LEADERSHIP AND THE CHALLENGES OF NATIONHOOD IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to examine the challenges of nation building in Nigeria. Some literatures on the subject were reviewed while data analyses are from secondary sources. The elite theory was used to explain the issues therein. The paper reveals that since the amalgamation of Northern and southern protectorate in 1914 into a single entity by Lord Lugard, the country has been struggling on how to effectively build the nation with series of problems spanning from bad governance, socio-economic inequality, federal character dilemma, ethno-religious crises and corruptions. These obstacles have over the years threatened our national integration principle which is based on building a strong and prosperous nation irrespective of differences. The paper found out that the following are the leadership challenges and nationhood: Bad governance, socio-economic inequalities, Ethno-religious Conflicts, Federal Character Dilemma, Corruption, and Leadership crisis. The paper however, recommends that there is urgent need for Nigerians irrespective of status, to reflect back on the visions, values and aspirations of Nigerian's founding fathers, particularly on the areas of good governance, formulation and implementation of people-oriented policies and programmes through good leadership and the government should urgently establish leadership training centers at the 774 local

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government areas across the country. These leadership training institutes should serve as platforms for those wishing to occupy elective positions at local, state and national levels in Nigeria. These institutes, could be established through appropriate legislation and should be made mandatory for all envisaged public officials to pass through them.

Keywords: Leadership, Challenges, and Nationhood

INTRODUCTION

Before the advent of the British colonialists, Nigeria as a socio-political entity was neither in existence nor contemplated. The territories that now make up Nigeria existed in fragments. We have the Benin Empire, the Lower Niger Kingdoms (popularly referred to as the Oil Rivers), the Fulani Empire of Zodge (later referred to as Sokoto), and the Kanem-Borno Empire. In addition, there were the Oduduwa Empire of the Yoruba, and the Aro-Chukwu Empire of the Ibo. Another was the Aboh Empire that sprang from the Benin Empire (Alloh, 2012). However, there's no systematic contact between one empire and the other. There were isolated trade contacts among the people of the Lower Niger Kingdom and the Benin Kingdom. Different names were used for the territories now incorporated in Nigeria and the whole area was referred to as the Hausa Territories, the Niger Empire, the Niger Sudan and the Niger Coast Protectorates. In January 1894, Miss Flora Shaw, a journalist with the Times newspaper on colonial affairs, wrote an article and suggested the name „Nigeria" for all the territories around the River Niger. In 1902, Miss Flora Shaw was married to Sir Frederick Lord Lugard who was at that time the High Commissioner for the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria, who was also destined to become the Governor General of Nigeria (Alloh, 2013). In other words, the naming of a nation was a woman's suggestion to her husband who was in a position of authority to implement it. The Nigerian state, created in 1914, as an act of British

colonialism, by the amalgamation of two existing British colonial states, the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria and the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria was 100 years old on the 1st day of January 2014.

Whatever side of the argument one might be inclined to pitch tent with, what could be deduced from the above discussion on the national question in Nigeria is that the questions of ethnicity, religion, class, federalism, revenue allocation, and constitutionalism, amongst other factors, have remained largely unresolved almost 100 years after the amalgamation of Nigeria in 1914 (Akinola, 2012). Perhaps, the most often cited authorities in this regard are the statement credited to the first Premier of the Northern Region and the foremost Nigerian political leader of Northern extraction, late Alhaji Ahmadu Bello. According to Alhaji Bello, the amalgamation of the southern and northern Nigeria protectorates in 1914 was “the mistake of 1914” (Osaghae, 1998 quoted in Akinola, 2012, p. 8). Another statement credited to the political leader of the Yoruba race and leader of opposition in Nigeria's First Republic, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, refers to Nigeria as a “mere geographical expression”.

For many years of nationhood, the most critical challenge confronting Nigeria as a nation appears to be credible leadership. Many scholars at one time or the other have queried why Nigeria seems to find it difficult to address her perennial leadership problems in spite of abundant human and material resources available at her disposal. Some have argued that leadership challenge of the country could be traced from the emergence of colonial misadventure in Nigeria, while others dismissed such argument on the basis that corruption and lack of vision among past and present leaders of Nigeria culminate to hamper any meaningful effort in the quest for good governance in the country. These leadership

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challenges are evidenced in political, social and economic instability and the prevalence of ethnic, communal and religious crises, which have bedeviled Nigerian socio economic development. In other words, the staggering wave of violence, insecurity, increasing crime wave, economic recession, coupled with the break-down in law and order are the attributes to the problem of bad leadership in Nigeria. Therefore, the quest for good leadership is a sine-qua-non for sustainable development.

