

## **Revamp of Social Institutions in Nigeria: A Pathway for Sustainable National Transformation**

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### **Abstract**

Social institutions in Nigeria are vehicles for sustainable national development and transformation, hence the need to provide an enabling environment for their smooth sailing. A pathway for sustainable national transformation is a wake-up call for improvement in social institutions, such as education, economics, politics, religion, and family, for national development. This is because no nation can develop in negligence of its social institutions, which are prerequisites for national transformation. To this end, the revamp of education, religion, economy, politics, and family are necessary for national transformation and development. The paper, therefore, delved into the roles of social institutions as vanguards for national transformation. It behoves of the government to unlock all challenges that militate against the meaningful development of social institutions. The paper outlined the roles of social institutions as sustainability, inspiration, guidance, motivation, and regulation of behaviors. Also, the challenges include elite resistance, conflict of interests, lack of political will, constitutional rigidity, and leadership. The paper finally concludes that social institutions in Nigeria be fully revamped as they are the nexus of society and suggests, among other things, that every segment of social institution has the capacity for development. No one segment of the social institution should be denied full support, and neither should anyone be rated superior to the other.

**Keywords: sustainability, transformation, revamp, social institutions, family.**

### **Introduction**

Social institutions arose out of existing social relationships in the society. They are an organised, interrelated, and dynamic system of social roles to meet the needs of members of society. For Ukah, Njemanze and Omiya (2017) social institutions are part of the social structure saddled with the responsibilities of providing vital social services such as education, health, promotion of family values moral values, and politics. Nickerson (2024) viewed social institutions as a group of social organization that has specific roles, norms, and expectations which function to meet the social needs of society.

Social institutions in Nigeria comprise economic, educational, political, religious, and family institutions. Social institutions constitute the framework of the society, hence development of the society primordial rests on social institutions. How they function, what influence and impact they have on the people, how they affect law and order, how they regulate behaviours guide and motivate individual and group members of the society for national development. Social institutions exist to meet human needs through organized social life where behaviours of members of the society align for cordial interactions to promote development. According to United Way (2023), social institutions influence how we perceive ourselves and others and can challenge or perpetuate inequalities. Be that as it may, it is important to stimulate social institutions to address problems bedeviling the nation and create sustainable national transformation.

Congruency among social institutions necessitates national development, while relapse of any facet of social institutions could jeopardize sustainable development through the congruency of values, norms, and goals of various social institutions are interconnected. Whereas, with incongruence, the society experiences institutional fragmentation, inefficient service delivery and of course, inevitable social conflict.

Social institutions are organized systems of social relationships that embody certain common values and procedures that meet certain basic needs of the society (Baral, 2023). It is this organized system of social institutions that Mboho and Asangausung (2014) asserted that social institutions are formed from social relationships in society to meet such basic needs as stability in law and order, and clearly defined roles of authority and decision-making.

### **Social Institutions**

Social institutions are social structures created by man to guide lives and social behaviors in society. This agrees with the definition of social institutions as being created by man from social relationships in society to meet such basic needs as stability, law, order, and clearly defined roles of authority and decision-making (Development of e-course for B.Sc. <https://eagri.org> lec.). For United Way (2023) social institutions are established patterns of beliefs, behaviours, and relationships that organize social life.

Social institutions refer to complex social forms that reproduce themselves, such as political institutions like government, state, family, human languages, universities, and hospitals. Also, economic institutions like business corporations and legal systems ([eGyankosh https://egyankoshac.in](https://egyankoshac.in)). Again, social institutions are organized systems of social relationships that embody certain common values and procedures that meet certain basic needs of the society like a system of norms, values, status, and roles. These are developed

around a major social function (<https://uogqueen-smcf.com>). Finally, social institutions are important concepts in sociology that can be understood as mechanisms to govern the behaviours of individuals within a given community. They are the establishment in the society that works as a backbone in the functioning of the society. Without social institutions, a society cannot achieve fulfillment in terms of economy, academy, or relationships because without rules and regulations in the society. People are more likely to indulge in crimes and other harmful activities, which social institutions help to tame (<https://ksmcaurangabad.org>).

