

GOOD LEADERSHIP AND SUSTAINABLE DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIANS: THE WAY FORWARD

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Abstract

Several dispensations of government since independence in 1960 have tried without fruition to institutionalize good governance in Nigeria. The "trouble" with Nigeria, no doubt, can be perceived by all and sundry as endemic leadership failure. It has been empirically reviewed that abundance and/or celestial endowment with natural resources does not in itself translate to sustainable development, rather, development is engendered through qualitative and proactive leadership supported by the power of Education and wisdom, and harnessed by the synergy of a vibrant "work force. Hence, this paper examines some pertinent condition necessary for sustainable democracy to thrive holding good governances and education as factors for the sustainability of democracy as well as socio-economic development. The paper also argues that the seminal absence of intellectual rigour and inability of our leaders to leave a personal example which is the hallmark of good leadership, have contributed to the perennial leadership failure and its attendant legitimacy crisis in Nigeria. Towards this end, this paper proposes that, our great nation Nigeria can only experience the end of leadership crisis when true lovers of wisdom will come to hold political power or the holders of political power, will by some celestial appointment, become true lovers of wisdom.

Keywords: Good Leadership, Sustainable, Democracy, and Nigeria..

Obviously, the greatest problem confronting Nigeria's post-independent body politic is gross absence of humanistic political value system. To be humanistic in political culture presupposes good moral judgement in the actions of political actors, the masses, opinion leaders, stakeholders, the mass media as well as the Ecclesiastics. Having experienced transition from colonial autocracy to independence and civic rule in 1960, Nigeria was perceived as one country in Africa that would likely make steady progress towards representative democracy and good leadership. However, the departing colonial

imperialists rubber-stamped regionalism on the infant state of Nigeria which helped to deepen social fractionalization and ideological diversity in Nigeria. Consequently, our seemingly humanistic political culture was polluted and our political fore-runners were not able to fix the political puzzle, instead they swept it under the carpet without realizing that a time bomb has been planted under the carpet. Nigeria's leadership crisis sprang from the carefree manner which British took over, administered and abandoned the government and people of Nigeria. They did not make an effort to bring the country together and unite the heterogeneous groups of people.

Upon their departure, barely two years after, the people resumed fighting for their civil and political rights in a bid to institute a humanistic and justifiable political value system.-In 1962, personality acrimony ensued in the Yoruba-based Action Group (AG) political party between the leader Chief Obafemi Awolowo and his deputy Chief. S.L. Akintola who was also the premier of Western Region. Later in 1964, the census crisis also greeted Nigeria, the aftermath of .which was the Federal Election crisis in 1965 which assumed a National disillusionment-against the Belewa Government and the rulership of the Belewa/Akintola/Sardauna clique of the Nigerian National Alliance (NNA). The boat of the first republic was rocked by the military incursion into politics in the early hours of January 15th 1966. From that period, the country has' suffered the problems of bad governance, endemic corruption, criminal denial of the fundamental human rights of the citizenry and economic deprivation from both greedy political leaders and military dictators.

The crisis of governance in Nigeria is real. Ndehfru (2007) surmised that there are two important stairs in which we can substantiate the reality of governability crisis in Nigeria. The first according to him is the political level. Nigeria started as a multiparty democracy, consequent upon the west-minister model of government bequeathed to her by her departing colonial master which was predominantly parliamentary democracy. There were full commitments to the entrenchment of human rights, promotion of civil and political leadership. However, after a few years, democracy collapsed, there was total shift from democratic institutions, there was total hostility to opposition parties, the resultant effect was military intervention and the beastly civil war that finally aborted all attempts to fashion an acceptable and humanistic political value system in Nigeria.

