



## **XI'S FOUR COMPREHENSIVES AS PILLARS OF THE CHINESE DREAM AND DEVELOPMENT: A THEORETICAL ANALYSIS**

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### **Abstract:**

*The research work examines the contemporary reform model as enunciated by president XIJINPIN as a strategic blue print for china's continuous growth and development. The research will focus on each comprehensive as it relates to contemporary china in the economic field, reform initiative, rule of law and the communist party discipline. The researcher adopts the secondary methodology in order to generate data for the research. Findings show that the four comprehensives if properly implemented, will make china emerge as a political, economic and social model in contemporary global politics, for economic prosperity, political and social harmony will be achieved. The research concludes that, success of the four comprehensives will make china reformed and development will come to stay in china's near future. The paper recommends strict implementation of the four comprehensives and consolidating on rule of law and party discipline as the bedrock of the reform or political theory, among other things.*

**Key Words:** Four Comprehensives, Political Theory, Development, Economy, Prosperity, Contemporary & Analysis.

### **1. Introduction:**

The development of a society is hinged on the strength of its inertia to reform its economic, political, cultural and social aspects of living. A society without reform is like a decadent and moribund society. The morbidity of such society is that the economy will be stagnated; the political system will be left without stability, no political programs that may lead the society forward. Reform less society cannot continue educationally especially with scientific and technological knowhow. Cultural traits need to be reformed in order to stand the taste of time.

Reform in general is a policy initiative which provides a blueprint for future development of a nation at different intervals and under different institutions of the society. Reform is meant to correct, to change or to modify the existing structures with the view of uplifting the national institutions as well as members of the society. The institutions are meant to serve the people that are why they need to be reformed. The people's lives are expected to favorably change from the former condition to a new one. Reform is not a new term or concept in the literature of political science, development administration and economics. It is also not new in application by states around the world, especially the advanced societies. Reforms are like designs on how to produce an efficient change. Those who really need reforms, truly implement the reform policies and those who wish to have reforms on paper, define the reform without the intention of implementing it. This however, is obtainable in Africa and other third world nations due to the existence of some intervening variables that impede the implementation of any meaningful blueprint.

This research work however, deals with the four comprehensives of XI JINPIN of china, as a policy framework, reform initiative and a new political theory. The research will look at each comprehensive to see its effectiveness in the reform process and how it

will impact on the Chinese society and people. The cross-border influence of the four comprehensives as they shape the economic, political and socio-cultural aspects of other societies, especially in Africa, Asia, central Asia, Europe and the Middle East.

## **2. Literature Review:**

Many scholars have provided academic and intellectual arguments on the concept of reform and development. One major argument is reconciling the concept of reform, growth and development, which according to the works of Sen (1983:745-762), reforms and growth are one aspect of development. Reforms are made for the purpose of economic growth; the aim of economic growth is also to produce economic development.

Reforms are made to improve all aspects of the society for the betterment of the living condition of the people. It may involve improving the economic, political, economic and social aspects of people's lives (Shiffrin, 2003: 471). Reforms are developmental plans and designs for a better and a developed society. The European nations that emerged weak after the Second World War for example, were able to grow and develop by reforms and developmental plans that strengthened their economies. Even though economic, political and social reforms did not start immediately after the Second World War, but its origin has been traced to a particular stage of human development. In the writings of Contreras (2015:59) the concept of reform and development emerged with the decay of the historical feudal society and the early emergence of capitalist structuration. The capitalists resorted to primitive accumulation of values and exploitation of labor through the free ownership of means of production.

In a popular analysis of economic indices of development, scholars believe that development connotes increase in the level of per capita income in a society, which is obtainable through reforms (Mansell and Wehn, 1998). It is also believed that, apart from per capita income, development reforms should be able to catch up with what has been attained by European nations in terms of standard of living and the level of income earned per annum (Schumpeter and Backhaus, 2003: 61-116)

The concept of reform which results in a societal development in the works of Todaro and Stephen (2011), deals primarily with "the expansion of people's entitlements and their corresponding capabilities, morbidity, nourishment, literacy, education, and other socio-economic indicators. This is the Chinese dream of President XI JINPIN in his first comprehensive of building a prosperous and a harmonious society.