### **Roles of Social Institutions**

The roles of social institutions in Nigeria are pivotal to national transformation. It is the backbone for development upon which the nation is shaped. The major roles of social institutions are as follows:

- i. **Inspiration:** Schools, colleges, polytechnics, universities, and institutions are springboards for inspiration. The inspiration process endeared by educational institutions enables members of society to develop knowledge, skills, and personal growth to become competent members of society. The family institution and education inculcate mental understanding, interrelatedness among people of different backgrounds, receptiveness to new ideas, collaboration among people, creative thinking, and creativity to enable development.
- ii. **Guidance:** The family as the bedrock of educational institutions guides inculcating values, norms, culture, traditions, language, and expectations to younger generations. Moral principles, instructional facts, emotional background, economic sustenance, socialization, and acculturation are all provided for by the family and educational institutions. Thus, Dobrev (2018) opined that institutions are a part of the social order of society and they govern the behavior and expectations of individuals and at the same time they regulate business operations and ethics.
- iii. **Sustainability:** Social institutions according to Wilkin, Kargol-Wasiluk, and Zalesko (2019) are concerned with the social, economic, and environmental conditions of life, the functioning of society, and the economy and its various actors. Hoffmann & Patel (2021) noted that social institutions provide social services, financial support, and the means for social mobility, thereby filling the lacuna created by governments at all levels.
- iv. **Regulate behaviours:** Social institutions play the vital role of regulating behaviors by shaping beliefs and outlining acceptable attitudes by law to impact society. With the enforcement of laws, policies, and maintenance of order in society, they ensure sustainable development.

- v. **Motivation:** Social institutions whether political, educational, economic, religious, or family motivate to create willingness, encouragement, and positive state of mind that drives individuals to achieve their maximum.

### **Challenges of Social Institutions**

Manjumbar and Kukand (2004) Tang (2005) and Gambari (2008) identified the following five main challenges of social institutions in Nigeria which are inter-related and complementary to one another:

- i. **Elite Resistance:** The best description of Nigerian elites is “rent-seeking” people who seek to tighten their grip on political gains. The elites have captured the government and made the social institutions uncondutive because of their selfish interests which is at the peril of the citizens.
- ii. **Conflict of Interests:** A major challenge to effective social institutions is the existence of actor goals. This refers to conflicts between the objectives of individual actors involved in the organization and those of the organization as a whole. In most cases, individuals who run and operate social institutions in Nigeria pursue their personal goals which diverge from those of the body corporate. This results in adverse effects, such as the prevention of optimal performance of the organization and endangering an integral gang-up against attempts to strengthen social institutions.
- iii. **Lack of Political Will:** This refers to the motive force that generates political action. Social institutions’ effectiveness requires the commitment of those who are vested with the statutory authority to control and run the organizations. These include political heads, such as Director Generals, members of Boards Commissioners and Ministers, States and National Assembly members, Governors, and Presidents as well as private sector organizations.
- iv **Constitutional Rigidities:** The constitution of Nigeria is the supreme law of the country. The enabling laws for social institutions are derived directly or indirectly from the Constitution. Therefore, an amendment of the enabling laws in the constitution is often required before far-reaching changes like restructuring, reorganization, or revamping can be made, in most social institutions.
- v. Tang (2005) identified four ingredients that are necessary for effective leadership in building social institutions. They include optimism, devotion, setting timelines or deadlines, and possession of intellectual and technical skills to grasp every issue that emanates. To this end, what Nigeria needs is not a strong leader, but a leader with the right mix of vision, intellect, and commitment to initiate, drive, and champion the reform

process. This will position critical national social institutions for performance, resilience, and sustainability.

