who would go to school and who would not. Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, as soon as the meeting started, I was asked to step aside as I was not going to be one of those who would be enrolled for primary school education. Ladies and gentlemen, no reason was given other than telling me that I would have to become a butcher (Alapata Eran) just like my maternal grandfather. Before I knew what was happening, they had already placed a calabash (Koto Eran) and a knife in front of me, which were the tools needed by a butcher (Alapata) to start his or her business.

As soon as I heard this decision, I started singing with tears in my eyes. My song that day went as follows:

**“Ona lojin, eru na ni baba. Momo mi e e, momo mi a!
Feti simi mola ala kan lai dide. Mo lo si ile iwe; mo
ni ola, mo je ogun rere. Gbogbo enia lonpe mi ni
omo rere!”**

Meaning

“It is the distance that is far. The slave also has a father somewhere. My mother, listen to me. I had a dream while sleeping. That I had a good education and wealth. And everybody calling me a good child. All of this translated into a rich endowment for me.”

As the Almighty Allah had destined, it was at this point that they agreed that I should be taken along with others for enrollment into Primary One in Ansar-ud-Deen Primary School, Offa.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, I give glory to the Almighty Allah because since the time of my enrollment into Primary One up till now, I never for once disappointed them. Today and with all modesty, I testify to the Glory of God, that among those that were taken to school the same day with me from the Usman Kolawole's household, I am the only Professor and by implication and indeed the only Ph.D. holder. What always gladdens my heart anytime I remember this stage of my life is that the elderly man whom the Almighty Allah used to extend this favour on me was alive when I earned my Ph.D. at the University of Ibadan and he referred to the story above when he was addressing members of the family who were in attendance to celebrate this achievement with me.

History of Inaugural Lectures in the Department of Sociology, University of Ilorin

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, the first inaugural lecture in the Department of Sociology of this great University was delivered by the late Professor Johnson Adeyemi Sofola, the first Head of Department of Sociology and Social Administration on 28th January, 1988. The title of his inaugural lecture is “**Cultural Self-knowledge and cultural self-appreciation for True Development in Nigeria**”. The second inaugural lecture titled “**Work, Industry and Society: The Synergy that mirrors the Reality of Our Everyday Existence**” was presented by my brother, Professor Noah Yusuf, the current Vice-Chancellor of Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin on Thursday, 20th October, 2014. My own lecture, which is the third in the series of inaugural lectures from the Department of Sociology is captioned: “**Fixing the Thorns in Our Roses: Sociological Imagination for Sustainable Development**”.

The Timing of My Inaugural Lecture

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, permit me to say some few words on why I have to delay my inaugural lecture till now. First and foremost, this delay has been caused by the nature of my academic discipline (Sociology) and the wide exposure I had with the discipline even as an undergraduate student at ABC/ABU, Kano Campus. As an undergraduate in 1974, I came in contact with an article on Sociology titled, 'The Beauty of Sociology'. The summary of the said article which has great and unending influence on me to date is that: “the more you come into contact with the discipline of sociology, the more expansive your overall view of the society becomes”. My beautiful audience in this Auditorium, the implication of this on me, coupled with the quality trainings I was opportune to have had in the discipline of sociology in three different universities in Nigeria is better imagined than said. Thus, whenever the concept of Sociology rings in my head, I see a lot of things about human societies in the same way a surgeon will see what is wrong with any part of human body system after opening it up in the process of surgical operation.

Therefore, when I took up a teaching career in this citadel of knowledge, the University of Ilorin in 1984 and started engaging in research on human societies, I knew very well that I had a great task to accomplish. What this means to me is that as a surgeon of human society and no more a butcher of cow by Allah’s miraculous intervention, I got to know very early in my career that I must understand millions of things about human societies in order to fix their challenges. The implication of this is that when it was time for me to present an inaugural lecture, which is a requirement after being promoted to the rank of a Professor of industrial and development sociology, I was confronted with a question which looks simple but difficult to answer. That is, if I have this rich and extensive knowledge about the workings of human societies and how to fix their challenges, how will I capture the whole of this knowledge

effectively in a short narrative like this Inaugural Lecture for the sake of humanity?

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, to do this effectively and professionally, I realised at a point that I must delay my presentation in order to carefully and diligently think of a topic that will capture all that I have been doing in terms of teaching research, and community service for the past thirty-eight years. The question now is, how did a topic that captures all that I have been exposed to since 1974 emerge?

The Moonlight Story and the Emergence of today's Inaugural Lecture Topic

Mr. Vice Chancellor Sir, with the background I have provided above, it has not been an easy task for me to get a topic that will capture all my fears and my contributions to knowledge in terms of research. However, the way out for a topic that will address all my output as an intellectual close to four decades came like a flash of light when I suddenly remembered the moonlight conversation I had with my Igala friend during our service year in the then North-Eastern State at Maiduguri in 1978.

One day, as soon as we had settled down on our chairs under the moonlight, my Igala friend started commenting about a girlfriend of his, he so much loved. He described the girl as the most beautiful person he had ever met. He further said he could only compare her with 'rose flower' that has been created to be beautiful. It was at this stage of our conversation that I suggested to my Igala friend that he should go ahead to marry her. Hearing this, he quickly answered me thus: "Salawu she is a rose but with thorns'. At this point, I was confused. But later, when I was able to gather myself together, I asked him, how can a beautiful rose have thorns? He answered me again and said, "Salawu, I want you to know that God has created everything to be as beautiful as the rose flower, but by our acts and actions, we usually invest the beautiful rose with thorns that will eventually hurt us." As a sociologist, I interpreted "thorns" as social problems. An unconscious flashback to this moonlight discussion with my

Igala friend that took place about forty-four years ago reminded me of the beauty of human societies without thorns, which the discipline of Sociology impacted on me as an undergraduate and postgraduate student, and through research that has spanned thirty-eight years. Hence, the adoption of the metaphor of the thorns in our roses, which I will explain in full in the course of this lecture.

ROSE FLOWER PLANT



My Conceptual Model on the Sociological Imagination Paradigm

Mr. Vice Chancellor Sir, permit me to say a few words about my love for the field of Sociology branded “Sociological Imagination” as pioneered by a sociologist of repute named C. Wright Mills (1959). Right from my contact with Sociology as a discipline, I have always concerned myself with the factors responsible for the negative developments in our society, and how to tackle them using sociological means. At a point in my journey through the discipline of Sociology, I bothered myself with how to address some of these institution-related problems called social problems, which have contributed to our socio-economic and cultural challenges, the thorns in our roses. Luckily, my reading of the work of C. Wright Mills offered me the opportunity to look straight into some of these social problems and provide possible solutions. Hence, my unalloyed love for the thesis of sociological imagination.

The concept of sociological imagination provides a sociologist the opportunity to understand the issues connected with social problems and the ability to solve them. People are likely to ask me why? The answer is simple. In our society today, many individuals experience one or more social problems personally. For example, many people are poor, many people experience unemployment, many are in poor health condition, many have family problems, many drink too much alcohol, and many commit crimes like kidnapping, banditry, armed robbery and gender violence, to mention but a few. People outside the discipline of sociology often think that these individuals' problems are theirs alone, and that they and others with the same problems are entirely to blame for their difficulties. But from the perspective of sociological imagination, all the above-mentioned problems are traceable to the social structure and culture of a society.



