Reward Systems, Workers Morale, and Productivity

By

Victor Dike

Introduction

This paper deals with reward systems, workers morale, and productivity in Nigeria. The society has acquired the unenviable reputation of being very slow in meeting her workers demands. The workers have not been getting their money's worth; and they are often not paid when it is due. Obviously, pay can influence employees' work behavior and attitudes; and it may 'affect their decision to work more productively' or 'diminish their efforts.'

Therefore, this paper argues that poor reward system, among other things, has negatively impacted the workers morale, and productivity. How then can the society motivate the workers to improve their productivity? This paper shall attempt to address this question and many others not posed.

Definition of terms

Let me start by defining the relevant terms in this discourse (= reward, morale, motivation, and productivity). We cannot search too far to note the brutalizing effects of poor reward systems on the society. Admittedly, a reward is something that is given in return for some service or attainment. As it relates to employment, it is pay for the job held; pay for the individual's capabilities; and pay for results (Greene, April 1991, p. 63). Appropriate reward often motivates people to perform better.

What is motivation? Motivation, which has variedly been defined, is an inner drive that causes one to act. It has formally been defined as "a person's inner state that energizes, sustains, and directs behavior to satisfy a person's needs" (Milkovich & Glueck, 1985, p.136). According to Donadio (March 1992), motivation "is the art of stimulating someone to action by creating a safe environment in which their motivation can be unleashed and through providing a reason or incentive for people to produce" (Donadio, March 1992, p.40). Employee motivation causes one to abandon its own goals for the goals of the organization.
As Mullen (1993) has asked, how can an employee be motivated to abandon its own goals for that of the organization's goals? (p. 6). Any person who has followed closely the labor history of Nigeria would agree that the real problem facing the workers is that they are under appreciated. Relatively, they are not paid living wages; they are often harassed, used, and discarded. In addition, there is no effective social system to see them through their retirement years. This unfortunate condition has negatively impacted their morale.

What do we mean by workers' morale? Among other things, "morale is the mental and emotional condition (as enthusiasm, confidence, or loyalty) of an individual or group with regard to the function or tasks at hand" (see Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, 1980, p.742). The society should re-double her efforts to provide an enabling environment for the workers' to improve their productivity.

Clearly, Nigeria is still living in pre-computer age. Now virtually everything is networked in most countries. With this, managers are more visible, constantly processing and giving out needed information. A system where the manager is invisible and unapproachable is no longer acceptable. For this, our managers should stroll out of their offices often, communicate with and gather information from their subordinates, and solve problems as they arise. In other words, they should crawl out of their cocoon, stop playing gods, and become more sensitive to the needs of their subordinates. This can boost the workers' morale and productivity.

As we all know, humans are goal driven. It has been documented that once a goal is set, behavior aimed toward the goal persists until the goal is reached. But more often than not, a Nigerian worker works all his life without coming close to achieving his life goals. This sad situation is rampant today where an average worker cannot afford to meet his or her family's basic needs (= food, clothing, water, decent shelter, and health care; see Addis Ababa, JASPA, 1981, p.22; Maslow, 1943, p.370; and Sisk & Williams, 1981, p.317). The lack of all these basic needs have negatively impacted their productivity.

In the case of productivity, it may be measured at various levels: organizational, unit, product line, or any other level that is logical (Milkovich & Glueck, 1985, p. 175). And productivity can be broken down into three component parts: ability, opportunity, and motivation (Managers, Nov. 1993, p.29). But here, I shall focus on the effects of motivation on productivity. However, "productivity is the relationship between the amount of one or more inputs and the amount of outputs from a clearly identified process." And "the most common measure is labor productivity, which is the amount of labor input (such as labor hours or employees) per physical unit of measured output." Another measure is materials productivity, in which the amount of output is measured against the amount of physical materials input...
Yet another measure of productivity is termed total productivity. Total-factor productivity is the ratio of output to all inputs, not just labor (Soros, Jan. 1998). In other words, total-factor productivity includes all the factors of production. Given Nigeria's poor reward systems, the workers' productivity has been 'downright dreadful.' Has the society the resources to better motivate and treat her workers like human beings?