The Chinese dream for example, is subjected to a series of reforms which china wants to achieve in the nearest future. The four comprehensives are part of the Chinese dream which was coined by president XI in 2013, to describe the plan for Chinese prosperity and harmony from now to the year 2021 (The economist, 2013: 24-26). The Chinese dream is also meant to achieve a developed nation of china, with the nation of china getting to the national dream and achieving individual Chinese dream of economic independence, improved leadership and economically advanced society (The economist, 2013: 11).

The dream of China as characteristically identified by president XI, though different from the American dream, is full of expectations. Such expectations of the Chinese dream (Osnus, 2013) include (a) national rejuvenation (b) improvement of the people's livelihoods (c) prosperity (d) construction of a better society and (e) a strengthened military.

The reforms of china and the dream the people and the nation want to achieve, is believed to be based on a collective effort, not just a political commitment. President XI

has made it very clear that young people have to work “assiduously to contribute to the revitalization of the nation” (Yang, 2013). When people contribute their own quota and the government continues to support, the dream of prosperity through collective effort, socialism and national glory will be achieved (Shi, 2013).

In the writings of Neville and Adrian (2008), Chinese reforms must be able to rebuild ex-urban centers and should not just focus on building new cities. In this view, china is seen as a city under construction. The reform and dream of a moderately harmonious society envisages high standard of living, higher GDP per capita, completing urbanization, science and technology, economics and business, resurgence of Chinese civilization and culture, military might and effective participation at global level (Isaac, 2013).

### **3. Theoretical Framework:**

The theoretical framework adopted to guide this research work is the theory of change, developed from program theories to oversee objectives of change, plans or reforms that are geared towards change and evaluation of outcome of reforms (Brest, 2010; Clark and Taplin, 2012). Developed in the 1990's by Huey Chen, Peter Rossi, Michael Quinn Patton, Helene Clark and carol Weiss. The theory of change first emerged at the aspen institute of roundtable on community change as an initiative to evaluate comprehensive community efforts towards reforms and change. The efforts put by the proponents of the change theory started since in the 1980's in their thinking on how to apply program theories to evaluate reforms and change initiatives in the society (Weiss, 1995).

The change or reform theory tries to also look at the possibility of achieving the reform goals, the timing in the reform process and measurability of the reform. These assumptions are known as (a) reform plausibility (b) reform feasibility and (c) reform testability. Plausibility envisages “the logic of the outcomes pathway. Does it make sense? Are the outcomes in the right order? Are the preconditions each necessary and collectively sufficient to reach the long-term outcomes and ultimate impact? Are there gaps in the logic?” (Stein and Volters, 2012).

Secondly, feasibility of a reform looks into the “initiative” of the reform. Some of the fundamental questions attached are basically to understand whether or not the reform “can realistically achieve its long-term outcomes and impact. Does the organization have adequate resources? Does it need partners? Does the scope, expectations, or timeline of the theory need adjustment?” (James, 2011).

Reform testability delves into the “indicators: Are they solid and measurable? Will they yield sufficient information to evaluate the success of the initiative? Will they be convincing to necessary audiences?” (Collins and Clark, 2013).

### **4. Theory Relevance:**

The relevance of the theory of change to the topic under study (XI JINPIN four comprehensives) is that, there were many reforms as carried out in china. The four comprehensives are a kind of reform initiative and a blue print for the future development of china. The theory of change is trying to look at the plausibility of the four comprehensives, which involves the logic of the outcome of a prosperous society, deepening reform, strengthened rule of law and party discipline. The pre-conditions, are they sufficient to the realization of the long term outcome?

The second relevance of reform theory or theory of change to the four comprehensive is feasibility. This experiments the initiative in its entirety whether the Chinese dream of four comprehensives can be achieved within the designated period of

2021. Is there need for time adjustment; is there need for partners or additional resources?

Lastly, the theory of change explains whether the four comprehensives are testable and evaluable. Are people convinced about the outcome of the comprehensives or not. It is therefore, based on this theoretical framework that this research work will critically analyze the four comprehensives as a blue print for Chinese societal change.