C-Wright Mills (1916-1962)

From the thesis of sociological imagination, therefore, I see the myriad of problems we are facing in Nigeria today not as a problem emanating from individuals in the society, but as a result of failure of the society and its institutions. Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, this explains why in all my intellectual contributions to knowledge through research activities that span a period of close to forty years, I have adopted sociological imagination as telescope for x-raying our socio-economic and cultural challenges in order to find solutions to them by attacking the roots of the overwhelming social problems in Nigeria.

Objectives of my Lecture

My four aims in this inaugural lecture are to:

- i. explain the metaphor of the 'Thorns in our Roses from the background of Sociology as a discipline that deals with human society and its institutions as the households of social order, all for the benefit of humanity;
- ii. explore the root causes of our challenges using the metaphor of the thorns in our roses;
- iii. highlight my intellectual contributions towards fixing the socio-economic and cultural challenges of our everyday life for sustainable development as measured by the sociological imagination paradigm; and
- iv. provide conclusions and recommendations that will impact positively on our policy making.

The Thorns in Our Roses Analogy and its Application to Human Society

Just like the rose flower, the human society is also created to be beautiful. The question that will guide my discussion in this section is what is rose flower? The rose flower is considered the most beautiful plant on the surface of the earth. This explains why history has informed us that the rose flower plants have been cultivated for their beauty and fragrance for upwards of 5,000 years. Just like the human society, the rose flower comes in an astonishing array of colours, shapes and sizes.

Beautiful as the rose flower is, it is faced with some challenges, which affect its beauty. First and foremost, the stem on which it hangs is usually copiously armed with prickles of various shapes and sizes commonly called 'thorns'. Also, as beautiful as the rose flower plant is, it can become infected by a number of diseases, most of them caused by fungi. In short, all of the above-mentioned diseases and thorns are the challenges faced by the rose flower plants that may spoil their beauty. Hence, the metaphor 'even roses have thorns'.

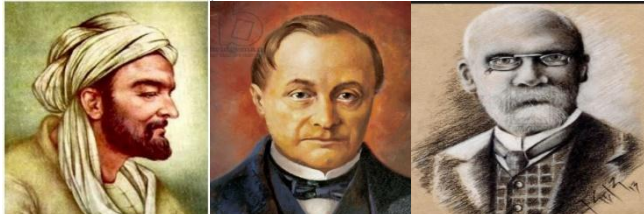
Mr. Vice Chancellor Sir, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, the analogy of 'thorns in the roses' explained above can be extended and applied to human societies. Both in theory

and practice, the human society has been created to be as beautiful as the rose flower. For the purpose of this Inaugural Lecture, I want to submit that no matter how the concept of society is defined, all definitions of society take particular account of three key concepts, namely: (1) people; (2) institutions; and (3) relationship. In this lecture, therefore, **society is seen as a complex whole that comprises a group of people, governed by institutions and culture in a complex network of relationships** (Macionis, 1997). The beauty of human societies, therefore, rests on the fact that they remain the framework that makes orderliness possible. It is the society's system of institutions that checkmates our behaviours and provides the framework for social life in an orderly manner. This is what constitutes the beauty of society that is comparable to the beauty of the rose flower.

The beauty of human society has been expressed theoretically in the works of the founding fathers of Sociology. The work of the founding father of Sociology, named Auguste Comte (1798-1857), who deserves mention here, because of the central position he occupies in the discipline of Sociology. In one of his works titled, *System of Positive Polity* (1854), Auguste Comte's aim was to create a naturalistic science of society, which according to him, would both explain the past development of mankind and predict its future course. In addition, Comte attempted to formulate conditions that account for social stability at any given historical moment. According to him, the society and its institutions housed the laws that maintain and sustain the social order and stability. To him, it is when these laws break down that the beauty of human society also disappears. That is, when they are infected by thorns.

Another founding father of Sociology used in this lecture to expose the beauty of human society like the beauty of rose flower is Ibn-Khaldun whose work was translated into English Language in 2015. His own work rests on the fact that society remains the framework that makes orderliness possible. To him, it is the society's system of institutions that checkmates our

behaviours and provides the framework for social life in an orderly manner. It is, therefore, the kind of society that we build that will provide the kind of framework we desire. This is why Ibn-Khaldun made it so explicit in his work that society is built around meeting the numerous needs of human species through its various network of institutions. What this implies is that, the quality of society and its system of institutions determine the well-being of its people and consequently the level of social order that they will experience. Similarly, Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) described human society as the foundation of personality and social order in order to show the beauty of society. Here are the pictures of these Giants Scholars in Sociology:



Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406) Auguste Comte (1798-1857) Emile Durkheim (1858-1917)

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, I have gone into these details in order to show that human societies have been built to meet human needs and to set limits on our social life. The frameworks that make it possible for the human society to perform its regulative functions, thereby making social order possible, are the social institutions. It is when these institutions perform optimally that the society records socio-cultural and economic successes, and becomes a beautiful place for human beings to live in. These social institutions are: (1) the family institution; (2) marriage institution; (3) political institution; (4) religion institution; and (5) economic institution. The summary of the roles they play in human society are as presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Social Institutions and their Functions

Name of Institution	Definition and Unique Characteristics	Institutional functions in the society
1. Family Institution	The primary social institution of the society and the basic unit in the society	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Reproduction function2. Socialisation function3. Fosters mutual identification4. Basis for enduring relationships5. Maintenance function6. Placement function
2. Marriage Institution	It is contractual agreement based on rules and regulations governing rights, duties and privileges of husband and wife with respect to each other their children, relatives, and society	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Regulates men and women's lust and sexual behaviour is regulated2. Provides human society with a framework that regulates human reproduction3. It legitimises pregnancy and child birth4. Marriage helps to build up unity among groups
3. Political Institution	It is the institution that ensures coherent social life by subjecting	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Establishment of social order2. Promotion of individual welfare

	people to some degrees of compulsion	3. Promotion of morality
4. Religion Institution	It is the institutionalised systems of beliefs, symbols, values and practices that provide groups of men with solutions to their questions and ultimate meaning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promotion of group cohesion through shared values and beliefs 2. It helps to strengthen moral order in the society 3. Helps to bind people to the social order 4. It promotes group integration
5. Economic Institution	It is the institution that ensures maintenance of society through production, distribution and consumption of goods and services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It sustains other institutions 2. Provides people with the means to earn their livelihood 3. It performs employment functions

Source: Author's exploration of human societies (1974-2023)

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, ladies and gentlemen, the summary of the nature and functions of the social institutions provided in Table 1 points to the fact that every human society is a system or network of institutions all of which work together to provide orderliness for humanity to live happily. All the contents in the table 1 above can be explained using the theory of structural functionalism. This is to say that the beauty of human society is contained and expressed in sociological theory like structural functionalism. Generally speaking, this theory of society examines the human society from the point of view of

order, consensus, stability and functional relations (Dahrendorf, 1959, P. 161). According to Dahrendorf, the functionalist theory looks at the way social institutions, as contained in the table above, function towards the maintenance of the human society.

According to this sociological theory, which is in line with the major objective of today's inaugural lecture, social problems (challenges) in the society are considered to be the outcomes of the failures (thorns) in the institutions that make up the society. That is, if the social institutions of the society are unable to change with the changing social conditions, it may lead to several socio-cultural and economic challenges or problems, which consequently will affect the general well-being of the citizens. Thus, like the rose flower plant with thorns, the human societies also have their own thorns which affect their beautiful nature.

