

Democracy, Good Governance and Development in Nigeria: The Challenges of Leadership

Dr. Linus Ugwu Odo

Department of Public Administration IBB University, Lapai, Niger State.

Abstract: *The quest for democracy, good governance and national development by the Nigerian state since the country's political independence in 1960 has suffered serious setbacks, which has engaged the attention of scholars and students of Nigeria's political history; and administrators alike. Many have attributed the country's setbacks and lack of progress to poor leadership. It is argued that the problem of leadership if not tackled has the potential to derail the country's quest and aspiration for an enduring democracy, good governance and development. It is in consideration of the importance of the subject that this paper seeks to examine the challenges of leadership in Nigeria to enable an understanding of its nature and implications for the goal of sustainable democracy, good governance and development in the country. This is with a view to making appropriate recommendations to address the leadership challenges such that the 21st century Nigeria will not follow suit, the lost of 20th century.*

Keywords: *Democracy; Good Governance; Development; Challenge; and Leadership.*

I. Introduction

The quest for democracy, good governance and national development has been the major preoccupation of the Nigerian state since independence in 1960. These laudable objectives have suffered serious setbacks due to poor leadership and the inability of the followership to hold those in positions of authority accountable for their actions and inactions. The country has thus, been left in a poor state of development characterized by endemic corruption at all levels of government and society; abject poverty and hopelessness; insecurity of lives and property; high rate of unemployment and youth restiveness; kidnapping and armed robbery; religious extremism; infrastructural deficits; among others.

Those in positions of authority have remained indifferent to the plight of the poor, the hungry and unemployed; instead, they are obsessed with siphoning the fortunes of the country, hence social injustice, corruption, poverty and insecurity have brought untold hardship to the people. The desired national transformation of the country is still a mirage in spite of the abundance of human and material resources, which should have ordinarily translated into a buoyant life for the citizenry. The greatest threat to democracy and good governance in Nigeria has thus been poor leadership, which breeds hostile political environment for national development. Since the return of democratic governance in 1999, Nigeria has been experiencing deepening political crises as a result of the defects of the democratization process and the apparent ineptitude of the political leadership.

The problem of leadership has continued to abort efforts at genuine democratization through exclusion of some segments of the political elite from effective participation in the politics of the country. According to Fayemi (2009), the long years of political misrule and bad governance exemplified by civilian administrations and military dictatorships since the country's political independence has left the nation politically de-mobilized, humanly underdeveloped and economically sterile with an ample population ravaged by poverty. Thus, with the return to democratic rule in the country in 1999, Nigerians had expected that the new wave of political leadership and democratic governance would accelerate the tide of development in the nation. The political leadership was expected to grapple with the socio-economic and political problems of the country, which border on poverty, corruption, lack of good governance, corrupt electoral system, unemployment, and insecurity, among others.

Some of these problems are not only getting worse, but appear to defy solutions. Nigerians have become deeply frustrated and disappointed over unfulfilled hopes of solving persistent economic crises, social tensions and political instability. The emergent political corruption and deceit have created widespread national disaffection, which has been hijacked by some interest groups for their own parochial purposes. Thus, despite size and natural endowment in both human and material resources, Nigeria lingers in the doldrums, perpetually a country of the future. This is contrary to the dreams of Nigeria's founding fathers that saw the country at independence as a beacon of hope and a bastion of democratic government in Africa (Oronsaye, 2006).

The challenges of democratization, good governance and development confronting Nigeria are deeply rooted in the quality of leadership. The inability of the political elite in the country to provide quality leadership

has been the major reason for the failure of the Nigerian state to make progress on all globally acknowledged indices of human development. This paper is concerned with how the expectations of Nigerians for democracy, good governance and national development could be realized. Thus, the paper seeks to examine the challenges of leadership in relation to the country's quest for democracy, good governance and national development. The paper is structured into sections. The first section is the introduction followed by the second section, which provides clarifications of the key concepts used in the work. The third section addresses in historical perspective the nation's struggle to consolidate democracy, good governance and ensure national development. The fourth section examines the challenges of leadership as it affects the country's national aspirations. The fifth section offers suggestions on how to tackle the lingering problems of leadership in Nigeria and thereafter draws conclusion.