Leadership and Good Leadership Concept

The Concept of Leadership is perhaps not a new word in the -literature of Political Science, Education, Management Sciences and the entire academic circle. Mostly, the word 'leadership' is used interchangeably with governance and management.-Governance is referred to as the deliberate task of running a government or any other organized 'entity (Ndehfru, 2007). Management can be perceived as the process of achieving objectives through people and through the use of other resources (Ezimah, 2004). On the other, Munroe (2005) argues, that Leadership, because of its indispensable role in a seemingly confused and complex world, ought to be perceived as a role one plays rather than a life one leads as could be deduced from the definitions of

governance and management respectively. He submitted that leadership is not a technique, a style or the acquisition of skills, but a manifestation of a humanistic spirit. According to him, Leadership is the capacity to influence others through inspiration motivated by a passion, generated by a vision, produced by a conviction, and ignited by a purpose.

Leadership has to do with an intrinsic and unrestricted passion one has to contribute his/her quota to the upliftment of the humanness of a people and to leave a trans-generational example which is the ultimate hallmark of Leadership. Therefore, true leadership must pursue humanness as a vision because to be a good or true leader is to be human and. to be human is a *condicio sine qua non* for the full realization of the leadership potentials of an individual. Haggai in Newman (1997) posited that Leadership is the discipline of deliberately exerting special influence within a group to move it towards goals of beneficial permanence that fulfill the group's real needs. Good leadership has an inseparable knit with excellence and self discipline. According to .Plato "he who wants to rule the world must first rule himself. Leadership is an awesome responsibility. Nothing great has ever been achieved without self-discipline. Self-discipline enables a leader to strive for excellence. Going far beyond the call of duty more than the citizenry expect... this is what excellence is all about. It comes from striving, maintaining the highest standards, looking after the smallest detail and going the extra mile. Excellence connotes doing your very best in everything one does. Newman (1997) submits that a leader loves excellence and shuns mediocrity. Nigerian leaders should set high standards of excellence or else Nigeria will soon be left behind in a world of accelerating change, development and improvement. Good leadership is not achieved by a twist of fate. What we aim at determines what we will become and while we may not always make our goals, our goals will always make .us. To aim at excellence in Leadership is to point your life towards the realization of your potential, to endeavour to fulfill your capacities.

On the contrary, Achebe (1983) laments the Nigeria's unruly leadership capital beginning from independence in 1960. He said that Nigeria has been less than fortunate in its leadership. The poverty of intellectual rigour and thoughtfulness in the mindset of our leaders has contributed to this National misfortune. In Achebe (1983), a perceptive student of Nigeria politics, James Booth was identified as drawing attention to the poverty of thought exhibited in the biographies of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe and Chief Awolowo in contrast to the expressions of ideology to be found even in the more informal works of Mboya, Nyerere and Nkrumah!. In a solemn vow made by Azikiwe in 1937 he pledged:

"That henceforth, I shall utilize my earned income to secure my enjoyment of a high standard of living and also to give a helping hand to the needy". Obafemi Awolowo was even more forthright about his ambition:

"I was going to make myself formidable intellectually, morally invulnerable, to make all the .money that is possible for a man with my brain and brawn to make in Nigeria". Primordial sensibilities such as these are more likely to produce aggressive and unhealthy millionaires than selfless and excellent leaders of their people. An absence of objectivity and

intellectual rigour at the critical moment of a nation's formation is more than an academic matter. It inclines the fledging state to disorderly growth and mental deficiency.

Democracy

'Democracy is a charming form of government full of variety and disorder, dispensing equality to unequals and equals alike...

The ruin of democracy is the credulity of the people

"when faced with the insolence of demagogues

who flatter and mislead the multitude...

Aristotle.

Uncoordinated perspectivism has made the concept, of democracy- to be elusive. In contemporary times the connotations of the word are so overwhelmingly charming-that even regimes with no claim to it at all appropriated it. Revolutions and violent changes of governments have been undertaken in the name of democracy. Nationalist liberation struggles have been carried out in the name of democratic values. Most Nationalist leaders in Africa emerged as their country's leaders during the decolonization era ended up using the state machinery as a tool of imperialism and self-enrichment. Little wonder, Greek ancient philosopher Aristotle seems to detest democracy.