Exploring the Thorns in Our Roses and their Consequences

Mr. Vice Chancellor Sir, as mentioned earlier, every society is made up of key societal institutions that are very important for its survival. I have discussed these institutions as the most important engines that pilot the human society in the right direction. What this simply implies is that there cannot be a functioning society without these institutional frameworks, such as the family, marriage, political, religion and economic institutions.

The above-mentioned institutions and the culture and norms that are attached to them make every human society a beautiful abode for humanity. This explains why sociologists in their sociological theories believe that the human society and its institutions are vital to our ways of life and our comfortable existence. It is therefore on this premise that we in the discipline of sociology believe that, if any society is getting worse as we are witnessing in Nigeria today, it is the institutions that make the human society to be beautiful that are failing. It is this failure of the societal institutions that I metaphorically refer to as the thorns in our roses which I present in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Signs of Thorn-infected Social Institutions and Socio-economic Consequences

Institution	Signs of thons in our roses	Socio-economic consequences
1. Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Rate of Divorce • Remarriage culture • Family violence • Cohabitation culture • Same-sex Marriage • Culture of singlehood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak socialisation of children • Upsurge in crime rate • Smoking culture among youths • Alcohol abuse • Pre-marital sex • General insecurity • Breakdown of material and emotional security
2. Marriage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High divorce rate • Culture of separation • Empty-shell marriages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less attention is paid to children • Increase in crime rate • Upsurge of problematic behaviours like smoking, drinking and premarital sex.
3. Religion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability of religion to promote group cohesion again • Inability of religion to provide social control • Failure of religion to provide meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High capacity of religion in generating social conflicts. • Radicalisation leading to terrorism • Rising wave of

	<p>and purpose for the smooth operation of our society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social division 	<p>insecurity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative effects on our socio-economic development
4. Political Institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declining social order • Gradual disappearance of individual welfare • Inability to provide morality • Inability of government to recognise systemic risks, i.e election frauds, terrorist attacks and police brutality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ineffectiveness of governance • Increasing wave of political instability • Presence of violence and terrorism • Lack of rule of law • High rate of corruption
5. Economic Institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to realise its great potentials. • Ineffective leadership to manage her potentials • Over-reliance on oil • Failure of foreign exchange policy • Inability to create employment • Increasing rate of inflation • Increasing wave of insecurity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing rate of unemployment • Increasing level of poverty • Resultant high rate of crime • Attendant general insecurity • Youth revolution

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate power supply • Low level of infrastructural development • Inadequate health facility 	
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Source: Author’s exploration of the thorns in our roses and their consequences.

The submissions summarised in Table 2 point to the fact that social problems in a society are usually the outcomes of the failures of the institutions that make up the society. That is, if the social institutions of a society are unable to perform the functions they are created to perform, it will lead to several social problems with negative consequences on the socio-economic development of any nation.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, although all the social institutions presented in the table above are important to sociologists, but as an industrial and development sociologist, who is concerned with how and why we are where we are as a society in spite of the unlimited resources God has blessed us with in Nigeria, I will be concerned in this inaugural lecture with two key relevant social institutions out of the five social institutions presented in Table 2 in order to drive home my points in this inaugural lecture. The two institutions are: (a) Political institution and (b) the economic institution, which are highlighted in the following discussion as the thorn-infected social institutions.

(a) The Thorns-Infected Political Institution

Mr. Vice Chancellor Sir, one of the two societal institutions explored by me to drive home my point in this inaugural lecture is the political institution. Politics, according to Macionis (1977), is the social institution that distributes power, sets a society’s agenda, formulates policies and makes decisions. This explains why sociologists like Emile Durkheim (1915) and Thomas

Hobbes (2008) agree that every political institution (traditional or modern) has three main purposes. These purposes are: (1) establishment of social order; (2) promotion of individual welfare; and (3) promotion of morality.

Because of my concern for the negative changes in our society and how to fix them, I asked myself a question very early in my academic career, has governance in Nigeria at a point in our national history fulfilled the above-mentioned expectations? This led to my imaginative exploration of the political institution to find answer to the above question. In exploring this institution, I found that over the years, there have been systematic failures of governance in Nigeria.

Statistically speaking, Nigeria as a society has consistently ranked low in the World Governance Index in areas such as government effectiveness, political stability and presence of violence and terrorism, rule of law, and control of corruption. On corruption, for instance, according to 2020 Transparency International Corruption Perception Index, Nigeria is perceived as a highly corrupt nation with a score of 25%. The country's corruption ranking increased from 146 in 2019 to 149 in 2020 out of 180 countries surveyed. These ratings are indication that the political institution in Nigeria has failed, leading to increasing rate of unemployment, various types of crimes and criminality, making every region to be unsafe.

(b) The Thorn-Infected Economic Institution

Mr. Vice Chancellor Sir, another thorn in our roses which informed my academic contributions is what I now tag the thorn-infected economic institution. In the words of Macionis (1977), the economy is the social institution that organises the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services. This institution is so fundamental in human society to the extent that if it fails, all other institutions will collapse. My exploration of this institution showed me that because of the country's considerable resource endowment and her coastal locations, she has great potential for strong growth (Adams 2019). But, unfortunately, Nigeria has realized very little of this potential.

My exploration of the thorns that might have been responsible for this revealed that it is caused by the inability of the government to put into proper use the great potentials of the country, and ineffective leadership to manage the potentials, leading to senseless privatisation policy. Others include the over-reliance on oil for too long a time, failure of foreign exchange policy, inability to create employment, increasing rate of inflation, increasing wave of insecurity and inadequate power supply.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, the overall consequences of the thorns in our economic institution are the increasing rate of unemployment among the youths, and increasing level of poverty among the populace, all of which have resulted again into high rate of crime in our society and its attendant insecurity.

The background provided above has guided my contributions to knowledge with the sole objective of fixing some of the consequences of the failures of our social institutions, with particular reference to political and economic institutions.

My Contributions: Fixing the Thorns in our Roses: Sociological Imagination for Sustainable Development

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, when destiny launched me into a field or discipline that concerns itself with the study of society and its institutions (Sociology), I became more exposed to the issues of social change and the consequential social problems they created for the survival of human societies. Therefore, from 1984 when I joined the University of Ilorin as an Assistant Lecturer in the then Department of Sociology and Social Administration, my concern has always been how to fix our socio-economic and industrial problems, which are becoming more and more obvious in spite of the great potentials the Almighty God has given this country.

Therefore, as an industrial sociologist, who is concerned with the economic, industrial and socio-cultural development of our society for sustainable development, I employed the

Sociological Imagination Paradigm in my various research works to discover and fix some of the socio-economic problems confronting the Nigerian society in the above-mentioned areas using the analogy of the thorns in our roses. Consequently, many of my research works were directed at examining the failures of our societal institutions, the consequential social problems, and suggestions for fixing them for sustainable development with particular emphasis on political and economic institutions being a Professor of Industrial and Development Sociology. Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, permit me to present some of my intellectual contributions one after the other in order to address the topic of today's inaugural lecture.

Research on Neglecting Development Plans and its Implications

The research work on the above topic was conducted by a team of researchers namely, Salawu, Mohammed, Adekeye and Onimajesin (2012). Our focus in this work was on the political institution (the government). In the research, we observed that the essence of government or political institution in any nation is to make a conscious choice regarding the rate and direction of growth relative to heavy industry, light industry, agricultural improvement, transport and commerce, housing and so on. According to the outcome of our research, all the above can be possible if there is conscious policy to be piloted by the political institution. This explains why we attempted in this research work to use the sociological imagination paradigm to research on the **Neglecting Development Plans and its Implications for Socio-economic Development in Nigeria** (Salawu et. al., 2012).