Section II

Conceptual Clarifications

For the purpose of clear understanding of the paper, the key concepts used in the work are explained. These are democracy, good governance, development, and leadership.

Democracy: The word democracy has been conceptualized by scholars and statesmen alike from different perspectives, which had tended to emphasize different aspects of the process. Democracy as a form of government holds a strong appeal among countries of the world. It possesses certain basic elements without which no society can truly call itself democratic. These include the principle of equality; sovereignty of the people; respect for human life; the rule of law; and liberty of the individual. Democracy is a concept that in theory and practice holds the right of the people to choose their leaders who in turn, must be accountable to the people as of right.

According to Omoleke (2009) in Euginia (2010), democracy is a system of government, a set of institutions that fulfill at least two essential requirements, which are ability to elicit as accurately as possible the opinion of as many people as possible on who shall be their representatives and on how the country ought to be governed. This means that democracy connote universal suffrage, institutionalization of free and fair election at frequent intervals; and the elected representatives must be accountable to the electorate. The essential condition of democracy is that there shall be a consensus on the rules of the political game. Democracy therefore, entails a system of governance that is accountable and guarantees a wide range of social, economic and political rights.

Good Governance: The concept of good governance is often difficult to define because the word "good" is a relative term. To this end, it might be necessary to first examine the concept of governance. Like most concepts in social science, governance has not lent itself to a universally accepted definition. According to the World Bank (2000) cited in Adejumobi (2004), governance is the exercise of political power to manage a nation's affairs. This encompasses the state's institutional and structural arrangements, decision-making processes and implementation capacity, and the relationship between government officials and the public. The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (1999) cited in Adejumobi (ibid) on the other hand, defines governance as a process of social arrangement between the rulers and the ruled in a political community. Its component parts are rule making and standard setting, management of regime structures and outcome and results of the social pact. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (1997) describes governance as the totality of the exercise of authority in the management of a country's affairs, comprising of the complex mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights and mediate their differences. Governance denotes how people are ruled and how the affairs of the state are administered and regulated (Okpaga, 2009). Governance therefore, refers to a nation's system of politics and how this functions in relation to public administration and law.

The concept of good governance is derived from governance. Governance can be regarded as good when it has the basic elements of what makes a system acceptable to the generality of the people. These elements include freedom, accountability, and popular participation, among others. According to Okpaga (2009), good governance is the process through which a state's affairs are managed effectively in the area of public accountability, responsiveness and transparency, all of which must be in the interest of the governed and the rulers.

Mohideen (1997) posits that governance becomes "good" when it is operated in accordance with legal and ethical principles as conceived by society. Implicit in the definition is the identification of the functional elements of good governance, which are the operational variables by which it can be achieved and sustained. These include accountability, transparency, rule of law, freedom of expression and association, electoral legitimacy, among others.

Development: The concept of development is susceptible to wide interpretations. There are as many views on the meaning of the concept as there are scholars and practitioners. In most literature, the concept of development has been used interchangeably with modernization, growth, change, innovation and transformation. Fayemi (2009) posits that development denotes the process of transforming a state of being into a better one. It entails the process of expanding and adapting capacity of the society in satisfying the material and cultural needs designed to achieve among others, increased productivity within a balanced economic system, the eradication of poverty and disease, and the liberation of the individual from their constraints. The process necessarily involves individual freedom and social security, cultural buoyancy, educational and economic liberation, self-reliance and sustainable socio-political order. In terms of approach, development has been subjected to several approaches in the last four decades or so. For example, it has moved, within the context of third world countries, from emphasis on modernization to economic growth, to popular participation and presently to Human Capital Development (HCD).

Development is an improvement in the quality of life in both quantitative and qualitative terms. According to Oronsanya (2006), development is a change or a transformation from a lower state of a well-being into a higher one. Adedeji (1991) cited in Oronsanya (2006) viewed development as a process of bringing about fundamental and sustainable changes in the society, embracing such things as the quality of life; social justice; equality of opportunity for all citizens; equitable distribution of income and democratization.

Leadership: There is no universally accepted single definition of leadership. When people come together for a purpose, there would emerge a leader to organize them to achieve the desired task. Thus, leadership is one of the most important elements for order and progress in any human endeavor and society. It is central to the control, motivation and direction of every human society towards development, progress and meaningful achievement in all spheres of human existence (Fayemi, 2009).