Workers and lack of Motivation

With all the material resources available in Nigeria, it is unbelievable that her workers lack the necessary motivation to perform their job duties. Many workers are owed arrears of wages and salaries. But the bare fact is that the money looted by our brave and mad military generals (especially Abacha and his cronies, not to mention the 'evil genius'- Babangida) from our national treasury would have been enough to pay the workers for years. With the looted money Babangida has provisionally been approved to setup a private university in Kaduna State. Oddly enough, some people started to clap and dance around him looking for favor. Nigeria has not learned her lessons! The society should be committed to combating fraud and to bring criminals to justice. However, any action in this regard should be transparent, fair, just, and honest.

For the worker who has been struggling with unending social pathologies in Nigeria to be more productive and corruption-free, he should be well motivated; and corruption should be brought under control. Without this, the funds meant for workers would end up in private pockets. More importantly, honest efforts should be made to sustain democratic values, and to tackle other kernel issues facing the society.

The need to address these problems is very high now that the world has crawled into the highly competitive 21st Century. Nigeria cannot effectively compete in the global market place with hungry workers. Unfortunately, Nigeria has been characterized, with some justification, as a dinosaur. For this, the society is waiting for a leader capable of developing novel solutions to the most urgent problems of our age. For any solution to be effective, the society should wage war on tribalism, sectionalism, nepotism, religious intolerance, and other negative '...ism' that is dividing and alienating the people of Nigeria. It is a deeply disturbing fact that tribalism and nepotism are the main causes of mediocrity and rampant favoritism in various establishments in the country.

The issue of resource mismanagement seems unsolvable in the society. And the issue of low productivity, which is caused by ineffective management, is...
common in state-owned organizations (state intervention has rendered them less useful to the public). Oddly enough, many managers in the society lack the skills necessary to lead a productive workforce. Despite their poor performances, the managers of these inefficient institutions still get their salaries with the aid of state subsidy. This is unthinkable in a serious society; a good wage is normally tied to productivity (a good job). As it were, if you cannot perform, you are out! Moreover, some of the managers are reckless; they have high taste, and play around with workers pay. This is irremediably devastating to the hopes, dreams and possibilities of the workers.

Because of the inefficiencies and corruption in our parastatals, the government should pursue the privatization programs that have been trumpeted in the country. The state should also "de-emphasize undue interference in government parastatals so as to promote professionalism and efficiency" (Lukman, May 12-13, 1999).

Some of the institutions that need to be re-structured include NEPA, NITEL, NNPC,NIPOST, government breweries and newspaper industries. Therefore, Nigeria is seriously challenged to take these actions for increased competition, economic democracy, better management, and good quality products (services). Because of their strategies economic importance, their poor performances have harmful multiplier effects on the entire economy.

The question poses itself: Why should a government get involved in newspaper and brewery businesses? The private sector can better manage that sector of the economy. Relatively speaking, newspaper prints in Nigeria are of poor quality. Even one who is information conscious might be turnoff by the poor prints. That these institutions are not functioning well is evidence that change is appropriate.

I would not like to dwell on issues that have already been over-flogged. But it is appropriate to point out that without a reliable power supply, the much trumpeted privatization program in the country would not have the desired effect. As Lester Thurow has noted, being able to do something after dark changes peoples’ basic habit. With electricity, mass transportation systems q underground and street railways q that have allowed the emergence of modern metropolis becomes available. And electricity has powered the telephone communication system that allowed small local markets to become big national markets (Thurow, June 1999).

Without the provision of the basic infrastructures, how can the industrial world invest in Nigeria with creaky infrastructures, roads, railroads, port facilities, energy, and schools? How can the privatized companies run their plants - with bundles of candle and firewood? Although recent reports
indicate that NEPA has improved, a lot is yet to be done to achieve a continuous and non-interruptible power supply in Nigeria. I hope that my highly respected and admired Chief Bola Ige could sustain the positive personnel and structural changes he promised to affect in NEPA.

