

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND THE RE-MAKING OF NIGERIA AS A COUNTRY: A PHILOSOPHICAL EVALUATION

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ABSTRACT

This article is a philosophical evaluation of the concept of political leadership in relation to the re-making of Nigeria as a country. Political leadership has to do with the legitimate power and authority given by the citizens of a particular society to a few individuals known as political leaders for the promotion of citizens' welfare and for the total development of the entire society. The fundamental questions that are very pertinent in this article are: What actually is political leadership? What is the political situation in Nigeria today? Could Nigerian political leaders be said to be performing up to the required standard? What role can philosophy play in improving the political situation of Nigeria? These and other related issues are to be given serious attention in this work. The approach is both analytic and phenomenological. It is discovered that the practice of democratic leadership in Nigeria is very questionable. This stems from the fact that it contradicts the principles of democracy, and seems to be the opposite of what is obtainable in well-organized democratic countries of the world. Hence, the researchers argue that Nigerian leadership predicaments could be ameliorated if Nigeria and her leaders adhere strictly to the core tenets of democracy or even borrow a leaf from globally acceptable leadership principles of justice and fairness which are the bedrock of any democratic political institution in the world today. Besides, the leaders should uphold the rule of law and take proper actions for the development of Nigeria and for the good of the citizens. Obviously, such will be of immense assistance in the re-making and repositioning of Nigeria in the right direction.

Keywords: Politics, Leadership, Justice, Nigeria and Democracy

Introduction

Man by nature is a political and social being who lives with his fellow human beings in society. Man realizes himself through interaction and cooperation with other humans in society. In one way or the other, one needs the assistance of other people in society for the attainment of specific goals in life. For any society to function effectively there is a need for leadership. Good leadership upholds social harmony and peaceful co-existence among the members of a given society. Leadership is very central in the life of every country. The development of any country is largely dependent on her leadership style. This explains why matters that concern leadership should be treated with utmost importance as well as urgency. Leadership affects seriously every sector of the country's life, especially as it concerns equity and fairness as the democratic

bedrock of every well-ordered civil society. Certainly, equity and fairness give room for peace, harmony as well as development in every civil society.

Nigeria is bedeviled with a lot of problems ranging from economic, social and political problems. Of these, political problem which revolves around leadership seems to be paramount. Put in a simple way, political leadership in Nigeria is far from being the ideal. This is very noticeable in every sector of the country's life. Corruption seems to be the order of the day. Leadership has turned into something else in Nigeria. Most of our leaders have exhibited gross irresponsibility, and have neglected the basic functions of leadership. Most Nigerian leaders do not care for the well-being and feelings of the citizens. In Nigerians' style of leadership today, injustice has taken over the major parts of the daily life of the people. Such ugly development needs to be corrected by all possible means for the good of the country. This stems from the fact that injustice nurtures disunity, fear, anxiety as well as restiveness of different kinds, and thus stagnates socio-political as well as economic development of the country. Justice is a moral virtue that emphasizes equity and fairness in the society. Today, Nigeria as a country is not getting it right in many areas and this has inadvertently multiplied resentments and divisions in the country. The effects of leadership failure are being felt in all sectors of Nigerian society. Many scholars and political thinkers like Chinua Achebe (1983) have attributed this political menace and rascality to the problem of bad leadership in Nigeria. In search of possible solution to the above malady, Achebe opted for good leaders. Surprisingly, he premised the emergence of this class of leaders on the efforts of enlightened citizens. This not only sounds elitist but invariably throws the problem back to the citizens. In the modern world, democratic rule has been rated as the best form of governance. Hence, this article examines some problems as well as hindrances bedeviling Nigerian democratic leadership since its inception till date and investigates how such problems could be resolved. The paper employs the philosophical tools of analysis and phenomenology in its examination of the political leadership situation in Nigeria in relation to improving the Nigerian leadership system. The phenomenon of political leadership is clearly an observable reality that can even be measured in the light of basic democratic tenets and instruments. As part of the phenomenological approach, the relevant authors that contribute to the textual analysis of the issue under discussion are allowed to speak for themselves through direct quotation. Where the need arises, hermeneutic phenomenology is employed in interpreting given issues or realities especially as they relate to the Nigerian lifeworld. This article is partitioned into four sections. The first section clarifies the concept of political leadership. The second section examines the practice of political leadership in Nigeria. The third section examines political leadership in Nigeria in relation to the re-making of Nigeria as a country. The fourth section is the evaluation as well as the conclusion of the article.