Leadership is the ability to take an initiative, to motivate, to influence, to direct and control the thoughts, opinions and actions of the followers in any given society towards the achievement of a purposeful end. By simple definition, a leader is a person placed in authority over others. This placement can be by birth, election or appointment. Generally, a leader should have the ability to direct the affairs of a given group. He controls and directs a group towards a set of pre-determined goals. These goals according to Robins (2002) cited in Eugenia (2010), are considered desirable, thus the group struggles towards them under the guidance of a person perceived as capable to deliver. Disenchantment arises when the leader fails to meet the expected targets.

Political leadership is therefore, challenging, particularly in a developing society such as Nigeria where there exists a lot of yearnings and demands for rapid socio-economic and political development. An effective political leadership should therefore, possess visionary, messianic, moralistic orientation and symbolic attributes (Adamolekun, 1988). These qualities are essential in making a good leader and a compelling lesson for Nigeria, which had suffered for too long under poor leadership. Also, Kombol (2009) cited in Eugenia (2010) stressed that good political leadership should have such sterling qualities as discipline, moral integrity, evolve people-oriented policies, good sense of judgment, strong vision, transparency, honesty and accountability. Leaders should be knowledgeable and facilitate the achievement of national aspirations and ensure development. Good leadership is therefore sine qua non for the attainment of the goals of democratic consolidation, good governance and development.

Section III

Democracy, Good Governance and Development in Nigeria since 1999

With the return of democratic rule in Nigeria in 1999 otherwise known as the “Fourth Republic”, the people have expected with great enthusiasm that the new political leadership and democratic governance would bring about rapid development in all facets of the Nigerian society. It was thus, expected that the political leadership would address the critical socio-economic and political problems bedeviling the country such as poverty; insecurity; unemployment; corruption; poor governance; among others. However, 15 years into the Fourth Republic in Nigeria, the extent to which these problems have been addressed as a means towards deepening democracy; instituting good governance; and fast-tracking the country’s development remains a matter of opinion.

Under a democratic governance, Nigerians expect certain minimum dividends from the government, which include steady electricity supply; good health-care services; employment for its teeming youths; reduction in mass poverty; access to qualitative education; improved infrastructure; security of lives and property; general well-being of citizens; among others. However, the nearly two decades and half of un-interrupted democracy in the country has been that of untold hardship, pains, increased poverty and squalor, unprecedented insecurity, preventable and rampant killings of innocent people and corruption. To some Nigerians today, military dictatorship is far better than the so-called democratic rule. According to Desert Herald Special Report (2014), this is because:

Under the military, citizens were virtually free to live and earn a living in any part of the country without fear of harassment and killings such as that of the dreaded Boko Haram that has defied military solution despite the enormous resources that are being wasted through security agencies.

Democracy in Nigeria has only succeeded in worsening the conditions of poor citizens due to the greed and selfishness of the leadership. The primary interest of the political leadership is not service but the accumulation of the nation's wealth. There are evidences indicating that the insecurity situation, armed robbery, kidnapping and other evil menaces in the country emanated from corruption induced poverty, a situation where the wealth of the nation finds its way into the foreign accounts of few individuals who are in the corridors of power. Billions of Naira is being stolen on daily basis while poor Nigerians are dying of hunger and starvation every day and those who survive live in penury in the midst of plenty.

According to Buhari (2005), what Nigerians bargained for and expected under a democratic rule was a government that would create a system that would guarantee at least the following:

- (a) The installation of a competent and accountable administrative machinery; and the end of arbitrariness and the use of public office for private gains;
- (b) The putting in place of effective constitutional and procedural checks and balances in the exercise of state power;
- (c) The nurturing and respect for a free and independent judiciary;
- (d) The creation of an environment conducive for business and foreign investment; and
- (e) The commencement of the drive for a higher standard of living for the people and drastic reduction in the levels of poverty and corruption.

However, these expectations had remained mere dreams. For instance, insecurity of lives and poverty is on the increase; poverty has assumed a permanent feature of the Nigerian society; corruption remains entrenched and endemic; there is decaying infrastructure; there is lack of qualitative education; staggering inflation; high rate of unemployment; health-care centers, where available are mere consultancy centers; etc. Buhari(2005) asserted that Nigeria has been saddled with civilian administrations that have wasted the years, doing nothing other than struggling with issues of legitimacy arising from rigged and fraudulent elections. He further accused the country's democratic leaders of displaying exemplary incompetence within the context of failing checks and balances.