There are also indications that the endless lines in fuel stations have begun to disappear. But how would company trucks run if this progress in not sustained? Given the fact that Nigeria is the world's 6th largest oil producing nation, and the "largest oil producer in Africa" (Lukman, May 4-5 1999), and considering the people's poor income, gas is still expensive at the official pump price of N20 per liter. There are even reports that some unscrupulous gas stations (moreover, those in the Lagos area), are in the habit of adjusting their gas meters, thereby pushing gas price up to about N30 per liter (see Abbas, November 12, 1999).

Some unscrupulous individuals are also in the business of provoking artificial scarcity. As if to squeeze the last drop of blood off the nation, recent news reports say that the government is again contemplating increasing the price of gas. Characteristically, the Nigeria Labor Congress (NLC) has issued a public warning that its members would embark on a nation wide industrial action should gas price be increased. In retrospect, the government should track down and close the gas stations that are involved in illegal adjustment of their meters to defraud innocent customers.

The government has arbitrarily increased the cost of local and international postage for sometime now. But the funny thing about it all is that the increase has not improved the services of NIPOST. The organization has not been able to perform the basic function of mail delivery well, because the workers are not motivated. For instance, mails take nearly two months to get to Zaria in Kaduna State from Umuaka in Imo State.

The cost of installing a telephone line in homes is beyond the reach of the hungry masses. The high cost does not in any way guarantee a better telephone service. In some parts of the country telephone lines are often dead; intra-city or inter-city communication is often difficult. The dearth of information, can and do, affect workers' productivity; workers would wait for weeks, if not months, for an information that could be obtained in some seconds in an information conscious society. If all these agencies are crippled, is there any wonder why the workers have low productivity? And with all these, the workers are angry because they have the right to be human.

The worker's right to be human

The workers have been able to survive almost everything thrown at them. But
it has not been easy for them to ignore the issue of lack of motivation. It is not too much to ask to be treated like human beings. The workers deserve some motivational welfare packages, and should be well trained; and they should, on their own part, think critically and creatively. Thinking creatively and critically would enable them to be rational and logical, and to be more productive.

In addition, creative and critical thinking would enable them to organize their daily lives, and to teach them how to think properly through their problems. Critical and creative thinking are much more important now that the world is a global village. In a global economy countries are interconnected. It is also characterized by free movement of goods and services, free movement of ideas and capital, freedom of choice associated with the international movement of people, and freedom of thought. This applies to direct investments and financial transactions. Thus the global economy should really be thought of as the global capitalist system (Soros 1998; Camdessus, May 20, 1996).

Obviously, organizations and nations that lack creative and critical minds may not compete positively in the 'transnational' and global world economy of today. As "our global society contains many different customs, traditions, and religions," only societies that are prepared would get the benefits "global integration has brought" (Soros, Jan. 1998).

I will not get into the psychology of 'creative' and 'critical' thinking. But it suffices to say that the two complement each other. Meanwhile, Ennis (1985) has defined critical thinking as "reasonable, reflective thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do." Thinking is "reasonable" when the thinker strives to analyze arguments carefully, looks for valid evidence, and reaches sound conclusions. Critical thinking helps to develop fair minded and objective individuals who are committed to clarity and accuracy (p.54).

Perkins (1984) states that "creative thinking is thinking patterned in a way that tends to lead to creative results." For that, "we call a person creative when that person consistently gets creative results, meaning, roughly speaking, original and otherwise appropriate results by the criteria of the domain in question" (pp.18-9).

However, Halpern (1984) notes that "creativity can be thought of as the ability to form new combinations of ideas to fulfill a need" (p.324). Creativity also involves re-framing ideas; and it is often facilitated when one gets away from intensive engagement for awhile to permit free-flow of thoughts (Marzano, et. al, 1988, pp.25-27). Given the above definitions, the ultimate criterion for creativity is output.
Managers in government establishments and business organizations must recognize each worker as an individual, and properly reward those that are creative, to encourage them to work harder. In addition, they should strive to identify what motivates their individual workers, since what motivates one person may not motivate another. Why am I concerned about creative and critical thinking in this paper? This two concepts are necessary because the ability to solve problems is a prerequisite for human survival (Rowe, 1985).