CONCEPTUALIZATION

Leadership

Leadership is the exercise of power or influence in social collectivities such as groups, organizations, communities or nation. (Olugbade, 1987) sees leadership is both a research area and a practical skill encompassing the ability of an individual or organization to "lead" or guide other individuals, teams, or entire organizations. Leadership can either be understood as a pattern of behavior or a personal quality. As a pattern of behavior, leadership is the influence exerted by an individual or group over a large body to organize or direct its efforts towards the achievement of desired goals. As a personal attitude, leadership refers to the character traits which enable the leader to exert influence over others. Leadership is thus equated with charisma which is the personal charm or power to lead. The democratic political leaders therefore have to be mindful of the side effects of their leadership style on the people they lead least the undesirable effects derail democratic process. Bad leadership lead to undesired outcome like it concentrates power and can thus lead to corruption and tyranny, hence the democratic demand that leadership be checked by accountability. It creates a situation of subservience and difference which may discourage people from participating in issues that concern them and thus lead to failure to take responsibility for their own

destiny (Olugbade, 1987).

Schmidt (1972) says, the relation of leadership arises only where a group follows an individual from free choice and not under command or coercion and, secondly, not in response to blind drives but on positive and more or less national grounds. The concept of leadership should be understood as encompassing a wide range of activities. It applies to the running of social groups and the governing of nations. It may concern the relatively diffuse process of influence in establishing norms of style or opinion; or it may involve specific orders in a chain of command. It includes supervision and statesmanship, routine administration and organization building.

Nationhood

The idea of nationhood is one that has not been defined explicitly. This is perhaps due to the inherent flexibility of the concept; it is multifaceted and loosely defined; nations are "self-defined", meaning that its perception and existence depend on what people make of it. "National identity involves some sense of political community. However tenuous, this allows for loosely defined bonds to be created, marked by affiliation to any number of qualities. Thus, nations are essentially "a self-constituted 'natural' category, a group of people who naturally form a unit with a common past, present and, often explicitly, future; a group of people who share things...that mark them off from other groups.." (Walker, 2007).

At the most basic level, nation has been defined as a collective or large group of individuals that are bound together and therefore unified by commonalities like language, ethnicity, habits, behaviours and customs. However, national identities are highly complex and this raises significant questions of what may actually constitute a nation in practice

rather than theory. For example, (Smith, 1999) argues that a nation is built upon myth and memory because these elements forge a collective purpose, hence inducing a sense of belonging that all too often inspires the 'nation' to defend its identity.

Stalin (1913) asks what a nation was in his text Marxism and the National Question, noting that nationhood goes beyond tribal and racial origins. He, instead, advocates that a nation must be a "...historically constituted community of people", thus situating the idea firmly in historical, political and social discourses that extend into the past. It has however been observed that the term itself is not a modern one. Rather, it can be traced back to the 14th century where it referred to a series of concepts that extend from the idea of descendants, countries and births (Harper, 2001). In effect, the structure of the idea behind it has always been complex, but has evolved alongside understandings and attitudes towards what constitutes a nation. Despite this, the notion of unification has remained constant with Egypt essentially being identified as the first nation as a direct result of the shared ethnic background, cultural consensus and unification on which it was built (Gat, 2013). In effect, the concept of a nation existed for several millennia prior to the actual term.

THE PRIMACY OF LEADERSHIP IN NATION BUILDING

Nigeria has had a long history of democratic experiment but had never gotten it right but with Authoritarian role by an institutionalized oligarchy set of people that constituted the main structural obstacle to actualizing democratic leadership in Nigeria. Also corruption, tribalism, ethnicity, mismanagement, embezzlement and nepotism are direct negations of law and order, good governance, economic justice and democracy. (Adefarasin, 2015) asserts that Nigeria is blessed with both human and natural resources; yet, it is quite evident today that political

independence has failed to match with economic independence. Nigeria has refused to develop and join comity of Nations, simply because of lack of effective leadership. It is gratifying to note that the majority of the leaders that have emerged in Nigeria after independence have exhibited bad leadership quality. The leaders are not concerned about the development of our country, as corruption, bad democratic principles and mediocrity have become the norms and direct negations of law and order, good governance, economic justice and democracy. He explained further that despite her enormous resources and huge potentialities, Nigeria remains underdeveloped, embellished in abject poverty, unemployment, high crime rate and insecurity with its attendant terrorism as well as the nagging issues of favouritism and ethnicity in resource distribution. Despite of all these vices the leaders undermined the development of the nation despite the fact that Nigeria is blessed with natural and human resources.