First and foremost, we discovered in this research work that the successful implementation of many projects before and after independence, and up to a point in the history of Nigeria as a nation, was due substantially to the strategy of pursuing economic and social developments through periodic National Development Plan. This was first introduced by the British Colonial Office in 1940, and which eventually led to launching of Development Plans in 1960 (Salawu, et al; 2012). Further

exploration also revealed that with the launching of development plans in 1960, the successive Nigerian governments were able to articulate policies in the following areas: equitable distribution of income, increase in employment opportunities, improved social services, and efficient allocation of available resources to eliminate waste (Ayinla, 1998; and Salawu et al. 2012). Thus, the research revealed that preparing and implementing Development Plans became one of the ways by which successive governments in Nigeria before and after the country's independence have been trying to better the socio-economic and political conditions of Nigerian citizens.

However, the study discovered that with gradual movement towards a cessation of National Development Plans in Nigeria which started in 1986, the business of governance became haphazard in the country. Consequently, the major findings of the research work include the followings:

1. the jettisoning of the culture of development plans, led to increase in the percentage of corruption and it grows really unchecked;
2. the rules and regulations for doing official business, which the culture of development plans entail died;
3. cynicism, contempt for and loss of integrity pervade every level of the Nigerian bureaucracy, which used to be the vehicle for execution of development plans in the past; and
4. with the absence of development plans, budgets which are tailored towards development targets are read without execution (Salawu et al., 2012p.15).

In the light of all of the above, the research work concluded that the Nigeria nation has suffered some negative consequences among which are deplorable poverty profile and unchecked high level of corruption. The implication of all of these is the resulting hindrance of economic growth because the country's resources, which are to be used for development are being plundered. This is indeed the thorns in our roses symbolized by the failure of our political institution. How this can be fixed is contained in my recommendations.

Study on Bureaucracy and Administration of Public Policy in a Democratic Society: Lessons for Nigeria

Mr. Vice Chancellor Sir, in 2009, the hardship caused by the systemic failures of our political and economic institutions, which included increasing level of poverty among the populace, increasing wave of insecurity and high level of corruption, gave me serious concern as a sociologist and thus attracted my attention. It was against this background that I recalled the Nigerian national goals as spelt out in the 1999 Nigerian constitution. In the opening page of the constitution, the country's national goals are spelt out to cover four major areas that include: the concern for national unity and political stability, concern for a bountiful and self-sustaining economy, a concern for social justice, and a concern for democracy. Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, my exploration of the Nigerian society in 2009 pointed to the fact that the national goals as contained in the constitution were yet to be achieved. This led to my use of the sociological imagination paradigm to research on what might have been responsible for this failure. Hence my research on **Bureaucracy and Administration of Public Policy in Democratic Society: Lesson for Nigeria** (Salawu, 2009).

At a theoretical level, the research revealed that all the above-stated goals depend upon an effective and efficient State bureaucracy. Against this background, one of the findings of this research work is that bureaucracy is seen as an important instrument of public policy administration as it remains the only legitimate unit that performs the function of implementation of public policy. Unfortunately, the research revealed that bureaucracy in Nigeria has long been associated with inefficiency, lack of initiative and unintelligent rigidity in the approach to human problems (Adebayo, 1994; Salawu, 2009).

The main finding of this research work is that the Nigerian bureaucracy has not, on the whole, succeeded in solving most of the developmental problems of the society that it was expected to solve. Thus, because of the obvious disconnections between bureaucracy and administration of public policy in Nigeria, the

quality of life for the majority of the population continues to be low, with many of the basic needs for food, shelter, water, health, and education still remain unsatisfied. The research work therefore concluded that the Nigerian bureaucracy had failed to achieve the goals contained in the country's constitution thereby creating untold hardship for the citizens. How this can be fixed is contained in the recommendations section of this inaugural lecture.

Study on Privatisation: Emerging Issues in the Context of Nigerian Economy

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, the systematic economic problems in many countries of the world and particularly, the developing ones (which include Nigeria) have led to a search for radical solutions. One of such proposed solutions, which is fastly becoming characteristic of all economies, is privatisation. Privatisation here means any action that serves to dilute or eliminate government equity ownership or managerial control of an enterprise (Salawu, 2008:p. 125). Because of its purported economic efficiency, privatisation is often adopted as an economic option for eliminating the economic problems of many nations. Consequent upon the obvious advantages of privatisation, nations now set up bodies and enact laws to regulate their privatisation process. It is with this understanding that as an industrial sociologist, I engaged in a research work to examine its operation in the Nigerian economy by paying particular attention to some economic issues, which are considered as fall-outs of privatisation in a developing economy like that of Nigeria, which became a policy in Nigeria in 1988.

Before the enactment of the 1988 Privatisation Decree and its implementation, the State-owned Enterprises have played a growing and, in some cases, pervasive role in the Nigerian economy. The study discovered that in the 1980s, for instance, the number of public enterprises at the Federal level alone had reached six hundred (600), while there were some nine hundred (900) smaller ones at the state and local government levels (TCPC, 1993). The implications of the above finding for the

Nigerian economy are far-reaching. Indeed in the 1980s, about 50% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 60% of the modern sector employment were accounted for by these public enterprises (Salawu, 2008). In addition to the above findings, the study also revealed that the total investment in the entire public enterprises at the Federal level alone amounted to ₦36.456 billion, whose value by 1993 stood at about ₦500 billion (Ishola, 2002).

With the results presented above, the research went further to know why the government of Nigeria went ahead to embark on the privatisation of public enterprises in 1988. Hence, the research revealed that at a point, only 20% per annum accrued to the government as returns from investment while the same government was expending about 40% and 30% of its fixed capital and recurrent expenditure respectively on public enterprises annually (Salawu, 2008). This led to the privatisation of the Nigerian public enterprises, which was formally introduced through the Privatisation and Commercialisation Decree of 1988 as part of the Structural Adjustment Programme of the Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida Administration (1985-1993). Further investigation also revealed that the objectives of this exercise were: (i) to improve efficiency and profitability of public enterprise (ii) to reduce the dependence of public enterprises on the treasury for funding of their operations, and (iii) to increase the participation of Nigerian citizens in economic activities through share ownership in productive investments. Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, the background provided above led me into researching on the consequential issues which privatisation of government-owned enterprise would give rise to using the paradigm of sociological imagination in the study titled: **“Privatisation: The Emerging Issues in the Context of Nigerian Economy”** (Salawu, 2008).

Ladies and gentlemen, I started engaging the sociological imagination thesis on this government policy using a Yoruba proverb, which says: ‘Ori bibe ko ni ogun ori fifo’. This means ‘Cutting off the head is not the medicine for headache’. Mr. Vice

Chancellor Sir, as beautiful as privatisation of the economy is (if well planned), my engagement in this research revealed that successive governments in Nigeria (the political institution) never engaged the sociological imagination paradigm to envisage the negative issues that would follow the privatisation policy. Hence, the relevance of the proverb above. The research work, therefore, uncovered some negative issues about privatisation with very serious consequences on the nation and her citizens.