Thus, the workers who have been de-humanized have the right to be human. They should be re-humanized and encouraged to be creative, because "in the face of intense global competition...businesses are scrambling to introduce a number of new techniques aimed at improving quality and productivity" (Sharman, Feb. 1991, p.8). Employers should help their workers to behave human by treating them like human beings. It has been noted that organizations with good reward system often attract and retain the best in the society. As Eric Weber has pointed out, valuable employees (all things being equal) are normally indispensable (Weber, April 1991, p.52).

The society should motivate the local labor-force to be more productive at this highly competitive period. But it is sad to note that in many instances expatriate workers are better rewarded than local employees with the same or those with better qualification. This is demoralizing, to say the least. We should establish a standard for decisions on how much to pay an employee. How to assure fair and equitable pay differences among employees, how large a pay increase each person should receive, and what forms compensation should take - cash incentives, bonuses and medical care, etc - for local employees, should be at par with that of expatriate workers. As it were, nothing is more important to a worker than economic survival.

Workers and Economic survival

Barber Conable, a former Republican member of the US Congress for 20 years and President of the World Bank from 1986-1991 said, 'When governments aren't sure what to do about a problem they readily resort to talk about institutional reform' (Conable, as cited in www.cgg.ch/barber.htm ) This is probably true. But when it comes to managing complex social challenges such as productivity, corruption, tribalism, and workers welfare in a volatile and complex polity such as Nigeria, institutional restructuring, in my honest opinion, is appropriate.

I read with disbelief the article, "Nigerian Workers do it for love, not money" by Remi Oyo, in the Daily Mail & Guardian of May 14, 1999. The article indicates that many workers in some organizations have not been paid for months. It is strange to note that the payment of worker's makes news headlines in Nigeria. Such stories are scattered all over the society like a
straw hut in a typhoon. But one of those that caught my attention recently was a caption in the Vanguard of Nov. 22, 1999 which states "Osun teachers get pay." The funny thing about this was that the teachers in Osun State were getting paid their July salaries in November; and the authorities had the gut to direct them to call off their strike action and return to the classroom. The question is, if the Osun teachers were paid their July 1999 salaries in November 1999, when would they receive their August, September, October, November, and December 1999 salaries?

At the Daily Times, the New Nigerian and the Telegraph newspapers, workers complain of not having been paid for nearly a year (Oyo, May 14, 1999). The story of late or non-payment of salary is applicable to police officers and postal workers. Medical doctors and state judges have motivation problem too. Not long ago medical doctors were on strike for months over basic benefits. And state judges in Enugu State were demanding the arrears owed to them on their professional robe allowance.

There are many problems in Nigeria, but that which involves late or non-payment of workers for months is difficult to comprehend. Given the magnitude of this problem, I cannot ask enough questions here. How long can the workers work for love, and not for money? Have the workers other sources of income? How are they taking care of their family obligations? How does an organization with unappreciated workforce expect the employees to produce good quality products and services? How does a manager expect a worker to improve on his productivity without being paid for months? How is the organization going to make profits if the workers cannot produce due to lack of motivation?

These questions may not have immediate answers, but something is definitely wrong with any society that treats its workers with disdain. I doubt seriously that this kind of fraud and inhumanity can happen in a serious and an organized society like the United States (and in the other highly industrialized countries of Europe and North America that look after the welfare of its citizens). It is a simple fact that 'people's social and economic circumstances dictate what goes onto their plates"(Kapur, Dec. 1999). Unassailably, bad labor relations and reward systems in Nigeria have negatively impacted the workers' morale, their productivity, and the health of the entire economy.

As a student of industrial relations and politics, it is appropriate to underscore the remarkable benefits a society would receive from workers increased productivity. In a competitive system, the very inefficient firms, individuals, and nations would simply wither or cease to exist. Increase in productivity on a national basis enables everyone to enjoy a higher standard of living (Sisk & Williams 1980, pp.131-132). If workers are well motivated they work with high morale and resultant increase in their outputs. But if they are under-appreciated, their productivity is bound to plummet. In
addition, workers would not have the resources to purchase the goods and services produced in the economy. Thus, if money is not changing hands in any economy, economic gridlock could result with the attendant socio-economic and political problems.