In 2017, in his inaugural lecture Professor Okotoni, he cited corruption as a vice that risked gravely harming millions in Nigeria and it is the major cause of poverty and conflicts. Corruption in Nigeria takes place in many forms, corruption in Nigeria has grown at an alarming rate due to poverty, which is rampant and miserable salaries often cannot suffice to cater for a big and extended family force many people to opt for bribes to meet the needs. Most Nigerian leaders have used their political position to embezzle economic resources that is a process that often involved thee mass pauperization of the "masses" and the deepening of their dependence on the patrimonial favours of the "government". (Obiozor, 2015) opines that Nigeria is a nation born in optimism in 1960 at independence but has its 61 year lived in a state of doubt and uncertainty. Within those years too, all kinds of analysis and conclusions

have been assembled on critical issues responsible for what has become a Nigerian dilemma over nation building and national development. This is because all countries compared to Nigeria in 1960 have made astronomical progress, developed relatively stable political and economic systems.

When compared with 3rd world countries in the 1960s, such as Singapore, Taiwan, Indonesia, Malaysia, South Korea. In an interval of thirty years, the latter became the Asian Tigers. He explained further that while the former are immersed in perennial violent wars, armed conflicts and small scale insurgencies, cross-border terrorism, unrelenting economic crises, financial corruption, famine, diseases and poverty, political instability, to name a few, which have become emblems of the African continent. What made the difference? In the light of the conundrum, this paper attempts to look at how leadership and governance have interacted and the implications of their interactions on nation building within the Nigerian context (Obiozor, 2015). Chimakonam and Ogar (2015) asserted that in Nigeria, however, there are some people who resent our national importance by calling us the "Giant of Africa". This is an ascriptive perspective. We are seen as giants not necessarily because of the quality of our national institutions and values, but simply by virtue of our large population and oil wealth. But in reality, the greatness of a nation has to be earned and is not determined just by the size of its population or abundance of its natural resources.

For instance, China and India have the largest population in the world, but they are only now rising as important global players. On the other hand Japan has few natural resources, but has long managed to run itself in the global economic powerhouse. (Salgman, 1968: 107) says that only effective leadership can furnish integrative direction and action as a

cure for the stalemated pluralism endemic to western democratic systems. The pathology of political pluralism, as we have in Nigeria, is immobilism. Under such conditions, only strong executive leadership can furnish decisive national purpose. But leadership role varies with situation and conditions. Leadership is a nexus of need fulfillments that binds situational demands and group membership. Thus during crisis situations, as Nigeria has been since our flag independence, groups are likely to select leaders who diagnose problems quickly and act decisively. But unfortunately, Nigeria has not been blessed with that type of leadership despite the fact that she has been in one crisis or the other. (Olugbade, 1987) says that no matter how important or effective the leader may be, the qualities that ender him to his people may soon fade away if he operate in an ideological vacuum. Even if he manages to cope, as most charismatic leaders do, things would surely be difficult for his successors. This is why the issue of ideology is linked with leadership.

Chikendu (1987) agreed that leadership is important in any political community because the electorate is generally atomized and inert. The mass is able to act as a single unit only when it is integrated from outside by the leader. Leadership can transform the mass from an aggregation of isolated units into a solid unified group. The great leader of the masses has noted that the workers themselves never transcend their mileux to see the distinction bread riots and total revolution. He explained further that the goal attainment functions are the functions of the political system. The political system, as the system that allocates the values of the society authoritatively, bestrides the other functional subsystems of the society. Political leaders operate in the political system and through the government. Therefore, they are the authoritative decision-making agents of the society. All the resources of the society are

ultimately mobilized and manipulated by the political leaders, how well and how wise they do this will, to a very large extent, determine the progress and development of the society. A few examples in history may suffice to buttress the point author are making. Nigeria is a nation born in optimism in 1960 at independence but has its 61 year lived in a state of doubt and uncertainty. Within those years too, all kinds of analysis and conclusions have been assembled on critical issues responsible for what has become a Nigerian dilemma over nation building and national development. This is because all countries compared to Nigeria in 1960 have made astronomical progress, developed relatively stable political and economic systems. When compared with 3rd world countries in the 1960s, such as countries in Asia like Singapore, Taiwan, Indonesia, Malaysia, South Korea.