Political Leadership: Conceptual Clarification

Political Leadership is one of the basic concepts in political philosophy. Just like every other philosophical concept, the task of arriving at a generally acceptable definition of Political leadership as a concept has been a difficult one throughout the philosophical epochs. It is quite a controversial issue. Political philosophers have described it in different, but related ways. Generally, leadership is seen as the ability of an individual especially in a political setting to lead, influence or guide other individuals, organizations, state or country. Such guidance or influence is geared towards achieving desired goals. According to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* (2010), leadership is "the state or position of being a leader... the ability to be a leader or the qualities a good leader should have" (p.844). The pertinent question that arises from the above definition is this: Who is a leader? How are leaders

constituted? The response to these will definitely throw more to what leadership is all about. However, this would be given detailed attention in the course of this work. Palmer (2009) seems to have a more precise description of leadership. For him, “leadership, at its core, essentially involves influencing others to act in light of a vision of how best to achieve a shared mission” (p.527). This portrays the fact that leadership deals with the ability to direct people, influence and guide them to the right part as well as leading them towards achieving certain objectives. It is evident in the above definition that leadership is geared towards achieving specific mission. Hence, a good leader creates a good enabling environment for the people to thrive and achieve stipulated objectives or goals.

Leadership is very necessary in every sector of our life. However, this article centers specifically on political leadership in Nigeria. Good political leadership is an important key to progress and success through positive strategic vision. Without good political leadership, no civil society can achieve her stipulated goals. According to Wineroither (2013), “political leadership, in a parsimonious definition, refers to the impact on decision-making and political outcomes that results from action by the holder of political office. Thus, it is connected with leadership style and may be rooted in certain character traits of the leader’s personality.” (para.1) Political leaders take decisions on issues that pertain to the followers. In agreement with the above definition of political leadership, though with some modifications, Okaneme (2017) defines it as “the capacity in a person or in a group of persons to inspire confidence and thereby regard for himself or themselves to guide and govern the followers”. This brings out very clearly the aspect of inspiring confidence on the part of the followers. From this perspective, a good leader should be able to motivate the followers and inspire confidence in them. He must be service-oriented in all ramifications, that is to say, a good leader must be proactive, effective, and efficient. An ancient philosopher, Socrates stipulates that ‘an unexamined life is not worth living’. Hence, he advocates for a virtuous life for everybody including leaders. It becomes necessary for every political leader to examine and re-examine his leadership style. From a Socratic perspective, it could be said that one who lives an unexamined life is not worthy to be a leader in its true sense. On their own part, Ogunmilade, Nwoko & Akhigbe (2017) state that “leadership is the process through which one individual consistently exerts more influence than others in the pursuit of group behavior”. This implies that leaders should be at the helm of affairs in the things that concern the group and ought to be more influential than other people in society. Leadership in a nutshell entails the exercise of social power on others. To Uveges (2003), “Leadership is the ability to influence the behavior of others in a group or organization, set goals, for the group, formulate paths to the goal and create some social norms in the group”. His definition of leadership is quite in agreement with some of the definitions above.

It ought to be noted that leadership is basically associated with social power. Attesting to this, Nwagboso and Duke (2012) state, “Thus, by exerting a profound effect on personal behaviour, individual and organization productivity, adjustment to working situations, and morale in organizations, leadership should not be viewed separately from social power”. In fact, every leader possesses social power which enables him to impact positively on the people. Besides, the followers should cooperate with the leader so that the mission of the society can be achieved. Hence, Kolade (2012) argued that both the leader and the followers must participate actively in governance. In his words: “Governance involves participation by both the governor and the governed i.e., the leader and the follower”. The joint action of the leader and followers brings about the development of the society.

How a leader emerges determines to a great extent the performance. A leader that emerges through the barrel of a gun or through any other foul means may not be accountable to the people. In a democratic setting, the leader is expected to emerge through the ballot of the box, nay the will of the people and be accountable to the people that put him/her in power.