As an example, a poor and hungry worker, no matter how information conscious he might be, would not spend the little money at his disposal in buying a newspaper. In fact, a friend of mine who is a university professor in Nigeria complained recently that he can not afford N50 (about 50 cents) to purchase a daily newspaper. Many people have the same problem confronting this professor. If this trend continues the newspaper industry would be in for a lot of trouble.

Without a doubt, the provision of basic economic necessities to ones family is more important to a poor worker than reading a newspaper. It will also be unthinkable for a poor worker to consume milk, which many would agree is a luxury item in present day Nigeria. In a purely economic sense, he would rather spend his meager income on staple food, such as 'garri' or 'yam,' (these items are relatively less expensive). Even the issue of democracy is out of the equation for a hungry worker. He is obviously interested in the politics that matters - the politics of survival.

Thus, if newspapers and milk are not sold, the simple fact is that the industries producing these items could collapse. Workers would be detached, and unemployment could skyrocket. The resultant dislocation could cause serious economic and social instability in a society such as Nigeria without an in-built social safety net.

In the advanced industrial and highly competitive societies, workers are the main tools for economic growth and social progress. Their demands are normally taken into serious consideration, because without a dedicated workforce an organization crumbles. But as I have lamented, reward system in Nigeria is probably the poorest in the entire globe. Their poor conditions notwithstanding, workers are often used and abused, harassed, threatened, and discarded, without any appreciation for their contribution to their organizations, and to the society at large. As I have mentioned earlier, the society has no social safety net (unemployment compensation, social security, etc.); and the pension system is awful.

One of the challenges facing Nigeria at the dawn of the new century is the establishment of the necessary social programs, because any person who is unemployed is on his own, even if one is disabled. Our very old, sick, and disabled, should not be left to struggle for survival without assistance. We should design a system where people can contribute towards their retirement when they are young, healthy, and working, and to draw from it when they are
not fit to work. Since our very old and sick live desperate poverty, this could help to reduce the level of poverty in the society. This is how it is in the United States, a country whose political system we have elected to model. Here, social security is the longest and most successful anti-poverty program (Baker & Weisbrot, 1999, p.12).

In retrospect, a worker with family responsibilities is likely to resort to an illegal and corrupt means to make ends meet, if he/she is not paid for months. Does the society expect a hungry citizen to be honest, happy, productive, and law-abiding? This is where petty and grand corruption comes in. The issue of corruption was discussed at length in my previous work (Dike 1999, pp.155-164). However, it is appropriate to add here that lack of adequate reward for honest effort and good skill is one of the reasons why corruption is pandemic in Nigeria.

It is equally important to point out that in Nigeria a university graduate if he is lucky to find a job in the present 'dysfunctional' society, cannot afford a car with his salary. Like what is common in the society, he might be tempted to get involved in fraudulent activities to make ends meet. For a university professor, a car is a luxury; universities are often closed as the teachers are always fighting for their survival. Sadly, the average salary of a Nigerian lecturer remains the lowest in West Africa. How then does one expect a professor who has the important responsibility to train the nation's labor force to put in his best in the classroom?

The present civilian administration has recorded some achievements in some areas since it was inaugurated, but not much has been achieved in the area of labor relations and dispute management. Industrial actions are still crippling the economy as workers are still fighting for their survival. Obasanjo and his administration were seriously criticized for mishandling the recent ASUU and NUT strike actions that rocked the nation in the late1999 (see Elemunor and Abuh, October 13, 1999). The administration could make history for itself if the welfare of the workers is seriously reviewed. Otherwise, labor crises would continue to be dealt with in the most expensive and least effective ways (= labor strike actions and lockout).

Even journalists would not make good reporting if they are not well compensated. General Babangida who ran the country down still receives wide press coverage from journalist. Is he bribing the hungry journalists with the money he looted from the national treasury? It is only in a country like Nigeria that you find people like General Babangida making waves. If it were in a country like the United States Babangida and his like could long have been dead politically. But strangely, he is still walking around freely like a saint, despite his atrocious activities in the society. Is he ignorant of what killed Dela Giwa? Do we need to setup probe panels to determine the criminality of his regime?
With the growing discontent in the society, there is near unanimity on the need for concerted action to provide solutions to the issues of resource mismanagement and corruption - the causes of the issues facing the nation today. The problems facing Nigeria multiply by the month. It is accepted that every society needs some shared values to hold it together. Unfortunately, the activities of some of our leaders have not created the needed good environment for the development of the necessary glues to hold our nation together.