In an interval of thirty years, the latter became the Asian Tigers. (Agbor, 2012) asserts that the United States of America which today ranks as one of the world's most developed nations in terms of technology and standard of living of her people, did not become a great nation over-night and by accident. She has been tended and nurtured into greatness by her political leaders ranging from George Washington, through Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln to John Kennedy. The history of Russia offers yet another example of the importance of political leadership in nation building before 1917 the Russians could not manufacture a bicycle. Her citizens were famished lot, see thing under the autocratic misrule of the Czars but today, the Russian is vying strongly with the United States for the first position s the most powerful and most developed nation in the world. Thanks to the able leadership of Lenin and Stalin, without Lenin, the great Bolshevick revolution of 1917 which was destined to transform the Russia into a superpower, would not have come

to fruition. He explained further that turning to the developing countries of the third world, Cuba is another example of the role of leadership in lifting a people from the quagmire of poverty, ignorance and disease into a haven of affluence and contentment. Cuba lacked the right type of political leadership that could have put her on the path of development and national greatness. She was to await the arrival of Fidel Castro, who in 1959 brought down the corrupt and inefficient regime of Fulgencio Batista and mounted a progressive type of political leadership. Today Cuba, under the leadership of Fidel Castro has been transformed politically, socially and economically and his government has vastly expanded educational opportunities and institution. These are but a few examples of the role of political leadership in building a nation, virtually all the nations of the world that have made it, did so primarily because of good leadership (Chikendu, 1987).

THE ROLE OF PUBLIC SECTOR IN NATION BUILDING IN THE 4TH DEMOCRATIC DISPENSATION

Abah (2015) agreed that the role of public administration in governance is a continuing issue of discussion and debate in the contemporary world. As with other developing economies and recognized member of the international community, Nigeria is required to subscribe to a system of values, policies and institutions for managing our economic, social and political affairs. It is also becoming increasingly imperative for government to address calls from among civil society, private sector and other groups for greater effectiveness and accountability for management of human and material resources. The only authentic means of doing this is through public sector/public administration institutions as the mechanisms by which government actors are implemented. Okotoni (2017) opines that the adoption of

democratic governance in 1999 as a moral imperative and a continuous process of political practice had enabled Nigeria to overcome past challenges of military junta's administration, regain legitimacy and muster the capacity for development. The Constitution had established the basis for the rule of law, assert a balance of power among the three branches of government, and affirm the dignity, basic human rights and fundamental freedoms of the Nigerian people. It had restored the people's sovereignty, sanction democratic principles and allow popular participation in policy and decision making. Furthermore, it had provides for the formation of a transparent government accountable to the people and open up the space for competitive politics, independent media and autonomous civic associations. In a nutshell, democratic governance had been the path to national renewal, state construction and economic revival.

Abdulsalam (2007) agrees that it has been recognized that Nigerians live in an “Executive Centered era” in which the effectiveness of government depends substantially upon executive leadership, both in policy formulation in policy execution. The suspension of extant laws and absence of new laws to guide emerging issues has resulted in anomalies in Nigerian public sector. Championing legal reforms and transforming their organizations into models of legal compliance becomes an immediate objective for public services/administrators, even as the Nigerian judiciary works to address weakness, slowness and inconsistency of government, public officials must take highest standards of ethics and performance within their organizations. He explained further that the civil service in Nigeria is expected to play a leading role in the socio-economic transformation through innovation and social engineering. It is also expected to be a leader in promoting national unity

and integration, because governments in developing countries have accepted responsibility for including promoting, directing and managing national socio-economic and political development, it becomes imperative that large scale of government bureaucracy is established, charged with the task of implementing development programmes and projects in a variety of fields.

The need for administrative development has arisen, that is, the need for appropriate action to be taken to design, build and sustain effective and efficient administrative machinery capable and ready to play its expected role in national development and nation building (Abdulsalam, 2007).

Ele (2013) asserts that modern formations in Nigeria, whose needs the state and the public sector finds itself compelled to address are relative enclaves providing livelihoods to minority of the population while the majority of the populace lives and works in relative poverty and, marginalization and exclusion in the non-formal sectors where traditional and various survivalist and adaptive livelihoods and modes of governance are dominant even if under great pressure from various external factors. Thus the question still stands as to what kind of state would be needed to promote inclusive economic participation, sustainable human development and nation building in a manner that uplifts the poorest of the poor in its wake. That is the grand problematic of public administration and governance. (Achebe, 1983) has opined that "Nigeria is less than fortunate in its leadership". According to him Nigerian leaders have a tendency to pious materialist wooliness and self-centered pedestrianism. He drew our attention to the statements made by Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe, in their autobiographies, which could be construed to be the underlying

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principles of their leadership behavior in Nigeria politics. (Agbor, 2012) called the Nigerian leaders of this period wind-showers rather than nation-building, their error of omission and commission were the wind the sowed. Political leaders such as ministers, commissioners, party leaders, heads of various parastatals, chairmen of local council, etc. used their positions to accumulate wealth, buy properties of various kinds, or enter into partnership with foreign exploiters to set up local branch factories of the multi-national corporations, etc.