It is also argued that on the economic front, the problem of Nigeria is no less depressing since the inception of the Fourth Republic in 1999. There is an apparent lack of planning and respect for the budgetary process almost in every sphere of governmental activity. The fight against poverty in the country has been more of slogan-chanting than a real poverty alleviation effort with the result that the poor are getting poorer while the rich are getting richer by the day at the expense of the poor. Similarly, the fight against corruption has not fared better. It has been alleged that the fight against corruption in Nigeria has been widely selective and geared towards dealing with perceived enemies than reducing the real corruption, hence corrupt behavior has continued unabated among officers in government (Buhari, 2005).

Corruption has undermined the normal functioning of social, economic and political system. According to Audu (2009) cited in Eugenia (2010), corruption directs resources from the poor to the rich; increases the cost of running business; distorts public expenditures and deters investors, both domestic and foreign. Also, elections in Nigeria are characterized by abuses such as multiple registration of voters; illegal printing of voter's card and other electoral materials; snatching and stuffing of ballot boxes; among others.

Since the return of democratic rule in 1999, the tide of development in the country has not accelerated to any higher height. As Fayemi (2009) noted:

Money laundry, political godfatherism, economic wastage, misplaced priorities, insecurity of lives and property, insensitivity to the plight and welfare of the masses, and lack of vision have remained permanent features of the present democratic leadership.

Accordingly, democratic consolidation, good governance, and development have continued to elude the Nigerian state. The leadership has woefully failed to live up to the creed of service to the people and indulged in self-serving, arrogant, exploitative and unscrupulous thereby constituting a clog in the wheel of deepening democracy; institutionalizing good governance and development in the country.

There is no doubt that these traits of the Nigerian political leadership cannot midwife democratic consolidation and good governance. Consequently, such social ills like poverty, corruption, unemployment, illiteracy, insecurity of lives and property among others have become permanent features of the Nigerian society. According to Adegba (2009), corruption has brought about poor and unpurposeful leadership, which has become a cankerworm that is eating deep into the fabric of the Nigerian society. The country's leadership has been discredited by corruption as a result of which institutions hardly provide the needed services to the people as public interests are relegated to the sideline and compromised for personal or parochial interests.

There is therefore, a poverty of leadership in Nigeria, which results in the personalization of leadership; the conduct of governance within an ethnic framework; and irresponsible use of power; crass opportunism of a political class sacrificing national economic development objectives for selfish material gains; total neglect of social welfare; sacrifice of merit on the altar of ethnicity; corruption and the pursuit of personal wealth at the expense of common good; among others. All these indices of bad leadership are anti-ethical to democratic consolidation; good governance; and the development of the country. The failure of the political leadership in Nigeria has therefore, aggravated the crisis of development, which manifest in high incidence of poverty and underdevelopment in the country.

Nigeria is richly endowed with human and material resources and ranked the sixth largest producer of crude oil in the world; yet poor leadership and corruption have perpetuated and entrenched poverty in the country. According to Eugenia (2010), the incidence of poverty in Nigeria is characterized by:

Lack of income and productive resources, hunger and malnutrition, ill-health, limited or lack of access to education and other basic services, increase in morbidity and mortality from illness, homelessness and inadequate housing, unsafe environment social discrimination and exclusion.

The quality of life of an average Nigerian citizen has therefore, progressively declined over the years. It is thus, evident that Nigeria lacks the political leadership that could midwife democratic consolidation and good governance for socio-economic development of the country.

Section IV

The Challenges of Leadership in Nigeria

It is worrisome to note that Nigeria's political independence had not brought substantial change in the economic conditions and people's general development. As Fayemi (2009) rightly observed, the standard of living in Nigeria is deteriorating on a daily basis as high unemployment, inflation, civil strife, poverty, corruption, disease, malnutrition, illiteracy, insecurity of lives and property, among others appeared to be the only legacy the state is capable of passing from one generation to the other. The most critical question that any patriotic Nigerian might be asking today is why has the country not developed or is not developing as fast as it should? As Okau (2014) noted, while answers to this question may vary from group to group and individual to individual, some answers are so strong that they are rarely controvertible. In this respect, the problem of leadership is a good example.