#### **5. The Four Comprehensives and Chinese Development Prospect:**

The emergence of the four comprehensives for china is traceable to November 2013 plenary session of the 18<sup>th</sup> CPC central committee, which discussed on strategies, priorities for further reforming the Chinese nation and designing a blue print for china's future development. The major priorities considered for china are: (a) comprehensively building a moderately prosperous society (b) comprehensively deepens reform (c) comprehensively implement the rule of law, and (d) comprehensively strengthen party discipline (Chen, 2015:5-10). The benefits that china can derive from these comprehensives may include, but not limited to the following: (a) china will emerge a wealthier nation (b) china will become a model of development plans (c) the people of china will become more happier with economic development (d) it will consolidate Chinese diplomatic relations and foreign policy (e) china will continue to have more influence on international stage (f) the blue print will fulfill the popularly known hope of "Chinese dream" which is a complete renewal or rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

#### **6. Comprehensively Building a Moderately Prosperous Society:**

A prosperous society is understood to be one with improved standard of living, high per capita income, improved infrastructure, education, science and technology, equality, and development of the rural areas. The overall administrative framework for china is prosperity. As emphasized by president Xi, China needs a moderate prosperity. This concept of prosperity is a complex one, for it envisages legal prosperity, party prosperity, economic prosperity, political prosperity, social prosperity in its divergent nature. The rationale behind the political theory is all about making progress in all ramifications of Chinese nation.

China is launching this strategy because it is assuming leadership position in the world. Many countries in the world look up to china for economic support, infrastructural support, political support, economic support, policy support and many other types of support. For China to be able to continue providing these supports, it needs more internal reforms, strengthening its rule of law and democratic principles, fight corruption and maintain party discipline. For China, however, setting example internally is what will make the world admire china. This is also in tandem with the adage that: "charity begins at home".

#### **7. Deepening Reform**

Secondly, deepening reform and building a moderately prosperous society share a common peculiarity. This peculiarity is that, prosperity is not attainable without a better plan and reforming an existing system. Reformation is like a design of how you want the society prospers. The Peoples Republic of China has had many reforms from mao's era, Jiang Zenmin, Deng Xiaopin, Hu Jintao, now to Xi Jinping. Good reforms are usually continuous and from where one regime stops, another continues. The Xi Jinping's comprehensive on deepening reform states that:

The overall goal of deepening the reform comprehensively is to improve and develop socialism with Chinese characteristics, and to promote the modernization of the national governance system and capacity. We must pay more attention to implementing systematic, integrated and coordinated reforms, promoting the development of socialist

market economy, democratic politics, advanced culture, a harmonious society and ecological progress. We must make sure that the vigor of labor, knowledge, technology, managerial expertise and capital keeps bursting forth, all the wealth-creating sources fully flow, and that the fruits of development benefit all people still more and equally (Chen, 2015:7).

The above is not unconnected to governance system and governance capacity as all reform processes must reflect socialism with Chinese characteristics as the system, it must also consider the determination of the members of the communist party as pioneers of growth, development and deepening reform in the peoples republic. In order to consider the plausibility of comprehensively deepening reform of the political theory, the road map and objective designed to be achieved need to be highlighted. Based on the decision passed at the third plenary session of the 18<sup>th</sup> CPC central committee in November 2013, in respect to balancing production with the productive forces, promoting sustainable economic and social development as objectives in line with reforming economics, politics, culture, society, ecological civilization, national defense and army and self-construction of the CPC, the process of achieving the objectives is what is termed reform plausibility. This in the writings of Chen (2015:8) clarifies that: Economic system reform is the focus of deepening the reform comprehensively. The underlying issue is how to strike a balance between the role of the government and that of the market, and let the market play the decisive role in allocating resources and let the government play its functions better...uphold the leadership of the party, adhere to the party's basic line, reject both the old and rigid closed door policy and any attempt to abandon

Apart from the above that provide theoretical reform plausibility, other areas that will make outcome of the reform attainable may involve: Take the socialist road and ensure that...reform is in the right direction. We should emancipate the mind, seek truth from the facts, keep up with times, be realistic and pragmatic...learn useful experience, promote innovation both in both theory and practice.