## **Revamp of Social Institutions for Sustainable National Transformations**

### **1 Revamp of Education institutions for sustainable national transformation**

A revamp of education as a form of social institution is an obvious pathway for sustainable national development because educational skills are essential for the industrialization of any society (Ukuma, 2015). In a related development, Paulley and Buseri (2019) saw education as a socializing agent that equips all its beneficiaries with the necessary tools, such as knowledge, skills, attitude, cultural values, language, and social skills. This enables them to conform to the desires and demands of their society. Okorosaye-Oriebite (2019) in agreement defined education as a social creation designed to meet the specific needs of the society at any particular point in time.

The revamp of educational institutions for transformation demands that such issues as insufficient and unqualified teachers, lack of workshops and laboratories, and lack of machines, equipment, infrastructures, and theory-based education that bedevils the system be overcome.

Summarily, Dibbari (2021) identified increased funding of education institutions, provision of quality and affordable education, engagement of expected teachers, improved teachers' salaries, establishment of ICT Centres at all levels of learning, adequate provision of infrastructures for teaching and learning, and adequate provision of equipment and facilities for practical oriented education. These are the factors necessary for the revamp of educational institutions. This is for sustainable national transformation.

### **Revamp of Political Institutions for Sustainable National Transformation**

Boddy-Evans (2024) defined political institutions as the organization in a government that creates, enforces, and applies laws. Political institutions often mediate on conflict resolutions and make government policies on the economy and social systems that directly impact the business environment, and as well provide representation for the population. Thus, a political system that is straightforward and evolving focuses on the well-being of the people and contributes to positive economic growth and national transformation.

Political institutions are also the structures and organizations that hold political powers within a society, including the central state groups solving collective action problems and the monopoly of violence (<https://www.sciencedirect.com>, political...). Again, the bodies that make up the whole mechanisms of modern government, such as heads of state, legislatures, and parties, are known as political institutions (<https://byjus.com/question-answer>).

Nigeria's political institutions are hinged on democracy, with distinct powers vested in the executive, legislature, and judiciary. However, factors such as corruption, conflicts, and rivalries have limited performance and thereby hindered sustainable good governance, national transformation, and development of the Nigerian society. The result, therefore, is widespread electoral fraud, dishonesty, lack of accountability and transparency, inadequate infrastructural facilities, and poor management of personnel and resources. Therefore, the urgent need for a revamp of political institutions, especially the roles and functions, will in no small measure bring about sustainable national transformation.

### **Functions of Political Institutions**

Almond, and Coleman, (1960) in Body-Evan, (2024) identified three core functions of political institutions as:

1. To maintain the integration of society by determining norms;
2. To adopt and change elements of social, economic, and religious systems necessary for achieving collective political goals; and
3. To protect the integrity of the political system from outside threats.

To this end, the main purpose of political institutions is to create and maintain stability which an American scientist, George Tsebelis calls "veto players".

On the whole, Patterson J.J. (2021) asserted that revamping political institutions has to do with understanding how existing political institutions, such as policies, laws, regulations, and constitutions can be remade to support national transformations. This requires not only explaining past changes but also thinking forward about the types of struggles likely to occur when institutional changes are deliberately pursued.

### **Revamp of economic institutions for sustainable national transformation**

The economic institution is an agency that engages in the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services in the society. It functions to meet basic societal needs, generates income and employment as well as promote trade and employment. Examples are the Nigeria Stock Exchange (NSE), the Central Bank of Nigeria, Insurance Companies, and Government organizations (Otutu Nsonaagu Gasi <https://lessonnotes.com> ies...).

In summary, Erhun (2015) identified engagement of the private sector, building an economic foundation, building a strong financial base, effective policies and institutions, accountable government, and sustainable economic initiatives. He also identified increased agricultural productivity as the factors required to achieve a high rate of sustainable national economic transformation.

### **Revamp of religious institutions for sustained national transformation**

Isamil (2025) defined religion as a system of belief and symbolic practices and objects governed by faith rather than by knowledge which relates beyond the known and the controllable. Therefore, religious institutions are social institutions that involve beliefs and practices based on a conception of the sacred ([https://www.uop.edu.pk/RE/\(PDF\)](https://www.uop.edu.pk/RE/(PDF))).