One of such major issues is the time frame set for the privatisation exercise, which was not enough for a thorough job to be done. The outcome of this inadequate time frame was that it made the implementation of the exercise to be haphazard and carried out in indecent haste. Another worrisome issue which emerged from the privatisation exercise in Nigeria was the labour issue. In this case, many workers lost their jobs unexpectedly which increased the level of poverty in the country. Another serious issue uncovered by the research work was that the privatisation exercise which was supposed to engender Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) was in fact not doing so. Instead, some core investors, i.e. International Investors Limited did this using the First Bank Plc in its attempt to pick up NITEL gratis. This amounts to using loans within the country to service the purchases in the privatisation exercise, which by implication serves no useful purpose (Salawu, 2008). Another major outcome of the research is the discovery of the issue of accountability and transparency, which the research tagged as serious grey areas of privatisation in Nigeria. In this case, the proceeds from the sales of public enterprises were nowhere to be found. In other words, corruption had consumed them.

The research then concluded that the issues that had emerged from the privatisation exercise in Nigeria as discussed above have far-reaching implications for the Nigerian economy in particular and the Nigerian society in general. Every economy, whether in the developed or developing countries is expected to improve the lot of its citizenry by ways of reducing poverty and

elimination of corruption. Our lesson in this research work is that where privatisation programme is not well planned and properly executed, the issues of poverty and corruption, which the programme is out to address may end up becoming more serious. This explains why, in spite of the country's long years of experience of privatisation, Nigeria remains a country with citizens in abject poverty, and still having to contend with problems of corruption and unemployment, all of which are now thorns in our roses. The suggestions on how to go about resolving this are in the recommendations section of this inaugural lecture.

Study on "Settlement Patterns and Problems of Rural Development in Nigeria"

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, what prompted me to embark on this research work with the title above was the systematic failure of government to manage the God-given potentials of Nigeria, representing another thorn in our roses. The government's failure in this area has resulted in increasing poverty of the rural populace, mass unemployment and high level of insecurity. Nigeria has a huge size of rural population which, according to Ajaegbu (1976, p.18) stood at about 85% of the total population. If properly managed, this huge population could be an advantage to the rural areas and indeed Nigeria as a whole. Against this background, this research work investigated the prospects of population re-patterning in Nigeria, with the title: "**Settlement Pattern and the Problems of Rural Development in Nigeria**" (Salawu, 1995).

The research work was guided by the theoretical compass of Auguste Comte in Coser (1976, pp. 594-596). In his scholarly works on population increase and the law of three stages, Auguste Comte demonstrated that natural increase of population affects the rate of progress in human societies. According to him, human progression started from the great centres of population. Therefore, my hypothesis in this research work was derived from Auguste Comte's work. The hypothesis formulated to pilot the research was that 'to enhance human progress, there is the need

for population increase which will be adequately condensed at various places to serve as great centres of population from where development can be initiated (Salawu, 1995).

The test of the above hypothesis using the Nigerian settlement patterns led to a number of outcomes. First and foremost, the research revealed that generally, the settlement patterns in rural Nigeria vary from one region to another, which is attributed to variation in the past and present economic, cultural, historical and ecological factors (Gree et al, 1978, pp. 501-502, and Salawu, 1995). Another finding of the research work is that rural Nigeria is characterised by many small settlements with few inhabitants and which in some cases are separated from one another by vast acres of farmland. From the characteristics of the rural Nigeria as presented above, the research work concluded that the pattern of population distribution in the rural areas of Nigeria could not encourage and consequently improve the material development of the rural people. Ladies and gentlemen, the sociological implication of the above is that as long as people in many parts of the rural areas continue to live in dispersed forms, the majority of rural dwellers will be far from existing service centres, which in most cases are the Local Government Headquarters (Salawu, 1995).

The support for the above conclusion is found in the work of Mabogunje (1980), where he talked about the implication of population concentration (in form of city) for human progress. According to him, there cannot be the realisation of the desired social order without good and reasonable accessibility to the components of social order, which include things like provision of job opportunities as well as public and private welfare service facilities.

My study, therefore, concluded that population condensation in the rural areas with dispersed population settlement is really desirable. A successful accomplishment of population re-patterning of the rural areas will help to root out poverty, disease and ignorance as more and more people are probably going to have contact with modernisation and

consequently improve the over-all rural life (Salawu, 1995, p. 85). Again, population re-patterning of the rural population will reduce the rural-urban drift of certain depressed rural areas which do not experience the positive impact of government because of their small population, which makes any investment on them uneconomical.

Study on the Social Dimensions of Development: A Consideration of the Importance of Cultural Value System

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, as an industrial sociologist who is concerned with the socio-cultural and economic development of people through government policies and industrialisation, an important concept in the discipline of Sociology, namely “cultural value system” caught my attention, when I noticed that so many government projects meant for communities to alleviate their problems were lying unused in many parts of the country. This led me into conducting an investigation into the “**Social Dimensions of Development: A Consideration of the Importance of Cultural Value System**” (Salawu, 1999).

Although the socio-cultural factor may be important in itself, it is the least recognised in most planning efforts. Rather, emphasis is often on the economic factors. It is on this premise that this research work started with a theoretical compass which holds that whether or not a particular item of development will be acceptable to people depends on how close the project is to the community's cultural values (Praw, 1969 and Hoselitz, 1963). Using the above theoretical compass, I then started to study empirically some government projects that have been abandoned and why they were abandoned. In other words, I embarked on empirical exploration of some developmental efforts of governments in Nigeria.

A major finding of the research is that in Nigeria, governments at various levels are making attempts at development as their social responsibility which seem to embrace all dimensions intended to bring about significant improvement in the welfare of both the rural and urban populations. The research also revealed that some of the concrete

areas covered by governments during their presentation of budgets include the establishment of cooperative shops, markets, provision of drinkable water, sewage and drainage system, housing and education, all of which involve some huge amount of money for their effective execution.

Another finding of this research work is that, in spite of the huge amount of money expended on some of these government-initiated development projects, there are many of them that have been shunned by the people they are meant to serve. For example, the Federal Low-Cost Housing Units built all over the country during the Shagari's Administration in Nigeria were rejected by the people. Another example is the modern market places constructed in Kwara State of Nigeria by the George Innih's Administration. The research carried out on these projects revealed that they have become colossal wastes. The investigation carried out on these projects revealed that the problem with the unused projects was that there was no fit between such projects and the societal cultural values.

The theoretical explanation of the findings and conclusion mentioned above is found in the symbolic interactionism model. The point of departure for symbolic interaction theory is the dialectic interdependence between human organism and his natural or social environment, which has its own reality independent of the individual. It is this environment that is selectively perceived and related to by the organism. Consequent upon the above, the theory believes that action or behaviour of human beings is not a mechanical response to external stimuli, but a thing constructed.

The research, therefore, concluded that planning for development generally must be related to the realities (especially the social realities) of the various communities which the development projects are meant to serve. To avoid waste, the policies and plans must be appropriate to the needs of the people to which they apply. In order to achieve this end, it is suggested here that appropriate consideration of cultural value systems of a society is necessary before any item of development can be made

relevant to the people (Salawu, 1999, p. 26). Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, the lesson from this work is that planning from the economic point of view alone without inputting some other dimensions is nothing but a pure ‘disciplinary approach’, which will only yield negative results.

