



LEADERSHIP FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Leadership in government is a great determinant of success of governance in any organised political system. Nigeria is blessed with natural and human resources, yet the battles with leadership and governance remain unsortable since her political independence from the British. The causes of governance failure and the problems of leadership in Nigeria is the focus of this paper. The data used for the paper was basically secondary in nature. The paper concluded that transparent, committed and transformational leadership is highly required for good governance and sustainable development in Nigeria.

Keywords: Leadership, Governance, Development, Government, Nigeria.

Introduction

The socio-economic and political development of any country depends largely on the ability of its leadership to facilitate, establish and sustain good governance. Effective management and utilization of available resources to better the living condition of the people has been the pre-occupation of the government. The onus is on the government to ensure that human and material resources are effectively and judiciously galvanized, utilized and sustained to ensure the development of the country. The socio-economic and political development of Nigeria depends largely on the ability of its leadership to facilitate, entrench and sustain good governance. Essentially, good governance is a function of committed, patriotic and disciplined leadership. Nigeria obtained political independence since 1960 and it is therefore expected to be at par with its contemporaries in terms of socio-economic and political developments. However, its progress in these areas have been stunted by lack of transformational and functional leadership.

Despite the long years of independence, Nigeria that is regarded as “giant” of Africa is still battling with the problem of good governance.

The crop of leaders that have attained leadership position since independence seemed to lack vision and most of them have been engrossed with corruption and political problems leading to the enthronement of maladministration and mismanagement of public resources and consequently economic setback and abject poverty. Significantly, Nigeria is among the countries of the world endowed with human, natural and valuable resources that are capable of improving the socio-economic status and living standards of the citizenry. The reverse has been the case with Nigeria. In view of this ugly trend, many observers of the development crisis in Nigeria since independence agree that poor leadership has been a major factor. The trouble with Nigeria is simply a failure of leadership. It is against this background that this paper examines leadership and governance crisis in Nigeria since independence with a view to providing alternative style of leadership that can enhance good governance.

Statement of the Problem

Good governance should be linked to the extent to which a government is perceived and accepted as legitimate, committed to improving the public welfare and responsive to the needs of its citizens and competent to assure law and order. The main elements of governance comprise of rule of law, freedom of expression and association, electoral legitimacy, accountability, transparency and development-oriented leadership. The need for good governance has been emphasized as a precondition for development because it can yield positive developmental changes. Does the characteristics of the leadership in Nigeria promote good governance? What are the effects of the existing style of leadership on the national development in Nigeria? What should be put in place to prepare leadership for good governance in Nigeria?

Methodology

Qualitative research design was adopted to gain an insight into the nature and character of leadership, corruption and governance in Nigeria. Secondary data from journal publications, textbooks and internet was adopted for the study while descriptive analysis was used to examine the issues of leadership, corruption and governance in Nigeria. The study is theoretical in nature.

Literature Review

Leadership

A leader can be described as anybody that can influence others to perform beyond their formal authority. Leadership emerges because societies are organized. Since the masses cannot all lead, there is a need to have a few people who will lead (Ujo, 2001). Leadership promotes and binds a work group together as the catalyst that triggers motivation among the populace thereby having major influence on organization performance. Omolayo (2005) describes leadership as an essential oil that keeps the wheel of government working without any difficulty. According to him, leadership makes the difference between success and failure in a country. It involves giving direction to citizens who are the critical assets of the nation.

Leadership is a bundle of attributes which includes knowledge, vision, courage, imagination, determination, transparency, decisiveness, motivation, patriotism and nationalism deployed by occupants of strategic positions to lead their citizens and followers towards profound and positive societal transformations. Profound society changes require extraordinary leadership exemplified in transformational policies and actions (Ukaegbu, 2010). Transformational leadership makes bold statements of goals, has bold visions, takes bold steps to unite with followers to achieve those goals, takes initiative in mobilizing people for participation in the process of change, and encourages a sense of collective identity and collective efficacy. Importantly, transformation leadership makes leaders out of followers. The leaders so produced and dispersed across sectors and geographic areas ensure that the goals and visions of progress established at various centres of power are implemented in accordance with the needs of citizens and that the later actively participate on goal implementation.