Furthermore, it ought to be noted that leadership is associated with many qualities. A leader should possess the following qualities: regard for law, trustworthiness, firmness, humaneness, prudence, discipline, courage, and intelligence. The above qualities enable one to function effectively as a leader. A good leader interacts with followers in a mature way. Hence, a good leader communicates effectively and thinks about the welfare of society. The attitude of a good leader is always positive-oriented, and the welfare of the people ought to be his major concern. Most importantly, a leader must possess the virtue of justice. A renowned political philosopher, John Rawls, in his book, *A Theory of Justice* argues that “a society is well-ordered when it is not only designed to advance the good of its members but when it is also effectively regulated by a public conception of justice” (Rawls, 1971, p.3). Rawls further argues that only a society that seeks for the general welfare where all the individuals will be favoured especially the least advantaged of the society could be qualified to be termed a well-ordered society. Hence, every leader ought to be guided by the principle of justice.

The Practice of Political Leadership in Nigeria

The major problem that has bedeviled Nigeria from the point of her existence as an independent country is the problem of leadership. Attesting to this, Nkom (2000) averred, “Most Nigerians believe very strongly that the factor which has crippled the country’s progress in virtually every field of human endeavor is leadership and bad governance.” (p.75) Nigerians experienced military dictatorship for many years. Many citizens of Nigeria rejoiced at the termination of the military dictatorship which dealt terribly with Nigerians for a good number of years. Obviously, Nigerians had high expectations for good political leadership immediately after the country returned to the fourth democratic republic system of government in 1999. The citizens were looking forward to reaping the dividends of democracy that have eluded them for a long period of time. The general narrative was that the military government was very inconsiderate, corrupt, selfish, rigid, harsh, and unaccountable in every regard. Hence, Nigerians hoped that with the new democratic leadership, things would be better, especially in critical matters like justice, security, respect for the rule of law, youth empowerment, fight against corruption, provision of basic infrastructure, provision of social amenities, poverty alleviation and fight against indiscipline. Nigerians believed without a doubt that our politicians or political class might have learned some lessons from the catastrophic evils as well as mistakes of the first, second, and third republics, hoping that they would do the right thing to avoid military invasion and coup d’état in Nigeria.

However, it is quite painful and unfortunate that after many solid years of existence as a country, Nigerians are still lacking the concrete ingredients needed for nation-building, development, and quality political leadership. It is noteworthy that the progress of any country depends largely on the standard and type of leadership in place. This explains why the importance of quality leadership can never be overemphasized. According to Ejimabo (2013):

The solution for addressing Nigeria’s problems and consolidating democratic governance in the federal republic lies in having a government or leadership that works on the principles of good governance and is, most importantly, accountable to the Nigerian people. Good governance in Nigeria is essential to its stability, growth and development.

Nigeria as a country is very rich in both human and natural resources. Hence, Nigeria has all it takes to be a great country. Nigeria's problem is simply bad leadership as pointed out by Chinua Achebe many years ago. The past and present leaders of Nigeria have demonstrated obvious failure to provide quality leadership capable of addressing the numerous challenges confronting Nigeria as a multi-ethnic country. Bad leadership is very visible in the inability of our political leaders to harness and manage the numerous human and natural resources in Nigeria. Also, bad leadership is glaringly clear in political, social, and economic instabilities, and in the prevalent ethnic and religious crises, which have crippled Nigerian socio-economic development. Certainly, bad leadership has kept Nigeria underdeveloped despite her rich natural and human resources.

The issue of getting good leadership to enhance good governance has been a recurrent and disturbing issue in Nigeria. It is obvious that Nigerian leaders have failed remarkably to provide quality leadership capable of addressing the numerous challenges confronting the country. James Booth in his book entitled *Writers and Politics in Nigeria*, decried the intellectual poverty evidenced in the founding of Nigeria such as Nnamdi Azikiwe and Obafemi Awolowo. Incompetency and inefficiency in governance by Nigerian successive leadership have deteriorated the Nigerian economy to a very unfortunate level, and our political leaders seem not to be perturbed by the ugly state of affairs in the country. Political instability and lack of accurate accountability institutionalized in Nigeria have impeded the ability of successive leaderships to implement economic policies for the good of the citizens. In an attempt to describe the practice of political leadership in Nigeria, Fagbadebo (2007) states:

The Nigerian State is a victim of high-level corruption, bad governance, political instability, and a cyclical legitimacy crisis. The country's authoritarian leadership faced a legitimacy crisis, political intrigues, in an ethnically differentiated polity, where ethnic competition for resources drove much of the pervasive corruption, and profligacy. The history of a great nation is linked to purposeful leadership. Such leaders have played significant roles in the socio-economic development and political emancipation of their nations. In Nigeria, leadership has failed to harness the resources and the ingenuity of the people for national development. The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. The nature of political leadership became a problem as most of them lost or lacked control of effective leadership. This led to the scramble for state resources to suit their personal desires.