Challenges of Leadership and Nation-Building in Nigerian

Since the amalgamation of northern and southern protectorate in 1914 by Fredrick Lugard, a number of national issues have generated heated debates and crises, which have threatened the entire fabric of nation building. These include: Bad governance, socio-economic inequalities, Ethno-religious Conflicts, Federal Character Dilemma, Corruption, and Leadership crisis.

i. Bad Governance- Bad governance is the exact opposite of good governance. It is exercised through bad leadership. It is complete absence of good leadership, followership and good governance. It means lack of respect for the fundamental human rights of citizens, lack of judicious use of natural resources, fraud and other corrupt practices; in short, it has no respect for principles of accountability and transparency. Just as good governance promotes the accumulation of financial, physical, social and political capital, bad governance inhibits or drains away that accumulation. For development to take place in any society there must be serious transformation in the quality of governance. For every governed country, corruption leads to public infrastructure decay or the resource at the state disposal are diverted to private ends. In the context of bad governance, individuals seek governmental positions in order to collect

rent and accumulate personal wealth through the conversion of public resources into private goods. There is no commitment to the public goods and no confidence in the future.

The only way to generate truly sustainable development, according to (Diamond, 2004:226), is to bring about fundamental transformation in the nature and quality of governance. To him, governance permeate the entire environment of development, merging with attitudes, value to the expectation to the point where it is hard to know where culture ends and institutions begin The leaders that came to power after independents did not come with any ideology of their own. The colonial master too did not leave them with any. They come to power without any agenda of development for the people. They where only handled political independence without economic independence and this political independence was seen as a do or die affair. For one to control power, they use arbitraritry for their own selfish ends to the detriment of people they are supposed to be serving. There is absence of political will, the people are empowered and there is complete breakdown of trust between the leaders and the followers. The leaders have completed abandoned the people, It is not easy to eradicate poverty in any society no matter the amount of resources available in the country but as (Marshall, 2013: 714) observed there is no moral justification for extreme poverty side by side with great wealth". It is the opinion of any people that the problem with Nigeria is in the area of instability, policy implementation and corruption. All these can be solved through good purposive leadership excised through functional institutions and committed civil society, which Nigeria is in dare need for all round development to take place.

ii. The Challenge of Socio-Economic Inequalities - An important

aspect of nation-building is the building of a common citizenship. But how can we have a common citizenship when the person in Ilorin has a radically different quality of life from the person in Yenagoa? Or when the woman in Gusau is more likely to die at childbirth than the woman in Gboko? Through the development of the economy and equal opportunities for all, or through the development of social welfare safety nets, mature nations try to establish a base-line of social and economic rights which all members of the national community enjoys. Not to enjoy these socio-economic rights means that the people involved are marginalized from national life. That is why in many Western European countries contemporary nation-building is about preventing „social exclusion" or the exclusion of significant segments of the population from enjoying basic social and economic rights (Jimoh, 2008).

In Nigeria, however, not only are many of our citizens denied basic rights such as the right to education and health, there is also serious variation in the enjoyment of these rights across the country. As a consequence, the citizen is not motivated to support the state and society, because he or she does not feel that the society is adequately concerned about their welfare. Secondly socio-economic inequalities across the country fuels fears and suspicious which keep our people divided. The level of immunization of children against dangerous childhood diseases, while the South-East has 44.6% immunization coverage, the North-West has 3.7% and North-East 3.6%. The education of the girl child as indicator, there's a similar pattern of inequality with the South-East having an enrolment rate of 85%, South-West 89%, South-South 75%, North-East 20%, and North-West 25%. Only 25% of pregnant women in the North-West use maternity clinics, while 85% of the women in the

South-East do. It is not surprising that 39% more women die in child-birth in the North-East, compared to the South-West. Education and poverty levels are also important dimensions of inequalities across Nigeria. The admissions into Nigerian universities in the academic year, 2000/1 when the North-West had only 5% of the admissions, while the South-East had 39%. As for poverty, the former Governor of the Central Bank, Charles Soludo, recently pointed out that while 95% of the population of Jigawa State is classified as poor, only 20% of Bayelsa State is so classified. While 85% of Kwara State is classified as poor, only 32% of Osun is in the same boat (Jimoh, 2008).