The emergent political leadership of the post-independence Nigeria has shown a disappointing incapacity to manage the affairs of the country. The citizens are feeling thoroughly embarrassed and disappointed by the turn of events because of unfulfilled expectations and dashed hopes. The people are facing economic hardship of the highest order despite the enormous national resources with which the country has been endowed.

Nigeria's celebrated economic growth has not translated into better economic and social welfare for Nigerians. Thus, poverty reduction and job creation have not kept pace with the population growth, which implies social distress for an increasing number of the people.

Poor leadership has succeeded in putting Nigeria and its over 160 million people into political and economic impasse. It is rather unbelievable that since the return of democracy in 1999, the country could not consolidate the democratization process to achieve good governance and usher Nigerians into the land of goodies. In most parts of the country today, millions of human inhabitants share water from the same source with animals; water infested with bacteria and viruses.

Nigeria is poorly governed, hence her failure to rise to the height of its potentials. According to Achebe (2010), the country's embarrassing stunted growth despite its enormous human and material resources is the product of the failure of leadership. The thesis that determined and focused leaders, elected or non-elected, make their society is well grounded with the facts of history. The people or followers feed on the energy of their leaders to rise to their individual potentials; the full flowering of which fuel national development. Leaders are the engines of national development. This shows the critical role of leadership.

The Phenomenon of Leadership Failure in Nigeria

It has been argued in this paper that the reason why Nigeria has failed to internalize true democratic culture; good governance; and development, in terms of the general well-being of the larger majority of its population 15 years (1999-2014) after an uninterrupted civilian rule is bad leadership. As Ekpou (2010) noted: We thought that with our vast resources, men and material and our unspeakable enthusiasm, we would circle the globe. However, 50 years (now 54) later, we are like a false pregnancy; every symptom is there but no baby. Indeed, Nigerians are unanimous on the verdict that the country has not fulfilled its potentials despite her enormous natural endowment in both human and material resources, hence the people's realities are far from their ideals; and all the accusing fingers for this paradox point to the quality of leadership. This makes the search

for the underlying causes of the phenomenon of leadership failure in Nigeria a compelling endeavor. The causes of leadership failure in Nigeria include the following:

Constitutional Provision: The 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in Section 131 provides four qualifications for the office of the President as follows:

- (a) He must be a citizen of Nigeria by birth;
- (b) He must attain the age of 40 years;
- (c) He must be a member of a political party and is sponsored by that political party; and
- (d) He must be educated up to at least school certificate level or its equivalent.

The issues of citizenship and political party affiliation are not debatable but certainly age and educational qualifications are. As Nigeria searches for a leader, what should count are people with a gift of the head and gift of the heart; brilliant and hardworking people with uncommon traits of selflessness and sacrificial service to humanity. These qualities have nothing to do with age.

The constitution provides for school certificate level education for an aspirant to the high office of President. At this time of great complexity in world affairs, if our entry qualification for the most important office in the land is this low, how can we expect a high level achievement from the occupant since higher education is part of the preparations for a high office. According to Ekpu (2010):

No school certificate holder today can be the managing director of a bank or the manager of a high grade restaurant in Nigeria, or driver at national Agency for the control of AIDs. Yet we have school certificate as the qualification for the most important office in the land at a time of great complexity, in world affairs.

Ethnicity: Ethnicity is a major obstacle to the development of effective leadership in Nigeria. The country is bedeviled by crisis of governance, which include the conduct of governance within an ethnic framework. Ethnic politics in the country has reduced faith in the unity of the Nigerian state to protect all citizens. As a result of this, ruling parties are tailored to serve tribal and ethnic cleavages with either the dominant tribal group or an acceptable tribal group used as a balance (Eke, 2008). The natural consequence is intensified tribal and ethnic rivalries based on deep-seated suspicion of the opposing ethnic groups. The ethnic minorities in Nigeria offer lucid examples.

The political class in Nigeria scarifies national economic objectives on the altar of ethnicity. These are at variance with the fundamental objective and directive principles of state policy.