#### **8. Strengthening the Rule of Law:**

There is great nexus between rule of law and party discipline. The laws must be above everybody in china regardless of his position, wealth or influence and nobody should be above the law. If this is consolidated, members of the communist party must be watchful in whatever they do.

One important aspect of the Chinese constitution is that, it has been subjected to reformation in order to stand the test of time and making the constitution supreme in trying to maintain rule of law. The current constitution of china according to Chen (2015:108) "was adopted in the fifth session of the fifth national people's congress in 1982 through national discussion on the basis of the 1954 constitution". This adaptation has also included the rights of Chinese people in all ramifications dealing with the issues of safeguarding the rights of the people. Other relevant institutions such as state organs, armed forces, political parties, social organizations, enterprises and public institutions must adopt the constitution as criteria in discharging their functions.

With the determination of the government of china to strengthen the rule of law, the national people's congress has made four changes to the constitution since after 1982. These changes are with the purpose of maintaining rule of law and safeguarding the rights of the people. Some of these changes made are as follows (Chen, 2015:109-110):



- a. The 1988 amendments: the amendment made in 1988 was made to open up for the private sector to exist and help in the development of the Chinese society within the ambit of law, and secondly, land ownership was made transferable according to the prescription of the constitution. The amendment as declared reads: "The state permits the private sector of the economy to exist and develop within the limits prescribed by law; land use rights can be transferred in accordance with the provisions of the law".
- b. The 1993 amendments: the amendments made in 1993 were to strengthen the market economy according to the principles of Chinese socialist system, allow for more democratic participation through multiparty cooperation and political consultation under the guide of the Chinese communist party. The amendments read: "the state implements a socialist market economy; the system of multiparty cooperation and political consultation under the leadership of the CPC will exist and develop for a long time".
- c. The 1999 amendments: the major provisions of the 1999 amendments as enshrined in the constitution are (i) the state implements ruling the country by law and building a socialist country based on the rule of law (ii) economic system in which public ownership is the mainstay and economic entities of diverse ownership develop together (iii) system of income distribution in which distribution according to work is the main form that coexists with other forms of distribution.
- d. The 2004 amendments: some of the amendments made in 2004 are (i) the state encourages, support and guides non-public economic development, and implements supervision and management to the non-public economy according to law (ii) citizens' lawful private property is inviolable (iii) the state respects and safeguards human rights in accordance with the law.

From the above reforms and amendments made over the years, it is evident that china can strengthen the rule of law under the leadership of Xi Jinping from his commitment to reform china. Some of the areas highlighted to work on the rule of law as written by Chen (2015, 110) includes the following:

- a. Improve the supervisory mechanism and procedures to raise to a new level the comprehensive implementation of strengthening the rule of law.
- b. Establish and improve the system within which society is loyal to, abide by, upholds and applies the constitution and laws.
- c. Uphold the principle that everyone is equal before the law, and no organization or individual has the privilege to overstep the constitution and laws.
- d. All acts in violation of the constitution and laws must be investigated.
- e. Establish a system of universal legal counselling.
- f. Improve the review mechanisms of normative documents and primary decisions.
- g. Set up a rigorous assessment standard for legal system development.
- h. Improve the legal education mechanism and raise the public awareness of the rule of law.
- i. Gradually increase the number of major cities with the right to make regulations.

From the theoretical instrument adopted the comprehensive of strengthening the rule of law remains plausible, feasible and evaluable. This is largely because, other reforms and amendments have occurred in china, the four amendments treated above have also been successful. A design of modusvivendus has been made and requirements on how to achieve that goal.

## **9. Party Discipline:**

The communist party of china is the bedrock of Chinese nation; its agricultural base; revolutionary engine and pioneer of all developmental initiatives of china. Without the communist party being disciplined, corruption will become order of the day, rule of law will be absent, poverty level will increase, markets will fall and think of all vices due to lack of party discipline. Having discovered that, president Xi identify party discipline as a priority for contemporary Chinese economic, political and socio-cultural development. The excesses or absolute power without checks is not healthy for the survival of a society. Albeit the communist party has been performing well in china, there is need to maintain discipline within the party.