Zimmer and Saito (2016) saw religious institutions as an organization that promotes healthy lifestyles and organized manifestations of practices and beliefs in particular social and historical contexts (<https://www.encyclopedia.com>).

### **Functions of Religious Institutions**

Lupka and McClendon (2017) saw religious institutions as very important for our daily lives and their importance is not likely to diminish in the future because the majority of the world's population is religious with a share of few non-believers.

The main functions of religious institutions are to provide an integrative social force by uniting people, meeting spiritual needs through worship and rituals, as well as preserving traditions and sacred texts (<https://www.cribd.com7document>).

Robinson (2017) maintains that religious institutions function to protect the individual conscience and group rights and provide desirable societal structures.

Finally, Ismail (2025) itemized the functions of religious institutions as the creation of social solidarity, socialization, social control of occurrences, removal of facts or anxieties, and preservation of values. A revamp of religious institutions is necessary because, as a vehicle for coexistence, peace, tolerance, and moral and cultural values, it promotes sustainable national transformations and developments.

### **Revamp of family institutions for sustainable national transformation.**

Bau (2021) described the family as presumably the oldest human institution with the greatest amount of intersection and interaction between the private and special spheres. Family is central economically, not only because it has historically been a locus of production and distribution but also because it is the main transmitter of the social beliefs upon which all institutions depend.

Family is a basic religious institution that has existed in all periods of history. An obvious means of family is a social group consisting of a husband, wife, and their children. A family is a group of persons defined by sexual relationships, and the people in it are related through the ties of marriage and blood. Thus, family is both biological and social units (<https://www.mlsu.acin<>.519.LPDFI>). Family as a social unit is characterized by a common residence, economic cooperation, and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes,

at least two of who maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more children, owned or adopted by the sexually cohabiting in adults. The household is said to be the living arrangement of such as family unit ([</a>\). Family institution, therefore, is a universal social intuition that is constituted of persons directly linked by kin connection where the adult members assume the responsibility of caring for the young children.](https://www.un-org>mt.intro(PAF))

### **Functions of family institutions**

The family intuitions is the basic unit in society and the multifaceted functions it performs make it much much-needed institution in society. Some functions include reproduction of new members and socializing their provision of emotional and physical care for older and younger persons as well as ease of social problems ([</a>\).](https://www.un-org>mt.intro[PDEF])

Other functions of the family institution according to [</a> \(PDF\) are affection, recreation or entertainment, religious, educational, and economic functions. The family as a bedrock for societal development is poised with the inculcation of norms and values that engender cultural respect, responsibility, tolerance, unity, and resourcefulness for personal development. Hence, a revamp of family institutions is a pathway for sustainable national transformations.](https://www.mlsu.ac.in>519)

### **Conclusion**

Social institutions in Nigeria are vehicles for sustainable national transformations and development. The dwindling national development is an indication of the weakness and deviation from the tenets of the social institutions. Therefore, a revamp, reactivation, or improvement and enforcement of the functions and roles of social institutions, especially education, economy, policies, religion, and family, will serve as a pathway for sustainable national transformation, which will save the country from collapse.

### **Suggestions**

The researchers made the following suggestions:

The revamping of special institutions for sustainable national transformation is a huge task that cannot be realized overnight. Hence, the a need for commitment, sincerity of purpose, and perseverance by the government and the stakeholders.

1. Government at all levels should stop playing politics with national social institutions which affect the public.
2. For instance, the removal of fuel subsidies without revamping the refineries is a high-level politics. What played out is that the fuel cabals are still in their business with the poor citizens alone bearing the brunt which was formerly shared with the government.



3. All the social institutions are important and unique for sustainable national transformations. Hence, there is a need to emphasize the revamp of all, as against the concentration on few because of personal gains.

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