These inequalities pose two related challenges to nation-building. Firstly, high levels of socioeconomic inequalities mean that there's an unequal distribution of resources in different parts of the country. The chances of surviving child-birth, of surviving childhood, of receiving education and skills, all vary across the country. If different parts of Nigeria were separate countries, some parts will be middle income countries, while others will be poorer than the poorest countries in the world. A common nationhood cannot be achieved while citizens are living such parallel lives. Inequalities are a threat to a common citizenship. Secondly, even in those parts of the country that are relatively better off, the level of social provision and protection is still low by world standards (Smith, 2012). The 20% that are poor and unemployed in Bayelsa State are still excluded from common citizenship benefits. Therefore, they is need for Social Contract between the people on the one hand, and the state and nation on the other. The state and nation must put meeting the needs of the disadvantaged as a key objective of public policy. Such an approach can make possible a common experience of life by Nigerians living in different parts of the country and

elicit their commitment to the nation. Instead of resorting to the divisive politics of indigene against settler as a means of accessing resources, a generalized commitment to social citizenship will create a civic structure of rights that will unite people around shared rights and goals. Poverty and nation-building are different, whether the poor are 20% or 85% of the population. A largely marginalized citizenry, increasingly crippled by poverty and the lack of basic needs, can hardly be expected to play its proper role in the development of the nation. Nations are built by healthy and skilled citizens (Muhammed, 2008). On grounds of both equity and efficiency, to promote the access of the bulk of the Nigerian population to basic education, health, and housing, Nigeria needs a social contract with its citizens as a basis for demanding their loyalty and support.

iii. Ethno-Religious Conflicts- Nigeria is widely acclaimed as a society with vast ethnic, religious and cultural diversities. The Nigerian state has been be-devilled with bitter ethno-religious crises especially after independent. Even in this fourth Republic where democratic processes are initially thought to be more disposed to mediating the country's diversities peacefully; violent ethnic conflicts have been more rampant, thereby slowing down national progress and threatening national unity and stability. Poverty is a dominant factor in the rising trend of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria. Poverty, which is manifested in both unemployment and deterioration of social infrastructure, provides the bedrock for ethnic conflicts. Many people are unemployed. Many functional factories are not working to full capacity, leading to retrenchment of workers and an increase in the unemployment figure. Those who escape retrenchment and are still working find it increasingly difficult to collect their salaries, as some employers sometimes owe their workers‟ salaries amounting to many months or a times years

(Muhammed, 2008). Most families therefore find it difficult to feed themselves or cater for other essential needs like shelter, clothing and healthcare. Due to this pathetic scenario, family norms and values have collapsed across the country, as most parents can no longer adequately control their children, kith and kin. This situation provides ample opportunity for ethno-religious conflicts because the jobless youths and hungry children become ready tools of selfish leaders in fomenting trouble and causing conflicts across the country. The promise of a meager amount of money with little enjoyment makes the youths ever willing to undertake such a venture. They are overwhelmed by the available goodies and booties without serious consideration for the consequences of their actions (Muhammed, 2008).

Furthermore, prolonged military rule manifested in the forceful suppression of the ethnic aspirations of many minority groups, while the monopolization of power by the majority groups stimulated violent conflicts afterwards (Uju, 2004). The shift of Presidential Power to the South led to some agitations, which were given religious coloration, and these agitations also elicited reactions from some elements in the South who continuously clamored for a favorable system of revenue distribution and resource control. Ethno-religious conflicts in this era have been further heightened by the indigene/settler syndrome; Land ownership and the indigene/settler debacle have always generated security concern in the country, particularly in the Fourth Republic. Even within the same ethnic group, the problem of who owns the land, who is an indigene and who is a settler, are sources of violent disputes. For example, the Ife and Modakeke is Yoruba, while the Aguleri and Umuleri are Igbo, yet land disputes among these sub – ethnic groups have been intense and devastating in terms of large scale destruction of lives and

property. In addition to intra – group conflicts, inter – ethnic conflicts have been on the rise in recent times, especially between the Urhobos and Itshekiris in Delta State, Tivs and Jukuns in Benue State, Ijaws and Ilajes in Ondo State, Jukuns and Kutebs in Taraba State and the Hausa – Fulani against Northern Minorities in most of the Northern States (Olu, 2006).