Obviously, no country can be said to develop beyond her leadership level. Hence, whatever one has is what one can give or offer to the society which one belongs. The popular saying that 'no one can give what one has not' quickly comes to mind. Nigeria has experienced successive incompetent leadership, and this explains why Nigeria is underdeveloped. Nigerians have experienced untold hardship and numerous political challenges. From the time of independence till now, Nigeria has seriously dabbled from one predicament to the other. This has become so pronounced these days that it has negatively affected the country's developmental process and progress over time. Leadership has shifted to a situation where any type of person whether qualified or unqualified can come and mess up the general psyche of the citizens, embezzle public funds, and exhibit corrupt practices. It is now fashionable in Nigeria for people to do all sorts of things to get into power just for selfish motives. Our political leaders apply Machiavelli's dangerous political principle of "the end justifies the means". Security in Nigeria is nothing to write home about and has become worse than ever in recent times. It is unfortunate

that many Nigerians have been very poor in the midst of plenty just because of bad leadership. One can easily wonder if democracy in Nigeria meant the opposite of accountability and good governance. This probably might be the reason why Dr. Oby Ezekwesili, the former Minister of Education in Nigeria attributed the rising poverty in the country to poor political leadership and the economic monopoly structure of Nigeria. She therefore, observed that Nigeria has failed to translate the huge natural resources at her disposal to the improvement of her citizens' living conditions, and stated that many Nigerians live within the poverty bracket. In her words:

Nigeria is perhaps the best known example of the African paradox. As the 6th largest producer of oil in the world, it has earned more than half a trillion dollars in oil export since the discovery of that commodity in the South-South region of this country where we are gathered today. Unfortunately, the massive revenue from oil has been a source of enormous sorrow to citizens due to poor government by our political elite over the many decades since its discovery. Nigeria has therefore tragically failed to translate her rich resource endowment to improvement in the standard of living of her citizens hence we today have 69 percent of over 100 million of our citizens in the poverty bracket, according to the latest data from the National Bureau of Statistics. The poor governance or its more virulent manifestation, public corruption, is of course the fundamental reason for Nigeria's poor economic performance despite our globally acknowledged economic potentials to have become not just one of the largest economies of the world, but in fact, one of the most prosperous of those countries.(Naija.com news, 2022)

From the foregoing, it is obvious that Nigeria has enjoyed several cycles of oil boom in the past, but the major problem with Nigeria is poor management of her rich natural and human resources. This stems from the fact that our leaders have in most cases failed to convert the oil income into massive development of the critical sectors of the country like health, transportation, infrastructure, education, agriculture etc. Instead, Nigerian leaders are champions in corruption, embezzlement and looting of public funds without any form of pity on the innocent citizens. They devised a means known as 'politics of recycled succession' whereby they elect and re-elect themselves cyclically. According to Nwokike and Chidolue (2017):

A critical look at past and present leaders in Nigeria confirmed that some group of persons rotate leadership among themselves, at levels. Among these political classes, their main interest is to maintain the system of rotation against the general interest of Nigerians whom they claim to serve. (para. 17)

They also devised a means of implanting or imposing unqualified individuals by force or any crooked means possible on the innocent citizens of the country who are either gullible or not well-informed politically.

Consequently, when the leadership of a state persistently fails to achieve its basic function of providing the safety of lives and property, it becomes clear enough that such leadership has become a threat to the country and has failed the people woefully. In Nigeria, it is now very fashionable that the power of the political elite is determined by how economically robust one is, just as one's economic position is determined by the weight of political power one has in the society. Hence, the more economically strong one is, the more politically powerful one

becomes, and vice versa. The rich and the powerful, the bourgeois do everything possible to have control of the country and continue their corrupt practices with impunity. They see leadership as an attractive and lucrative means to more economic breakthroughs. It is also very unfortunate that ethnicity plays a remarkable role in Nigerians' political life. Nwokike and Chidolue (2017) observe that "elections and the eventual emergence of a political leader are interpreted on the basis of ethnic affiliations and sentiments. Leaders are chosen based on where they come from and whom they represent". (para. 18). The possible outcome of this is nothing but bad leaders as well as bad leadership.