Accidental Political Leaders: It is argued that no elected President of Nigeria since independence was ever prepared for the job. Hence, many of them hadn't the faintest idea about the nature and essence of political leadership because they were without exemption ill-prepared. This is the bane of the country's progress. According to Ekpu (2010), worthy of note is the fact that:

No elected President of Nigeria was ever prepared for the job. Abubakar Tafawa Balewa was not ready but was pushed by Ahmadu Bello to come to Lagos while he tended the shop in Kaduna. Shehu Shagari wanted to go for the Senate but the National Party of Nigeria's Kingmakers diverted him to Dodan Barracks. Olusegun Obasanjo was still in prison when godfathers pulled him out of the dungeon and put the crown on his head amidst a mild protest, "what did I forget there?" Umar Musa Yar'adua was heading to Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria for a teaching job when Obasanjo halted and wheeled him to Aso Rock. Goodluck Jonathan was just adjusting his seat as the Governor of Bayelsa state when Obasanjo called him to higher duties as Vice-President to Yar'Adua. As Yar'Adua's health failed, luck smiled on Jonathan and he became what he was not ready for; president.

It becomes obvious therefore, that no one among the presidents spent years dreaming, studying, working, researching and networking in readiness for the post of Nigeria's president. It is thus not surprising if none of them turned out to be a peak performer. Thus, Nigeria has over the years since the country's political independence, been saddled with leaders who were neither properly equipped nor even ready for the job.

Personalization of Public Office: One of the greatest un-doing of the Nigerian leadership is the tendency to personalize public projects. They initiate a vision and leave office with it, which is detrimental to national development. The challenge of leadership also creates the problem of policy summersault whereby policies are not allowed to mature as they are changed and countered arbitrarily. An example of this, according to Mark (2014), was when Obasanjo sold refineries in Nigeria to Chinese investors, which was upturned a year later by Yar'Adua. It is evident in Nigeria that every new administration comes in with its own programmes and completely jettisons whatever was on the ground notwithstanding the status of such programmes. It is worst when the new government belongs to a different political party. This accounts for the numerous abandoned projects that littered the entire landscape of the country.

Corruption: Nigeria is a nation favoured by providence. The vast human and material wealth with which she is endowed bestows on her a role in Africa and the world, which no one else can assume or fulfill. However, successive leaders in the country have regrettably betrayed irretrievably the country's high destiny. Achebe (1983) lamented over this situation when he said:

The countless billions that a generous providence poured into our national coffers in the last ten years (1979-82) would have been enough to launch this nation into the middle-rank of developed nations and transformed the lives of our poor and needy.

However, because we lacked the right leadership to manage such resources for the general good of the people, they were simply looted and stolen including squandering on uncontrolled importation of all kinds of useless consumer goods; inflated contracts to an increasing army of party loyalists who had neither the desire nor the competence to execute such contracts; as well as escalating salaries of grossly over-staffed and unproductive public service.

The trouble with the Nigerian state is leadership. The country lacks the leadership that would institute policies by which to engender the development of the nation. The people live in want of functional hospitals, roads, electricity, affordable shelter, schools, etc. As Igwe (2010) observed:

Funds meant for public welfare have been hijacked by the leadership and are sitting in Swiss Banks denying the poor the chance to escape poverty and forcing the best Nigerian brains (emphasis mine) to seek greener pastures abroad. Millions of others die from starvation, hunger, malnutrition, polio, measles, tuberculosis and other killer diseases. The crime of those who die and those who continued to suffer and who are denied opportunity to escape poverty is that they happened to have come under corrupt and incompetent leaders.

Majority of Nigerian leaders since independence, short of rhetorics, have variously shown they have no interest in the future of the country. All Nigeria has to live with are leaders who by some illegal means or the other acquired power, emptied the nation's coffers and restart the same process by working towards re-election and where this is not possible, transfer power to their cronies who venture to do worse than their predecessors. They recycled themselves within the corridors of power.

Thus, to all intents and purposes, Nigeria is a country of failed political leadership, which has betrayed its citizens. According to Fredlond (2001) cited in Okau (2014), One major characteristics of African Political leaders including Nigeria has to do with "Kleptocracy", which he explained thus:

The Greek roots of this word are "thief" and "rule" i.e. rule by thievery. It was coined by an observer of a Latin American dictator who pilfered on a grand scale. In Africa, the description was regularly applied to the government of President Mobutu of Zaire. ...Mobutu treated the national treasury as his personal account, drawing cash whenever he decided to buy another villa in Europe... or to fly with the national airline to France for a hair cut.