Study on Strengthening Vital Registration Systems as Source of Demographic Data for Socio-Economic Development Planning in Nigeria

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, compilation of demographic records/data for different reasons remains a constant characteristic of all civilisations- past or present. In fact, in each social type, be it primitive or modern society, people plan for population and they need population data to plan. The sources of demographic data or statistics needed for socio-economic planning include national census, sample survey, registration materials and adhoc sources. Of all the four sources of population data mentioned above, vital registration remains the most important and highly reliable source as it provides a continuous basis for the generation of demographic data. This is because, sociologically, in almost every culture, there is associated with each event a religious ritual to mark it, such as birth and baptism, marriage and wedding, death and burial services, etc. Thus, if these events are properly captured by way of recording them on continuous basis (vital registration), they will provide adequate demographic records or data on which planning can be based.

In today’s world, no meaningful socio-economic planning is visible without adequate records of the population. The research of Rev. Robert Thomas Malthus provides additional knowledge about the relationship between population, planning and development. Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, it was the important role of vital registration system in our socio-economic development that made me beam my sociological imagination search-light on this issue after serving as technical consultant to the National Population Commission in Kwara during 1991 and 2006 population census exercises. Hence, I embarked on a research

work titled **‘Strengthening Vital Registration System as Source of Demographic Data for Effective Socio-economic Development Planning in Nigeria’** (Salawu, 2009). My main objective in this research work was to isolate and examine the state of vital registration system as an important source of demographic data for socio-economic planning in Nigeria and to suggest ways by which the system of vital registration can be strengthened for socio-economic planning and development.

The research work revealed that the spatial and volume coverage, of vital registration in Nigeria in the context of the administrative structure had been very low and only much effective in urban areas, states and local government headquarters. In the rural areas on the other hand, the study revealed that the impact of vital registration was almost absent due to inaccessibility of rural settlements. Therefore, because there are more rural areas than urban localities in almost all the states in Nigeria, the research work observed that the spatial coverage cannot be said to be above average (Salawu, 2009, p. 203)

The conclusion reached in this research work is that as important as vital registration system is in socio-economic development, its spatial and volume coverages are far below international standards or the gold standard in Nigeria. This study traced this situation to a number of factors, namely insufficient funding, insufficient nation-wide publicity, inadequate number of registration centres, competition from local councils, and lack of effective sanctions for violators of vital registration laws. Therefore, in order to improve the present predicaments of vital registration system in Nigeria, the study suggested an eight-point agenda, which will be captured in my recommendations as this lecture proceeds.

Study on Ethnic Factors and Development Question in Nigeria: A Consideration of its Implications for Transformation of Rural Nigeria

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, Nigeria is generally endowed with a great deal of resources (natural and human resources), which any society needs to really transform its people for better.

Among the resources with which Nigeria is blessed are unlimited arable lands (half of which remains fallow), leading agricultural products such as cocoa, rubber, coffee, groundnuts, cotton, beniseeds, cashew, mangoes, oranges etc, which are valuable raw materials for agro-allied industries, and above all the mineral resources of various types. The most important of these are oil, bitumen, mineral stones, raw gold and many others. Very important too is the human resource in terms of its huge population size.

The implication of the above is that though Nigeria is still a developing nation, she has the potentials to develop generally and to transform her rural areas in particular due to availability of abundant natural and human resources, if only her people can transcend beyond the problems of ethnicity and ethnicism. It is against this theoretical position that I deployed the sociological imagination paradigm to explore the impact of ethnicism on the nation's development strides. Hence, my research on **Ethnic Factor and Development Question in Nigeria: A Consideration of its Implications for the Transformation of Rural Nigeria** (Salawu, 2010). The objective of this research work was to examine the effects of ethnic factor and its associated negative phenomena such as ethnicity and ethnicism on the development process in Nigeria, with particular emphasis on the transformation of rural communities.

Against the objective of the research stated above, one of the major findings of the research work was that Nigeria is one of the poorest countries in the world with very low per capital income, poor infrastructural development (particularly in the rural areas), neglected agricultural sector (the main economic activity of the rural people), high rate of inflation (which hits the rural area people more than any group), low rate of industrial development (which is almost zero in rural areas), high level of illiteracy (which is highest in the rural areas), and consequently a high level of poverty (a major characteristic of the rural people in Nigeria). The research work linked all the above to the mismanagement of her abundant resources. The implication of

these findings is that Nigeria with her vast resources is unable to improve the material wellbeing of all Nigerians, particularly those living in the rural areas of the country.

Another main finding of the research work is the impact of ethnicity and ethnicism on the development aspirations of the Nigerian nation. Generally speaking, any nation that hopes to build a united, strong and self-reliant society; a great and dynamic economy; a just and egalitarian society; a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens; and a free and democratic society should not allow ethnicism to dominate her affairs. The research, however, revealed that the ethnic factor has made the full realisation of these objectives impossible in Nigeria. The implication of this is that in Nigeria, the factor of ethnicism is seen as an important one that impairs meaningful resources allocation and utilisation for development, which affects the rural Nigeria more than any other sector of the society. This finding is anchored on a theoretical compass which sees ethnicity and ethnicism as breeders of primordial sentiment which places universalism to the background and sometimes treats it as unimportant. Thus, in the distribution of development infrastructures in Nigeria, the Nigerian politics as noted by Nnoli (1978) has presented an image of struggle among the various ethnic groups due to intense ethnicism for the equitable division of these socio-economic amenities that are distributed by governments at both federal and local levels. Osaaghae (2001) also noted that, theoretically, ethnicism often leads to a tendency to want to exclude outsiders in the sharing of scarce resources.

The research work concluded that as long as ethnic politics continues to play the pivotal role in the sharing of national resources, it will be quite impossible to ensure even distribution of national resources that may help to root out the fundamental causes of poverty, hunger, disease and ignorance which will consequently bring the desired changes so much needed in rural Nigeria. To solve this problem, the research work suggested among other things, that there must be a strong commitment on the part of the Nigerian elite who are the manipulators of ethnic

loyalty and who are incidentally charged with the responsibility of making developmental decisions to see Nigeria, including her rural areas, as their constituency. What this means is that the Nigerian ruling elite should develop a culture whereby their major aim should be to develop the country in general rather than singling out their own ethnic enclaves for development.

Summary of my other Contributions to Knowledge on Nigerian Workers Behaviour and Way Forward

Mr. Vice Chancellor Sir, very early in my academic career as an industrial and socio-economic development sociologist, I engaged in research works on the Nigerian workers' work behaviours and the way forward. The issues of work behaviours of the Nigerian workers particularly as they relate to their work attitude, job satisfaction, productivity, attendance behaviour, etc., constitute another set of thorns in our roses. From both colonial and modern perspectives, the descriptions of Nigerian workers see them as thorns in their workplaces. In short, the two perspectives see the typical Nigerian workers as having negative attributes that have implications for their productivity. Ladies and gentlemen, it was in this light that I used the sociological imagination paradigm to embark on research works that focus on the Nigerian workers. But for the purpose of this inaugural lecture, I will present only two of such research works to illustrate my points because of the limited space and time.

- (a) On the research dealing with the negative work attitudes of the Nigerian workers (Salawu, 2011), the findings indicated that the negative work attitude of Nigerian workers and their persistently low level of productivity are traceable to economic and managerial factors. Based on the above finding, the research work concluded that since the management of the Nigerian workers for higher productivity which is dominated by an ideology of increase in salary or wages has failed in concept and practice, there is a need for an alternative motivation package that will change the workers' negative attitude and increase their productivity. The research work,

therefore, suggested a multi-faceted strategy that will impact positively on the Nigerian worker's work attitude.