iv. The Federal Character Dilemma - Federal character and its application is another contentious issue in nation building. Federal Character, which is a key provision in the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria as amended has been a major source of tension in Nigerian Federalism. According to its enacted law: "The composition of the federation or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried in such manner as to reflect the federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity, and also to command national loyalty thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few states or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in that government or in any of its agencies". Put simply, Federal Character is a euphemism for ethnic balancing. It is an instrumentality for ensuring unity in diversity by balancing official appointments between groups and within the officer corps of the armed forces. There is need to emphasize that the controversial idea of Federal Character, which has become an integral part of Nigeria's federal system, is not peculiar to Nigeria (Ali, 2003),. For example, the United States of America too applies it in the form of "Affirmative Action" and India too as "Quota System" in several areas. However, what has happened in practice in Nigeria since 1979 is that the conflicting interpretation and faulty implementation of the Federal Character principle elicited results that were almost completely opposed to the aims of promoting national unity and loyalty. Clearly, these problems contributed immensely to the contradictions and disharmonies

that have since marred inter – governmental and inter – group relations in the country (Oyedele, 1999).

v. Corruption- Corruption is a global phenomenon but it is more prevalent and destructive in the Third World countries. That corruption in Nigeria has become an endemic problem threatening the country's socio – economic and political development is common knowledge. While acknowledging the threat of corruption to the Nigerian State, Hon. Ghali Umar Na‟ Abba, former Speaker of Nigeria's House of Representatives declared in 2003 that" While we cannot rule out the incidence of corruption and bribery in almost every facet of our society, it is particularly resident in the infrastructure areas in ministries or monopolistic parastals saddled with the task of making infrastructure available to the public – water, telecommunication, electricity (NEPA), roads and railways (NRC). In that same year, a Central Bank of Nigeria Director stated that "the avalanche of frauds and unprofessional / unethical practices in the industry in recent years is eroding public confidence in the system (Dukor, 2006). In 2004, Transparency International (TI), the world acclaimed anti – corruption watchdog, ranked Nigeria as the third most corrupt country in the world, after Haiti and Bangladesh. It also stated that billions of dollars are lost to bribery in government procument, particularly in the oil sector of the economy. Furthermore, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) declared that Nigeria has maintained a seventy percent rise in poverty inspite of an income of over two hundred billion dollars in oil revenues since 1970, and her per capital income has hardly improved ever since (Dukor, 2006).

Corruption in Nigeria is, primarily, a political problem. The incidence of corruption in a nation is as a result of the lack of political will

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on the part of the political leadership and the inability of the state to maintain law and order. Thus, business corruption is a fall – out of the failure to tackle political corruption, which casts doubts upon the moral uprightness of the state as a whole and on the political will of the leadership to manage the affairs of the nation. It follows simple logic that where there is absence of political corruption is where the state operates under a high ethical order and upholds, protects and enforce the rule of law on itself and on its citizens. Under the rule of law and justice, the state machinery works for the good of all and there will be no stealing of public funds, inflation of contracts, forgeries, and mismanagement of money in banks, industries and government beaurocracies. In a nutshell, as it has played out in Nigeria, political corruption and business corruption are two sides of the same coin. In this regard, it is important to note that the seedy financial scandals exposed in the Fourth Republic involved several financial institutions. For example, former Inspector General of Police (IGP) Tafa Balogun's financial frauds involved the laundering of 12 billion of Naira under different names in different banks. Similar method was also employed by government officials involved in "Ikoyigate", a reference to the shameful fraud involving the sale of government properties in Ikoyi, Lagos, and other financial scandals that rocked the Fourth Republic across the Local, State and Federal Government units, including the Presidency itself.

Electoral fraud is another dimension of the corruption syndrome in Nigeria. The massively rigged General Elections of 2003 and 2007 are undoubtedly the most fraudulent in the country's political history. By the conduct, nature and outcome of the polls, the Nigerian state clearly demonstrated its expertise and will to be corrupt, the will to corrupt the polity and the business society, coupled with the lack of will to enforce

the relevant legislations against electoral and financial crimes. The electoral fraud perpetuated by the state and some political parties in 2003 was acknowledged by many international observers. The European Union Election Monitoring Mission stated that the elections were marred by serious irregularities and fraud in many states. According to the United States-based International Republican Institute (IRI), the presidential and gubernatorial elections suffered in some parts of Nigeria as a result of numerous uncorrected administrative and procedural errors combined with many observed instances of obvious premeditated electoral manipulations". The Commonwealth Observer Group also observed that: In parts of Enugu and Rivers State, proper electoral processes appear to have broken down and there was intimidation.