To the Greek, democracy connotes "rule by the people". Since the people are rarely unanimous, democracy as a descriptive term is synonymous with "majority rule" or polycentric governance. Macpherson (1972) pointed out that today there are several varieties of democracy - liberal (western), socialist, Asian and African. This has made democracy to become an ambiguous thing, with different meanings, even apparently opposite meanings, for different peoples. In the views of Alapiki (2010), all democracies are incontrovertibly systems of power. Each is a system "by which people can be governed. To him, is the fact that a democratic government exists to uphold and enforce a certain kind of society, a certain set of relations among individuals, a certain set of rights and claims that people have on each other both directly and indirectly through their rights to property. These relations themselves are relations knitted together by political power play. They give different people, in different capacities and status conditions, power over others. Hence, in the above Aristotelian synopsis, "democracy... dispensing equality to unequals and equals alike". It may sound strange but about 100 years ago, democracy was seen as a bad thing. Certain fundamental changes took place in the social fabric of western societies before the transformation from liberal states to liberal democracies occurred. In the view of Macpherson:

The fact of the matter was that in Western societies, the democratic franchise was not installed until after the liberal society and liberal states -were firmly established.. Consequently, 'democracy came as a top dressing, it had to accommodate itself to the soil that had already been prepared by the operation of the competitive,

individualist, market society; and by the operation the liberal state which served that society through a system of freely competing, thought not democratic, political parties. It was the liberal state that was democratized, and in the process, democracy was liberalized (Macpherson, 1972:5)

Democracy changed from being a "bad thing" to a "good thing" when western societies became firmly rooted in a liberal value system. In it, individuals were free to choose their religion, their marriage partners, occupations and persons to associate with. They offered their labour and services, their products and savings in a free market situation. Given the need for respect of human sacredness and a¹ celestial right to freedom, a system of democracy was established to supply certain basic political goods, such as law, and order, defence, education, sanitation, basic social amenities and tariffs and grants designed to make the economy run efficiently and profitably. In Behrens & Rosen (1988), it was brought to the fore that in the course of human existence, individuals tend to separate themselves from natural causes that, relegate humanness to the background and begin to align their thoughts to their God-given rights and privileges. They typified this premise with the United States Declaration of Independence in July 4, 1776 which read thus:

We 'hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed...

Representative Democracy

The Athenian version of democracy in the Ancient Greek city state typifies what representative democracy connotes. The constitution of Athens was clearly democratic. In the Athenian democracy, the people themselves undertook the work of government. Their assembly, in which every citizen could take part, was the sovereign body in the state to decide national affairs, great and small.

However, it is needful to submit, that it is impossible to apply the elements and practices of ancient democracy to modern conditions. The Athenian city-state was small, primordial, it was a slave-owning democracy and its individual life was less complex than modern. In the obverse, the classical notion of citizenship rights and human sacredness may be usefully assimilated by the political class in modern states of Africa, and Nigeria so that they may take an intelligent and active part in the service of the state.

Modern day democracy is representative, indirect; the people, govern through, representatives periodically elected by them (Appadorai, 1968). Nigerian state is still groping in the dark waters of politics owing to the unruly abuse by the ruling class of real representative democracy which respects humanistic political culture. The ordinary citizens (the Plebians) part in government is limited. In the face of ethnic cleavages, social fractionalization and ideological diversity arising from the heterogeneous composition of Nigeria, a well-tailored representative democracy that can be laced with humanistic political culture has the ability to launch, Nigeria into a developed state. Ehibudu and Odum (2014) surveyed the Canadian Consociational democracy and stated that the Canadian federal system of government is working excellently in the face of ethnic cleavages and bilingualism. They opined that the Canadian government implements a consociational democratic model which enables them to establish a strong elite accommodation of the Francophone; English, Protestants and Catholics who inhabit the confederation of Quebec, and Canada. In Consociational democracy of Canada, the divisive attributes found in heterogeneous societies are altered by various segments of the population.