- (b) Labour strikes have become another serious thorn in our roses at work places in Nigeria. Hence, Salawu, Adefeso and Hassan (2011) engaged in a research work on income inequality as determinant of labour strikes in Nigeria with the sole objective of providing a lasting solution to it. The study started with an observation that employees in all kinds of work organisations (private and public) exchange work for rewards, which takes many forms (i.e material and non-material rewards). Such rewards include the money paid to workers either as salaries or wage or even monitored fringe benefits. These are regimes of benefit which impact most greatly on the employees' motivation to work and the propensity to cooperate with the management thereby creating a stable industrial relations environment.

In contrast to the ideal situation observed above, the research revealed that the administration of industrial compensation in Nigeria is always associated with a number of industrial relations-related problems such as income inequality and industrial conflicts in form of labour strikes. On Income inequality, the research found that in Nigeria, there are sectorial wage differentials in the Nigerian economy. This implies that in Nigeria, those who are supposed to receive high salary because of their superior skills in terms of education and experience, efforts in terms of physical, mental and visual demands; their responsibility in terms of equipment and process, material or product; safety of others and work of others; and their job conditions in terms of working conditions and unavoidable hazards, receive less salary (Salawu et al. 2011).

Based on the finding above, the research work concluded that the success of every government rests on effective and peaceful industrial relations, which requires the Nigerian government to do a comprehensive comparative analysis of

compensation and benefits in the various sectors of the economy. The research finally submitted that pay for performance as against general increase should be emphasised and protected so as to secure the confidence and cooperation of Nigerian workers. The ways forward as suggested by this research to fix this thorn in our economy are presented in the recommendations section.

My Contributions to Training and Mentorship in the Field of Sociology and other Related Fields

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Sir, it is extremely important at this point to present my contributions to mentoring and capacity development in the field of Sociology and other such related fields as Master in Public Administration (MPA) and Master in Industrial and Labour Relations (MILR). Today, I feel very proud to say that with the help and direction of the Almighty Allah, I have successfully trained and mentored five full Professors of Sociology namely Prof Olu Olufayo (EKSU), Prof Steve Metiboba (a former Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Kogi State University), Late Prof. Dagaci Mambe (of University of Abuja), may his soul rest is perfect peace; Prof. A. Y. Mohammed (University of Ilorin), and Prof D. S. Adekeye (University of Ilorin) and many other senior Lecturers in the field of Sociology across the universities in Nigeria.

In addition, I have trained to full completion and graduation many Ph.D. holders in the field of Sociology, who include Drs Steve Metiboba, Dagaci Mambe (Late), A. Y. Mohammed, D. S. Adekeye, Hussain M. Bintu, O. D. Fagbamila, S. Z. Abdulbaqi, Y. Agbabiaka, T. O. Tejideen to mention but a few because of space and over hundred (100) M.Sc. graduates. Also to the Glory of the Almighty Allah, I have supervised more than 450 undergraduate projects in Sociology and the counting still continues.

Outside my Department, I have participated in the training of MPA programme students in the Department of Political Science, University of Ilorin, where I handled two key courses of the programme, namely Organisational Theory I and II for many years. Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, my then experience in the MPA

programme encouraged me to speak to my Head of Department, Late Professor J. O. Sofola to mount the MILR programme in the Department of Sociology to which he gave approval and asked me to develop a curriculum for the programme, which I successfully did. The programme was eventually approved by the University Senate, which is still on to date and is contributing to the IGR of this University.

Community Service

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, I have also contributed my own quota to the development activities in Nigeria and at International levels in my journey as an academic.

Federal Level

1. In 1991, I was appointed to serve as the Technical Consultant to the National Population Commission for Kwara State. In this assignment, I was responsible for the training of facilitators and general supervision of population census exercise in Kwara State.
2. Also in the 2006 census exercise, I was reappointed as Technical Consultant by the same Commission (NPC) to be in charge of the training of facilitators and provide technical guide for the exercise in Kwara State.

International Level

1. At the international level, I served as member of Editorial Board of Journal of Development and Information System located at New Delhi, India for many years.
2. In 2008, the Asian School of Management and Technology (ASMAT) appointed me as Honorary member of the school based in New Delhi, India.

Conclusion

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, the topic of my inaugural lecture is: Fixing the thorns in our roses: Sociological imagination for sustainable development, and from my presentation so far, I have laid emphasis on the concept of society as the object of study of Sociology and by sociologists. The general belief among sociologists is that one

can only understand people not by looking at individuals, but by examining their society and its institutions. From the works of sociologists and what you have listened to in this lecture, we have been made to understand a lot about the place of society and its institutions in shaping humanity. For instance, we have seen in this lecture that to love society is to love something beyond us and something in ourselves. We have also seen that society is something that exists beyond ourselves. This means that society was here long before we were born, it makes claims on us while we are alive, and it will remain long after we are gone.

The implication of this summary provided is that it is the society that determines how we act, think and feel. In other words, our essential humanity is drawn from the society that nurtures us. This nurturing as we have seen in the course of this lecture is carried out in the society by what sociologists refer to as the key social institutions, which in this lecture include the family, marriage, political, religion and economic institutions. These institutions and the cultural norms attached to them make every human society a beautiful abode for humanity. Mr. Vice Chancellor Sir, I have proved beyond any reasonable doubt that the society and its institutions are vital to our ways of life and our comfortable existence. This is the ideal society which is described in this lecture as having the beauty of rose flower.

My main question in this lecture is that, is our society getting better or worse? This question is derived from the way sociologists view an ideal society. In this lecture, I have proved that the society we live in today is not getting better, instead it is getting worse. I have shown in this lecture as an illustration, that the family earnings in Nigeria today have remained almost flat; the divorce rate has soared; there is rise in crime rate and insecurity, which have undermined people's sense of personal safety even in their own homes; unprecedented high rate of unemployment; decayed educational system; rural poverty; and dissatisfied workers leading to incessant labour strikes in the country.

In the course of this lecture, I have argued that where all the above vices are happening, it is the societal institutions that make human society to work well that are failing in their responsibilities. This is what I metaphorically refer to as the thorns in our roses. I have submitted in this lecture that all our institutions have been affected by thorns, which has created a lot of social problems and which we must fix before we can have sustainable socio-economic development. In order to fix the numerous social problems that have arisen as a result of the failing societal institutions, I engaged the lens of sociological imagination to fix the resultant socio-economic challenges that we are facing in our society. It is this background that directed and guided my research works throughout my academic career.

From the angle of sociological imagination paradigm, I have been able to see our socio-economic challenges, not as individual problems but as social problems which must be solved in order to experience comfortable existence. Failure to solve these social problems will lead to a situation where our society will be more overwhelmed by many vices. To solve these socio-economic problems, I have submitted in this lecture that we must see society as a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability. Arising from the above fact, I want to submit that the essence of societal institutions, particularly the political and economic institutions in any society is to make a conscious choice regarding the rate and directions of socio-economic growth. This is to say that the relative rates at which heavy industry, light industry, agricultural improvement, transport and commerce, reduction in crime rate, elimination of poverty and the likes are to be pursued become a matter of conscious policy to be piloted in the context of societal institutions. It is against this background that I have engaged sociological imagination to fix some of the problems that have resulted from the failure of our societal institutions presented in my academic contributions to knowledge.