Certainly, Nigerians are tired of the leadership that has proven beyond a reasonable doubt to be worse than that of the military regime. If the political leaders continue in this pace of corruption, misrule, embezzlement of public funds, and failure to protect the citizens, the rising tendency to survive by all means without the government will push the citizens to imbibe the dangerous principle of 'survival of the fittest' as is obtainable in the animal kingdom as well as Hobbesian state of nature. There is a great need to prevent this unfortunate consequence.

It ought to be noted that Nigeria got her independence in 1960. It is very regrettable that after 62 years of existence as an independent country, Nigeria is bedeviled by many avoidable and human-created problems. Most of such problems are a result of the actions or inactions of our government. The situation of things in the oil-rich Niger Delta region of the country is very deplorable. The problems of this region are hydra-headed which include but are not limited to oil spillage, contamination of good sources of drinking water with crude oil, destruction of aquatic lives, destruction of farmlands and crops, and maltreatment by successive Nigerian governments. In the words of Afinotan and Ojakorotu (2009):

Oil drilling operations further pollute the underground water. Through a variety of unethical practices in drilling, more fish and fauna are destroyed, farming and fishing grounds polluted by toxic waste materials. Also in the production process, waste water is discharged from major production terminals together with other contaminants like sludge from storage tanks, oil debris, gaseous pollutants and sanitary wastes. More of these toxic wastes are released into the already heavily polluted environment during the process of oil refining, during which process several chemicals and pollutants such as hydrogen sulphide, oil and grease, ammonia and toxic heavy metals are discharged into the environment. (p.194)

It is very sad to note that the people of the region are very poor in the midst of rich natural resources. Such enkindled animosity and restiveness especially among the youths of the region. The evils and maltreatments become worse whenever the communities protest against the alienation by oil companies. The response gotten from the government is always disproportionate use of force of many kinds including live firearms by the government security forces against individuals and communities in one way or the other which has led to the death of uncountable number of indigenes of such communities, especially the men and youths. With this therefore, it becomes clearly obvious that the interests of the foreign companies are being placed far higher than the interests of the citizens by the government. The Niger Delta region has been suffering from severe underdevelopment despite the billions of dollars it generates in the oil sector of the economy on a daily basis which is the major source of Nigeria's economy. The UNDP (2007) Human Development Report notes that: "In the Niger Delta, endemic oil spills, waste dumping, and gas flaring have destroyed ecologically sensitive wetlands, clogged

waterways, killed wildlife and damaged the soil and air quality over the past 50 years... ruining the lives of people in the region”.¹²

The above-described situation portrays Nigeria as a very weak and sick state, and already on the road to failure, if not already a failed state. Nigeria has failed to meet the basic social human needs of its citizens like transparency, accountability, justice in political institutions, and sustainable economic growth for the good of all.

Furthermore, corruption is seen as a global problem, but Nigeria’s case appears to be very remarkable. Kofele-Kale (2006), in trying to explain what corruption is all about, notes: “Requesting, offering, giving or accepting directly or indirectly a bribe or any other undue advantage or the prospect thereof, which distorts the proper performance of any duty or behavior required of the recipient of the bribe, the undue advantage of the prospect thereof” (p.5). Corruption is one main problem bedeviling Nigeria for a long now, but its present situation in the country seems to be the worst. This issue started with government officials or political leaders but has gradually crept and of course eaten deep into every aspect of the country’s life. It is now very difficult to find a Nigerian political leader who is not corrupt. At present, Nigeria has been ranked as one of the most corrupt countries in the world, and this similarly was clearly stated by the ex-British Prime Minister, David Cameron that Nigeria is a ‘fantastically corrupt’ country with corrupt leaders all over. This tragedy has been there since Nigeria’s independence and has rotten beyond remedy. The countless political reforms and lack of honesty by the leaders have left the country poorer than imagined. The basic question then is this: How can Nigeria have good governance and progress when the leadership of the country is deeply and fantastically entrenched and submerged in corrupt practices? Corruption, therefore, is one of the greatest threats to good leadership in the world especially in Nigeria today. Writing on corruption in Nigeria, Mogilevsky (2010) states:

Corruption remains a priority concern to the Nigerian Government and People. Corruption affects all aspects of public life, continues to undermine the social, economic and political development of the country and is a major obstacle to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Good Governance should be in a position to control corruption.