vi. Leadership Crisis- The various challenges of nation – building, some of which have been detailed above in this paper, have been compounded by the leadership crisis. Though, the leadership challenge, like the Sword of Damocles, hangs above all nations, the issue has however assumed a crisis dimension of monumental consequences particularly in Less Developed Countries (LDCs) (Elaigwu, 2011). Nigeria is a nation born in hope and optimism but has lived in anxiety for most of its hundred years history due to the country's failure to produce a nationally acceptable leadership that transcends ethnic, regional and religious boundaries, and that can unite its diverse peoples for mobilization towards national development. In the light of this, it is valid to support the argument that the basic problem with the Nigerian federation is the failure of leadership. All other factors of disunity, instability and under –development have been nurtured and given momentum by leadership failure. Criticisms against Nigerian leaders across Local, State and Federal government levels are many and justified. These include corruption, selfishness,

despotism, tribalism, and religious bigotry (Alloh, 2013).

Nigeria's political history since independence has shown clearly through her various conflicts, coups and counter – coups, as well as a civil war, that the Nigerian ruling elite (both civilian and military) are divided along many lines, particularly along tribal, ethnic, religious and regional lines. This has led to inter – elite rivalries, mutual suspicion and status conflicts among the ruling elite. Thus, government and politics in Nigeria has been characterized by deadly competitions and conflicts of hostile subcultures araising various danger signals that occasionally threatened the continued existence of the country. Under successive Nigerian leaderships, almost every issue has been politicized and interpreted to serve as a weapon of political domination or intimidation. As a consequence, various issues like elections, census, state creation, religion, political appointments, revenue sharing and lately, resource control have ignited serious socio – political crises.

Conclusion

The challenges of leadership in Nigeria particularly in the 21st century are currently generating concerns among well-meaning citizens of this country. That Nigeria is yet to harness abundant human and material resources in her domain for development for the past 50 years of nationhood has left much to be desired. As this study have demonstrated, inept and corrupt leadership affect not only service delivery to the Nigerian people but also adversely affect the unity and corporate existence of Nigeria as a sovereign state. In view of this, the citizens of this country now need to strike a balance between the personality/qualifications of those who struggle to pilot the affairs of the country, the culture and democratic values of Nigeria as a nation. This is particularly important because, as rightly noted "leaders must be able to

assist and guide the community to embark on projects that serve the greatest and immediate needs of the people, as well as direct the means of implementing them at minimum cost. Nigerians must at this point in time, rise up against the ugly behaviours and corrupt practices of their leaders considered to jeopardize developmental efforts in their country. We must, therefore begin to speak out to our leaders and stand firm to ask them to resign their appointments if found wanting in discharging their functions. However, the actions of Governors Forum that asked the former PDP National Chairman, Prince Vincent Ogbulafor to resign from office should be replicated in other sectors of our national life.

Above all, Nigeria as a nation must go back to those values that distinguish her from other countries in the world, particularly the west. We must see the need to reward hard work and embark on paradigm shift particularly on the area of placing little or no emphasis on wealth acquisition, as this singular act negatively affects the psyche of our leader in the management of public resources. We should adopt styles of leadership that suit our history as a nation rather than adopting euro-centric models of leadership that have no place in our culture as a sovereign state. We must learn to condemn evil perpetuated against the state no matter who is involved and therefore advocate the strengthening of the role of the judiciary and anti-graft agencies in this regard. These, among others, are Panacea for the achievement of desired socio-economic and political development of Nigeria, through credible leadership particularly in this 21st Century.

Recommendations

1. There is urgent need for Nigerians irrespective of status, to reflect back on the visions, values and aspirations of Nigerian's founding fathers, particularly on the areas of good governance, formulation and

implementation of people-oriented policies and programmes through good leadership.

2. The government should urgently establish leadership training centers at the 774 local government areas across the country. These leadership training institutes should serve as platforms for those wishing to occupy elective positions at local, state and national levels in Nigeria. These institutes, could be established through appropriate legislation and should be made mandatory for all envisaged public officials to pass through them.

3. At the local government levels in some parts of Nigeria, the citizens always insist that those wishing to occupy public offices must first carry „political briefcases" for already tested and trusted politicians in their areas so as to enable them learn the rope. We, therefore, recommend that this approach should be replicated and sustained in all part of the country, provided that the contents of the said „political briefcases" are not corruption-related elements/materials such as embezzlement of public funds, election rigging, inflation of contracts for personal enrichment, intimidation/elimination of political opponents, formulation/implementation of anti-people's policies and programmes, among others.

4. The National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies should be more proactive to equip public functionaries at the states and national levels with requisite training that would ultimately reflect in the formulation and implementation of government policies and programmes in Nigeria.

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