

Nigeria in the Eyes of the World: The Need for a Change

Nigeria, like most African countries, owes its evolution to colonialists. Lord Lugard in 1914 merged two British Empire enterprises under his management as northern and southern protectorates. Pan-Africanism was conceived in the 1940s, culminating in the delivery of independence of some African countries, more than a decade on. Ghana was granted independence in 1959. The southern part of Nigeria, at the prompting of the colonialists waited a year longer for their northern counterparts to become independent in 1960.

Nigeria, being Africa's most populous nation, is also the most diversified in terms of people, culture, natural resources, tourist sites/attractions and arts. Nigeria is therefore amply qualified to be Africa's most illustrious nation! This depends on only one thing: the citizens of Nigeria.

Tracing it back to the colonial days, would any people have gained independence without a struggle for self determination? This is the basic question that plays up in the making of a good image for Africa's foremost nation. What are Nigerians themselves saying of Nigeria?

It is important to point out here that you are called by the name you introduce yourself. A product is priced as presented by the manufacturers. A quick reference to market segmentation and product positioning would help the average mind. Good things happen daily in every corner of Nigeria, but the world never gets to hear; largely due to ignorance and lack of patriotic zeal, the story of Nigeria is told by foreigners. This is akin to allowing a jealous neighbour to christen a cherished prince!

The most disturbing aspect of consumer rights advocacy is apathy. The sooner this basic truth is realised the better the people will be equipped to play their parts in selling the product called Nigeria. The onus falls on Nigerians, particularly those in a position to speak to the ears of the world, to realise that the country is a product that must be sold for the mutual benefit of citizens. Psychologists maintain that if you do not say "Here I am", nobody will say "There you are". This makes it imperative for all Nigerian hands to come on deck to communicate the better part of this nation to the world.

The achievability of this depends on common folks. Nigerians must learn to have their say. The efforts of the Federal Government, despite the nation's shortcomings, is commendable; the onus is on the people to make concerted efforts towards making their nation great. Only then would people have prophesied correctly.

A tourist operator once remarked, investors troop to put in little where they can reap more, but tourists save up some funds and spend it on recreation, to the benefit of the country toured. Nigeria's efforts must be geared towards driving tourists to the country. Perhaps this, more than anything else, underscores the need for all hands to come on deck to change the perception of Nigeria in the eyes of the world. Bob Marley sang in one of his songs that

when the rain falls, it does not fall on one man's house, intoning that when the benefits come, they will not be for only a segment of the populace.

The Nigeria Vision20:2020 seeks to ensure we become one of the 20 largest economies in the world by the year 2020 with a promising growth target of around \$900 billion in GDP and a per capital income of no less than \$4000 per annum. The power sector, therefore have a big role to play.

With opportunities in the power sector, that will also harness further ones in the oil and gas, mining, manufacturing, banking, agriculture, tourism, retail, construction and infractstructural development, telecommunication, transportation, IT and media, Nigeria is surely the market.

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