Obviously, corruption is a serious impediment to development. It has drastically impeded development in every sector of life in Nigeria. Similar view was expressed by Abdullahi (2009) as he argues that “corruption slows down economic growth and investment. Economic growth and development in Nigeria for over twenty years have been soiled with misappropriation and embezzlement of funds even with the return of democracy, turning the country’s economy into an underdeveloped nation with least position in international ratings”. In complete agreement to the above view, Okeyim, Ejue, and Ekanem (2013) state that corruption “is a social problem which hampers development and robs people of the chances for any significant economic as well as social advancement”. Unfortunately and regrettably, corruption is now seen as a norm or the order of the day in Nigerian society today. It is now very fashionable to argue that any political leader in Nigeria who is not corrupt seems to be odd. Corruption has very much destroyed the politics of the country. This institutionalization of corruption in all sectors of public life and activities in Nigeria is the major obstacle to the survival of good political leadership in Nigeria. Corruption has dominated our national mentality so ruggedly that it looks odd to stand against it. According to Loimeier (2003):

Corrupt and power hungry politicians, who hijacked votes and self-imposed leaders, declare billions of fictitious amounts of naira as assets only to be recouped as investments through falsification and over pricing of contracts awards, in spite of the existence of framework of due process and diligence in contract awards and procurements.

In Nigeria, most citizens hardly survive and are never beyond the poverty level because the leadership in place at each point in time continues to give lip service to this social and political tragedy known as corruption. Furthermore, it is regrettable that Nigerians especially the political leaders still have the mentality that public funds belong to nobody and that any individual who managed to have access to them should convert them to their personal, family, or ethnic property. In Nigeria, this corruption issue has really permeated every aspect of the society which ranges from online scam emails and fraudulent messages sent often by high-ranking political officials seeking help from abroad in order to transfer large sums of money out of the country, to the police and military officers who always set up roadblocks every fifty or hundred meters to extort money from innocent and law abiding citizens and commercial drivers for selfish motives. This is exactly what the country has turned into. Hence, a serious effort is highly needed to put the country back on the right track because it has run out of track for decades now which is highly detrimental to its citizens and societal development. Reacting to the level of corruption in Nigeria, Odey (2007) opined that:

Today in Nigeria, corruption has become a structural sin so contagious that it hardly leaves anybody without a smear. And since the country has been justifiably stigmatized as a den of corruption, all Nigerians, both the guilty and the innocent, have been paying costly for it. Everywhere in the world, Nigerians are generally feared like mad dogs, dreaded like criminals, cautiously approached like dangerous snakes and watchfully avoided like lepers.(p.20)

Nigeria is very corrupt in every sector but most especially in leadership matters and also, ironically managed by corrupt leaders who have made governance an instrument of wealth accumulation rather than using the scarce resources to meet the basic social and infrastructural needs of the citizens. With the high level of corruption in Nigeria, the country has been given a bad name and image globally. The citizens are so scorned and rough-handled at most international Ports/Embassies and other gatherings. This is partly the reason why the late Prof. Dora Akunyili advocated for 'Rebranding Nigeria'. There is an urgent need to address this malady in Nigeria. This requires complete re-orientation and attitudinal change among Nigerians.

More so, Nigeria has become an abroad for electoral malpractice. It is very difficult for one to see any election without malpractice in Nigeria. This particular situation includes votes buying with money, coercion, intimidation, promises of offices or special favours, interference with the freedom of the electoral process, threats of any kind to the electoral officers, killing and maiming of people. These give room for a situation where unqualified and unacceptable persons or even pure losers end up as the winners and the real winners become losers in elections. All these electoral evils have greatly undermined good leadership and governance in Nigeria as a country because the leaders who are supposed to be upright and fight corruption at all costs in the country turn out to be the engineers and arch riggers as well as the master planners of the game of rigging to the detriment of the poor masses and the innocent citizens of Nigeria. This explains why there is successive bad and incompetent leadership in Nigeria.