We are now saddled with the issue of Sharia (Islamic) Law, which the civilian governor of Zamfara State, Ahmed Sani Yerima, has vowed to introduce in the state. As many writers on this issue have lamented, Sani Yerima has not considered the fact that Zamfara state is "a diverse, plural, multi-ethnic, and a multi-religious" state. He has not even taken into consideration the human rights and economic implications of such laws on the state (Osu, Dec. 20, 1999; Edomi, Nov. 16, 1999, etc).

Let me summarize my views on the specific subject of Sharia law by saying that individuals have the constitutional right to practice whatever religion they prefer. This should be done without infringing on the civil rights of other citizens, and without tearing the country apart. Opinions may differ on where the dividing line should be drawn, but the government (federal, state, or local) is prohibited by the 1999 constitution to sponsor a religion, or to dictate to the people the type of religion to adopt. Sadly, some of our political leaders are out to govern without a clear understanding of their constitutional boundaries, and the responsibility of government. With all the problems facing the society, one wonders why the establishment of a religion in Zamfara should be the priority of the honorable governor - Ahmed Sani Yerima.

Given the foregoing, Achebe (1983) is probably right that leadership is the main problem facing Nigeria. The society, without a doubt, has all the material resources to pay her workers and to salvage all her poverty-stricken population. But the leaders waste their energies on issues that would not improve the living standard of the people. Grave threat to our future stability lie in the masses beset by absolute poverty. Economic reform, education, and infrastructure creation is still the most hopeful corrective measures. But without the concerted actions of the leaders, workers would remain unmotivated; and the entire society is bound to suffer. How then can the workers' productivity be improved?

**Possible ways to improve workers' productivity**

Having identified the problems facing the average worker in Nigeria, let's take a minute to discuss the possible ways to improve their productivity.
Employee motivation, which is the main problem, can take many forms. Thus, any productivity improvement programs in Nigeria should include, among other things, the replacement of ineffective and obsolete technologies; replacement of equipment in poor conditions; establishment of good working conditions (good payment system and incentives, job satisfaction, good retirement packages, etc), and the provision of appropriate technical manpower and instructions.

Investment in human development (employees training), and technological modernization are areas that deserve serious attention. This is because, one of the most efficient and effective methods of improving workers productivity is simply to train them in the skills they need to perform their job duties. And without the availability of necessary tools and modern technologies, workers productivity is destined to go south. As Hodgson (March 1993) has recommended, we should educate the workers, test them on the understanding of the materials, then reward them based on how well they perform (p.83). It is appropriate to point out at this juncture that "the only enduring competitive advantage [in this global economy] is a high-quality, well-motivated work force willing to work together as a team to increase productivity" Greene (April 1991, p.62).

Taking proper interest in people is another way to improve their productivity. It has been noted that the more you know about an individual - knowing the needs and aspirations - the better you will be able to know how to motivate and to get the most out of him (Donadio March 1992, p.40). Since workers are not paid well and when due, it is obvious that employers have not taken proper interest in them.

Managers (= person in charge of a formal organization or one of its sub-units, Mintzberg 1980, p.100), are responsible for giving directions. Thus, the work climate of any unit or organization is determined, for good or bad, by the work habits of that unit or organization's manager. For example, if the managers have not shown any concern for their organizations, how would they expect that from the workers? This tends to explain why corruption is endemic in Nigeria. Since both the led and the leaders are corrupt, they do not apparently see corruption as a vice. Therefore, any motivation programs in organizations would only work if the employees feel confident that management is willing to show good efforts in their use. Anything less could cause mistrust. De-motivation would also set in since workers are willing to put forth additional effort only when they see some kind of gain from it Mullen (Nov/Dec 1993, p.17).