Recommendations

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, it is now time for me to offer some recommendations as ways of fixing the aforementioned thorns in our roses as contained in my research works. The recommendations (fixing the thorns in the roses) herein offered are based on the fact that as an industrial/development sociologist, I am always concerned with how to fix our socio-economic and industrial backwardness in the midst of the great potentials the Almighty God has given this country. Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I humbly propose the following ways forward in fixing the thorns in our roses (society and its failing institutions):

- 1. Reintroduction of Development Plan Culture to Direct Economic Growth:** The essence of government or political institution in any nation is to make conscious choice regarding the rate and direction of growth, which in the past had been piloted by development plans. Through development plans, it will be possible to provide effective policy framework that will impact positively on the Nigerian people. Because of the rules and regulations for doing official business which development plans entail, its reintroduction will enhance economic development which will reduce poverty profile of the citizens and check corruption which the practice of annual budget encourages. In addition, with the reintroduction of the development plans culture in Nigeria, government at all levels will be able to intervene directly and extensively in the lives of the people.
- 2. Revamping the Link between Bureaucracy and Administration of Public Policy:** Bureaucracy remains a machinery or instrument for policy advice and for implementing the will of the state such as the country's national goals as stated in the Nigerian constitution. Against the background above, the government should institute policy that will strengthen the link between bureaucracy and public administration so that the Nigerian bureaucracy will become effective in the formulation and administration of policies that relate to economic growth, industrialisation, and poverty

alleviation among the citizens. The key areas to be touched in the reformation include:

- (a) Bureaucracy should have greater concern for planning, organisation and efficiency;
- (b) Nigerian bureaucracy should be reformed to have a belief in distributive justice as its ultimate goal; and
- (c) The reformation of bureaucracy in Nigeria should make it have disposition towards new ideas and ideals.

3. Creation of Enabling Environment for Efficient Management of Public Enterprises:

Rather than reducing poverty and eliminating corruption (the thorns in our roses) the privatisation exercise has led to more poverty, corruption, and unprecedented level of unemployment among the youths. It is, therefore, recommended that instead of scraping or embarking on privatisation of public enterprises that may provide employment for the unemployed youths, the performance of public enterprises can be improved by taking the following steps:

- (a) the government should not sacrifice efficiency and quality of service needed in the management of public enterprises for any parochial consideration;
- (b) severance of the unfortunate relationship between public enterprise and ministerial department in order to create a conducive environment for innovation, which is stiffened by bureaucratic procedures in the civil service;
- (c) the boards of public enterprises should not look like an extension of civil service; and
- (d) for efficient performance of public enterprises, the principle of accountability should be redefined by the government. If the above recommendations are implemented, the Nigerian public enterprise will become vibrant and serve as good sources of employment for the unemployed youths in Nigeria, thereby putting an end to all criminal activities and insecurity that have dominated our society.

4. **Formulation of Policy for Re-patterning of Rural Population for Development:** The patterns of population distribution in rural areas of Nigeria is not adequate enough to encourage and consequently improve the material development of the rural people as a result of which we have high levels of poverty, health problems and insecurity in the rural Nigeria. To alleviate these problems (the thorns in our roses) the Federal and state governments should deliberately institute policy that could lead to positive condensation of population of the rural areas for economic growth. These can be done through:
- (a) land colonisation and settlement schemes
 - (b) farm settlement scheme; and ‘
 - (c) sementarisation of normads scheme. With Successful population re-patterning of the rural areas, the government will be able to root out poverty, disease, insecurity and ignorance as more and more people will have contact with modernisation, which will consequently improve the overall rural life.
5. **Recognition of Cultural value system in Development Efforts of Government:** In Nigeria there are many government projects meant for the welfare of communities lying unused. One of the reasons for this is that the officials who are responsible for planning and managing such development projects hardly take into consideration the cultural value system of the people which such projects are meant to serve, thereby leading to massive waste of resources. In order to fix this thorn in our roses, the government should take the following steps. Firstly, before any project is embarked on, there should be an intensive research on the people who will benefit from the project. Such research will bring out the value system of the society the project is meant to serve. Secondly, the government should always employ interdisciplinary approach in planning for development meant to contribute to the welfare of citizens. This can be achieved through an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) study.

6. **Fixing the Thorn of Ethnicism in our Roses for Economic Development:** Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, the diverse nature of the Nigerian society has made identification with the nation a difficult task, which consequently affects our political stability, and indeed our socio-economic development, thereby raising the level of poverty in the Nigerian society. To fix this thorn, I therefore recommend that, firstly, the country needs a political leadership that has a new vision of how to place her citizens at the centre of the political project without a recourse to ethnic chauvinism. Here, merit should matter most. Secondly, there should be breeding of political leadership which sees acquisition of political power as not an end in itself but a means for serving the collective welfare of the citizens regardless of their ethnic origin; and thirdly, there should be a political leadership which will treat all communities as its constituency, thereby allaying the fear of ethnic domination.
7. **Fixing the Thorn of Socio-economic Underdevelopment Through Activation of Vital Registration System:** Vital registration remains the most important and highly reliable source of population data for socio-economic planning as it provides a continuous basis for the generation of demographic data. In spite of its importance, vital registration system for socio-economic planning is now faced with many predicaments. To improve the present condition of vital registration system in order to fix the country's socio-economic underdevelopment arising from faulty planning, I recommend the following: The government should:
- (a) make some initiatives to improve vital registration system by providing incentives for people to participate,
 - (b) make use of unofficial notifier systems,
 - (c) create enabling environment for vital registration,
 - (d) introduce improved institutional linkages,
 - (e) increase funding of the vital registration system, and
 - (f) finally, the government should consider more seriously the issue of international partnership so that the country will benefit from the results of such partnership. What all the above recommendations

mean is that planning based on correct demographic data will impact positively on the lives of the Nigerian citizens.

8. **Fixing the Thorn of Negative Behaviours of Employees in Work Places for Higher Productivity and stable Work Environment:** In my many research works as an industrial sociologist, I accorded a central role to the concept of motivation in order to capture the 'whys' of people's behaviours in general in order to fix the problems relating to them in their work places. Such behavioural problems include absenteeism, poor attendance at work, low productivity, and labour strikes, which impact negatively on the success of work organisations. To have and sustain good industrial relations in Nigeria, I therefore recommend the following to fix these thorns in our roses: First, government at all levels and other employers of labour should avoid a situation where the toughest gets the roughest. What this implies is that employees with superior skills in terms of education and experience; and greater efforts in terms of physical, mental and visual demands should not be poorly rewarded as we have in this country today. Secondly, government and employers of labour should adopt job-evaluation systems in determination of employees' compensation scheme in Nigeria. Thirdly, in order to solve the problem of income inequality, the government should deliberately introduce welfare schemes for Nigerian workers in order to reduce the impact of income inequality. Fourthly, to change the negative work attitudes of the Nigerian workers, the government should adopt an integrated approach to the planning of incentive programmes for workers by ensuring a reasonable standard of living for all and sundry.

Mr. Vice Chancellor Sir, before I proceed to acknowledge those that have in one way or the other impacted on my life, permit me to drop this borrowed slogan for this generation and generations yet unborn. The slogan is **'WITHOUT SOCIOLOGY, YOU ARE ON YOUR OWN'**. What this slogan shows us is that no government policy and economic policy can work effectively without the inputs of Sociology and sociologists. In other words,

through their lens of sociological imagination, sociologists see far beyond what others cannot see and what others take for granted, which usually results into policy failures and increased social problems.

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