Political Leadership in Nigeria vis-à-vis the Re-making of Nigeria as a Country

The previous section of this article makes it very clear that the problem of Nigeria is basically that of leadership. It becomes obvious that Nigeria can become a better country if it succeeds in getting good leadership. There is this popular saying that no state rises above the standard of its leaders. The political leaders of any country determine to a great extent the situation of things in that country. If the political leaders are corrupt, the country cannot be corrupt.

The search for good leadership that will foster good governance is Nigeria's most urgent need at this point in time if the country must progress and be able to meet its desired goals as a democratic independent country in Africa. Freedom, peace, harmony, and independence in their true senses will be achieved, if and only if, the citizens of Nigeria are empowered politically, intellectually, economically, and socially. The situation whereby only very few people benefit from the country's resources, while a huge number of the citizens especially the poor masses and the youths suffer tremendous hardship every single day must be properly addressed. The promotion of the common good should be uppermost in the minds of our political leaders. Hence, we hope to see a truly free and independent Nigeria, a new progressive Nigeria where the citizens are treated equally and given their dues.

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic country. If Nigeria is to be a changed state, our political leaders must address the problem of ethnicity. Each ethnic group, no matter how small, must be given a sense of belonging. It should not be the prerogative of any particular ethnic group to be producing political leaders in the country or determining who should govern the country. Our political leaders must rise above ethnicity and emphasize more on the unity of Nigeria. The emphasis should be on what unites us as a country, and not on what divides us. The unity of Nigeria should be uppermost in the minds of our leaders. Furthermore, if Nigeria is to be a changed state, the issue of corruption must be properly addressed. Every Nigerian, starting from our political leaders must give zero tolerance to corruption. It has been earlier demonstrated in this article that corruption is one of the major problems of Nigeria. Hence, no stone should be left unturned in the fight against corruption in Nigeria. More so, Nigeria is a multi-religious country, though Christianity and Islam are the two dominant religions in Nigeria. Many crises in Nigeria are religiously motivated. Our political leaders must pay attention to and respect different religions in the Country. No particular religion should dominate the political leadership of the country be it Islam, Christianity or Traditional religion. Nigeria should in no way be seen as mono-religious country.

Nigeria is very rich in both human and natural (mineral) resources. Nigerians are very gifted and talented people. Nigerians are experts and specialists in different areas of life. Unfortunately, these experts and specialists are not made use of as a result of corruption and tribalism. Brain drain is a serious problem in Nigeria. Many talented Nigerians are working in western countries because of their inability to secure good job in Nigeria. Such people contribute tremendously to the growth of the economy of their host countries. Our political leaders should take good advantage of these potentials in order to make Nigeria a better country. Also, Nigeria is very rich in mineral resources. Nigeria is one of the largest producers of crude oil in the world. Besides crude oil, Nigeria is gifted with many other mineral resources as well as very good soil for agriculture. Our political leaders should harness all these resources (both human and natural) in order to make Nigeria a great country.

Nigerians and their political leaders need attitudinal change. Our political leaders should have the interest of the country at heart, and think always of what they should do for Nigeria, and not what they will benefit from Nigeria. Hence, Nigeria is not something to be exploited. There

is a serious need for a complete change of attitude towards Nigeria both on the part of the leaders and followers. Such a positive change of attitude towards Nigeria will go a long way in making Nigeria a great country.

There is also a great need for regional restructuring and the practice of real federalism in Nigeria. Different regions and ethnic groups should be given a good sense of belonging. Every segment of the country must be carried along and treated fairly without any form of marginalization and subjugation. These would go a long way in making Nigeria a great country and a force to be reckoned with in the world.

Conclusion

In this article, the researchers have actually examined the practice of political leadership in Nigeria, and what should be done in order to re-make Nigerian state. It is the argument of this article that despite the fact that Nigeria has fallen apart, there is still hope for Nigeria. Certainly, Nigeria can still be better and can be redeemed from the looming doom, if and only if, Nigerians and her leaders would judiciously adhere to the globally accepted basic principles of good democratic governance of justice and fairness with the enthronement of good regional restructuring and true federalism in all her dealings and policies. Furthermore, Nigerians should start now to make necessary adjustments in their leadership style and electoral practices. Nigerian politics should focus more on competent leadership, and avoid tribal and religious sentiments. If these are properly put into consideration, and properly implemented, Nigeria will be a changed country. The project of making Nigeria a better country should be the major concern of all citizens of Nigeria. The researchers argue that good political leadership is paramount in realizing good development in every sector of the country's life.

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