For this, our employers should learn to implement any employment benefits agreement reached with the workers for the mutual benefit of the people and the society. The non-implementation of benefits agreed upon between the government and ASUU apparently led to the recent university teachers' strike actions. The managers should also desist from playing around with...
workers wages and salaries. This is a challenge that should be tackled with sincerity at the dawn of the 21st century. In addition, workers should be allowed to participate in activities and in setting goals and objectives in their organizations. This would help them to develop a sense of ownership and pride Donadio (March 1992, p. 40). And as Metz (Jan 1992) has noted, recognition and visibility of the subordinates by management can spur major increase in productivity (p.25).

More importantly, Nigerian society should create appropriate organizational environment and value system that would stimulate the morale and productivity of the workforce and leadership. Overtime, a culture of high productivity would be created, not by any other way, but by the behavior of the workers and the leaders. However, it is essential to emphasize that the above prescriptions would work better under a viable democratic political process.

**Conclusion**

Nigeria has a system that suffers from many deficiencies, the most glaring of which is the lack of motivation for her workers. The nation can move forward only if persistent and deliberate efforts are made to correct the deficiencies. Towards this direction, the state should withdraw from the areas of the economy where private individuals could manage, for improved productivity, more jobs, export increase, and sociopolitical stability. This would in turn increase the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The decline in productivity would result in plant's closure, loss of jobs, and increased human misery. As it were, a happy and healthy worker is normally a high productive employee (all things being equal).

Some state governments have not been able to implement the new salary structure approved by the federal government. Yet some governors from these states have since their inauguration undertaken some wasteful foreign trips without clearing the backlog of pays owed the workers. Even with the full implementation of the new salary structure, Nigerian workers would still be grossly underpaid. Many of them could still be struggling to subsist on less than $1 a day.

Meanwhile, our oil wells are still pumping out well over 1.88 million barrels daily; but the plebes have not been benefiting from the gains. Thus, with good management of the abundant natural resources in the country, we can still put in place effective social security programs for the society. As President Bill Clinton said at a regional conference on social security in Kansas City, Missouri, we still have the chance to "fix the roof while the sun is still shining" (as cited in Baker & Weisbrot 1999, p.1). For that, we must change our policies that have not served us well. As Bob Crandell, president of American Airlines, is known to have said, "If you always do what you always did, you will always get what you always got" (as
cited in Sharman, Feb 1991, p.11). And if we want to survive as a nation in this 21st century, we have to 'understand and apply what works now.'

References

Abbas, Femi (Nov. 12, 1999); "The cheating fuel stations." The Vanguard, Nov. 12, 1999.
Baker, Dean and Mark Weisbrot (1999); Social Security - The Phony Crisis; p.1; p.12.
Conabel, Barber "Beyond Halifax" - An article written shortly after the June 1995 meeting of the G7 at Halifax, Canada (cited in www.cgg.ch/barber.htm).
Edomi, Ovie (Nov.16, 1999) His comments on the issue of the Sharia laws in Zamfara state; the Vanguard, Nov. 16, 1999.
Hodgson, Karyn (March 1993); "Getting the most out of Employees." Building and Supply Home Centers, March 1993, p.83.
Managers (November 1993); "Improving productivity through motivation" Managers, Nov. 1993, p.29
Metz, Alex (Jan. 1992); "Improve productivity through delegation;" T&D, Jan. 1992, p.25.
Mullen, Paul (1993); "Employee Monetary Systems: The past or the future in employee motivation" IM Nov/Dec 1993, p.6).
Osu, Gabriel (Dec. 20, 1999); "Sharia or Constitution q Sharia will create disharmony." The Vanguard, Dec. 20, 1999.
Oyo, Remi (May 14, 1999); "Nigerian Workers do it for love, not money" The Daily Mail & Guardian, May 14, 1999.
Soros, George (Jan. 1998); "Toward a Global Open Society;" In The Atlantic Monthly;Volume 281, No 1, pp. 20-32).

Victor Dike is the author of, Leadership, Democracy, and the Nigerian Economy: Lessons from the Past and Directions for the Future. The Lightning Press, Sacramento, 1999. The book is marked for $20.00, and could be obtained by calling: (916) 497-3418 (voice mail)