The situation in Zaire during Mobutu's era has a lot of similarities with the events in Nigeria since the country's political independence. For instance, late General Sani Abacha had during his presidency, 1993-1998, stolen N 78 billion, stashed in banks around the world. According to Leslie Caldwell, US Assistant Attorney General quoted by Reuters (2014), rather than serve his country, General Abacha used his public office in Nigeria to loot millions of dollars, engaging in brazen acts of kleptocracy. The most critical challenge of the Nigerian nation today therefore, is bad leadership.

Arising from such monumental corruption and decay occasioned by the absence of good leadership, Achebe (1983) decried Nigeria's loss of the 20th century and wondered if the 21st century would be allowed to follow suit.

The Role of Followership: There are no leaders without followers. In both theory and practice in a democracy, leaders lead with the consent of their followers, which is obtained through the instrumentality of the ballot paper. It follows therefore, that the followers deserve the leaders they get because they are or supposed to be instrumental to the emergence of the leaders. It is however, tempting to hold a leader entirely responsible when things go wrong but such temptation needs to be moderated by the fact that the followership have critical role to play in the success or failure of their leader. One of the critical roles the followership play is the right to act as the watch dog of the leadership. The followership abdicates that role by its uncritical acceptance of whatever the leader does.

A critical followership is alive to its watch dog responsibility, which creates an atmosphere that prevents a democratic leader from turning himself into an autocratic leader and even an autocratic from turning himself into a god. Docile followership, on the other hand, is passive and has no stomach to question the leadership or hold him accountable for his deeds. As Agbese (2010) asserted, docile followership is a fertile ground for poor and failed leadership.

Generally, enlightened societies have critical followership, hence on the average; have better and more committed leadership. However, unenlightened societies such as Nigeria have docile followership and tend on

the average to have poor leadership. Nigeria has therefore, continued to face the constant challenge of good leadership. Docile followership according to Agbese (2010) is a consequence of illiteracy and poverty. The education of the citizenry is the sure road to critical followership. This is because education exposes the followership to their rights and responsibilities including the rights and obligation of the leadership to the people.

Poverty and illiteracy, on the other hand, foster the culture of dependence, which in turn fosters the culture of benevolence. The culture of benevolence is anathema to the culture of accountability because in such a culture, people do not feel it is their right to question the behavior of the benefactors or the source of their generosity. The culture of benevolence breeds followers whom according to Mike Obaden quoted in Agbese (2010) cannot confront their leaders but eulogize and collaborate with those who visit bad leadership on them.

Nigeria is unfortunately saddled with the twin burden of illiteracy and abject poverty, which have created fertile ground for poor leadership. This is because under conditions of mass illiteracy and dehumanizing poverty, the ability of Nigerians to demand accountability from their leaders are seriously weakened if not entirely denied.

Section V

The Way forward

Nigerians are what they are today only because their leaders are not what they should be. According to Obasanjo (1994):

Other nations whose levels of material poverty were similar to ours at independence and which are less endowed in resources have made greater strides because they were better led politically.

It is therefore, obvious that positive leadership represents Nigeria's oasis of hope for greatness in a desert of mediocrities, purposeless, corrupt and visionless men and women masquerading as leaders at all levels of governance in the country.

Given this reality, the paper recommends that the various underlying causes of leadership failure in Nigeria, which have remained obstacles to the country's quest for true democracy; good governance; and national development, must be addressed with the seriousness and urgency they deserve. This will allow for the emergence of a positive leadership that would not compromise the national quest for improved welfare for the citizens; social infrastructures, human development; and technological breakthrough, which are the dividends of democracy and good governance.

II. Conclusion

This paper is all about nation-building. How Nigeria, as a nation-state, can be made better than what it is today. In other words, how can we entrench good and visionary leadership? In this respect, the paper submits that Nigeria should in addition to tackling the underlying causes of leadership failure in the country, put in place a programme of developing and educating the youths, as potential leaders of the future, on the values of true democracy; good governance; and national transformation. This is particularly apt and timely as Nigeria prepares for a general election in 2015 to elect a new set of leaders for the country.

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