Understanding the Knit between Good Leadership and Sustainable Democracy

Sustainable development of any nation must be able to engender the greatest happiness of the greatest number of individual persons in that nation in all of its ramifications: It should also endeavour to sustain the happiness of posterity. The type of governance of any society determines the mode of leadership in that society. For instance, if military regime is in power, the expectant result of it is dictatorship. But that as it may, good leadership is associated with democratic regime (Ndehfru, 2007). According to King James version of the Holy Bible (Proverbs 4 v 7 -8), the celestial virtue of wisdom is considered to be the pillar of human development and success in all endeavour of life. Representative democracy without humanistic wisdom will definitely promote the 'strong' becoming right in our political system. Adah (2006).wrote in a poetic form that representative democracy demonstrates in the individual the discovery of potentials and creativity, achievement of freedom 'unlimited' .and the ability to contribute to the enthronement of his/her nation in the pinnacle of development and international honour. He posited that Education, though a tool for knowledge endowment that makes one command the attention of the world, is ultimately a tool that makes one to be filled with wisdom and knowledge thereby empowering him/her to meet the needs of the world around him. Good leadership can only be achieved in Nigeria when true lovers of wisdom will come to hold political power or the holders of political power and their actors, will by some divine appointment, become true lovers of wisdom.

The above context simply implies that true representative democracy is a function of good leadership and good leadership is a function of true representative democracy. The duo are two sides of the same coin, any attempt to divorce them from each-other will be artificial and misleading. It is disturbing and alarming that young graduates in Nigeria destroy their destinies in the Sahara desert and Medetaranian Sea in a bid to escape from the unwelcoming and "uncomfortable" environment of their fatherland. Some of them indulge in ritual killings and

satanic practices to make wealth just because they want to measure up with unruly politicians who flaunt their ill-gotten wealth crudely before them on-daily basis;

Since good leadership is all about respect to humanness and constitutionalism, it means that leaders are not and ought not to be law to themselves, it is pertinent therefore, to note 'that, extraneous exercise of power outside the realm of the constitution as well as human conscience is dictatorial and thereby unconstitutional and not in tandem with representative democratic principles, therefore a threat to democracy. It is rather heart-arching that our experience in the last sixteen years has obliterated from real democratic approach, hence representative democracy is at stake.

Conclusion

Society achieves the greatest happiness of the greatest number by leaders applying "hedonistic calculus". In doing this, you determine the number of persons in the group who are affected by happiness or pain. You as a leader then sums up pleasures and pains in any particular action or decision to be taken, you balance the pleasure against the pains, considering the number of person affected and seeing whether the actions, laws and decisions contemplated produce the greatest happiness of the greatest number. President Mugabi is approaching 90 years this decade and has ruled Zimbabwe since 1980. Mauman Gadafi led Libya for close to five decades and died in office. The same case was/is of Togolese Eyadema, Gabonese Omar Bongo, Paul Biya of Cameroun, Sanni Abacha of Nigeria, Colonnell Mobutu of Congo among others in Africa had blatantly destroyed and subjugated with impunity the spirit of Representative democracy in Africa. Thus, for our democracy, to be representative, sustainable and consolidated, the following recommendations are inevitable.

Recommendations

1. The Federal Government should set up a genuine, and transparent constitutional review i committee cutting across all cleavages to review the current constitution to provide in practical dimensions true fiscal federation with strong elements of confederalism.
2. Government at all levels especially the presidency must intensify efforts to nip corruption in the bud. This can be achieved through strengthening the anti-graft. Agencies- ICPC, Due Process and EFCC, to investigate, arrest and prosecute culprits without any fear or favour.
3. Political actors and leaders at various levels must endeavour to weigh their thoughts in the balance of justice and human conscience before they act..
4. In order to forestall the problem of resource control and allocation in the country the National leadership should adopt an objective fiscal federalism with effective regional/state control of their resources with considerable remittance to central government.

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