Legislative and executive powers are merged in china, where judicial powers are established by the state powers based on the principle of democratic centralism. Checks and balances are imperative in order for democracy to be preserved. The current regime of Xi wants such democratic principles broadened in china and ensure such checks on party officials obtainable from the reform agenda and as supported by the constitution. Some of the identified problems with the Chinese political structure and the party that need to be addressed are (Chen, 2015:155):

1. The power configuration: there exists no mutual restrain between the decision-making, executive and supervisory powers. This explains how the powers of some departments and positions are too great to be touched.
2. Some officials have excess powers even above the organization, with the concept of "one person alone has the say".
3. There exists overlapping of functions.
4. Lack of legal constrain of some powers
5. The exercise of power is sometimes not transparent

Consequently, the system has paved a way for some officials to be corrupt. With the comprehensive of strengthening party discipline, some of these powers will be curtailed, checks and balances will come to stay and rule of law will govern the conduct of all officials in china. It is also notable that, the issue of corruption and party discipline as manifest in the year 2012, was a good omen for china's intention to fight corruption and other related offences. According to Chen (2015:165)

China's discipline inspection and supervision organ at all levels received a total of 1.306822 million petition reports, including 866,957 classified as accusatory in nature. According to preliminary verification, 155,144 cases were filed and 153,704 closed, 160,718 people punished and 7.83 billion yuan recovered.

The fourth comprehensive of strengthening party discipline has some areas that need to be improved and necessary measures to be taken in order to curtail the level of corruption among party officials for the good of the system and for the betterment of the Chine society. Some of these plans on excessive powers and anti-corruption reform of Xi Jinpin includes:

- a. Building a power exercise mechanism that has to do with scientific decision making process, resolute enforcement and effective supervision.
- b. Improving the leadership of the party and the state, uphold the system of democratic centralism and provide full play to the party's role as the core of leadership.
- c. Specify the responsibilities and scope of power of the principal party and government officials at all levels.
- d. Improve the checks and supervision of powers vested in the hands of leading officials.

- e. Reform the functions of anti-corruption coordination groups at all levels
- f. Strictly implement the system of accountability for improving party conduct and upholding integrity.
- g. Reform the entire party's discipline inspection system.
- h. Strengthening the supervisory role of the central commission for discipline inspection.
- i. Improve the discipline inspection system at both central and local levels.
- j. Improve the system of laws and regulations on combating corruption and promoting integrity.

The above comprehensive is also plausible and feasible if the government of president Xi will implement the core aspects of the reform and the Chinese seem to have confidence in his resilience to accomplish the reform agenda.

#### **10. Conclusion:**

Any reform according to the theory of change must be able to be sufficient and conditioned to be achieved in any socio-economic formation. Such reforms should also be testable and evaluable. The four comprehensives of Xi are plausible and feasible. If fully implemented, china will become a fully reformed society politically, economically, educationally, agriculturally, industrially, technologically and china will emerge as an advanced society in the near future.

#### **11. Recommendation:**

To achieve the identified comprehensives of president Xi, some major areas need to be highlighted and consolidated. Such areas are:

One, the Chinese government must ensure the implementation of the four comprehensives in a manner achievable. Strengthening the rule of law and party discipline are the bed rock for china's meaningful reform and development.

Two, the Chinese government should establish relevant bodies and charge them with an effective execution of each comprehensive independently so as to ensure efficiency and separation of functions.

Three, with the improvement of Chinese markets around the world, China must also deal with the issue of product quality especially those that get to Africa as part of the reform process that other nations and economies can benefit.

Four, functions of the leading communist party officials in each department and institution must be specified, supervised and inspected. This must also do with frequent and periodic inspection and auditing to ensure more transparency and discipline within the party.

Five, more supports should also go to education. As china remains the most populous society on earth, there is the need to support more underprivileged to acquire knowledge alongside children from affluent homes. This will make china more prosperous and harmonious.

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