Transformational leaders assert independence and exercise courage in making choices in the best interest of the country within the global system of economic, political and cultural interaction. They lead the people to return quality and excellence to education, revolutionize infrastructure and modernize productive activity in all sectors of the economy. They insert indigenous professionals and labour centre stage to build national development infrastructure. Transformational leadership is inward looking without isolating its society from the global system. It assumes ownership of the national or local problem depending on the layer of leadership, deploys intelligence, imagination and energy to lead followers to solve problems and

enables followers to unleash hidden and untapped capabilities. The transformational leader constantly monitors the status of policies and project through his physical presence and reports from subordinates, with checks and balances to ensure the reports are genuine. This philosophy of leadership relegates embezzlement of public revenue, mismanagement of public resources, and other forms of corruption by indigenous and international actors and brings transparency and accountability to the fore. This is the history of development left by transformational leaders in many countries of the World (Ukaegbu, 2010).

Good Governance

Good governance is the process and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised; the process by which governments are selected, held accountable, monitored and replaced; the capacity of governments to manage resources efficiently, and to formulate, implement and enforce sound policies and regulations; and, the respect for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them (Onigbide, 2007). According to UNDP (1997), good governance refers to the exercise of authority in the management of a country's affairs, comprising the complex mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights and mediate their differences. It encompasses the political, economic, legal, judicial, social and administrative authority and therefore includes government, the private sector and the civil society. It also includes both a broad strategy and a particular set of initiatives to strengthen the institutions of civil society with the objective of making government more accountable, open, transparent and more democratic (Abe, 2010).

In the words of Healey and Robinson, good governance implies a high level of organizational effectiveness in relation to policy formulation and the policies actually pursued, especially in the conduct of economic policy and its contribution to growth, stability and public welfare. In addition to participation, accountability and transparency, good governance also includes openness and the rule of rule. The World Bank opines that good governance is the means by which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development (World Bank, 1992). Potter (2000) calls good governance "sound development management" that is a broad sphere of public sector management,

accountability; legal framework for development, reforms, information and technology, legitimacy of government, competence of governments to formulate appropriate policies, timely decisions and implementation and effective service delivery.

Good governance can also be linked to the extent to which a government is perceived and accepted as legitimate, committed to improving the public welfare and responsive to the needs of its citizens, competent to assure law and order, deliver public services, able to create an enabling public environment for productive activities and equitable in its conduct. Adamolekun (2002) views governance as the exercise of political power to manage a nation's affairs. He listed the main elements of governance as rule of law, freedom of expression and association, electoral legitimacy, accountability, transparency and development-oriented leadership. Governance means making and managing public policy, organizing people, controlling subordinates to exercise skills and commitment to achieve excellence in a given set of assignments. It is concerned with ensuring that constituents follow established process while instruments of governance provide means to maintain accountability. In the realm of public affairs, governance refers to the range of policies public officials enact and actions they take to manage the affairs of society (Ukaegbu, 2010). The need for good governance has been emphasized as a precondition for development because it can yield positive incremental changes.

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2011) governance is defined as "the exercise of economic, political and administrative authorities to manage a country's affairs at all levels". Similarly, the World Governance Survey Report conceptualized governance as "the formulation and stewardship of the formal and informal rules that regulates the public realm, the arena in which state as well as economic and social actors interact to make decisions (in Hyden & Court, 2002). The terms "governance" and "good governance" are being increasingly used in development literature. Bad governance is being increasingly regarded as one of the root causes of all evil within any society. Major donors and international financial institutions are increasingly basing their aid and loans on the condition that reforms that ensure "good governance" are undertaken. Good governance has some characteristics which include participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. It assures that

corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making (Akhakpe, 2014). It is also responsive to the present and future needs of society (Downer, 2000). Politically, good governance entails the establishment of a representative and accountable form of government.

Good governance requires a strong and pluralistic civil society, where there is freedom of expression and association; good institutions such as assets of rules governing the actions of individuals and organizations and the negotiation of differences between them; the primacy of the rule of law, maintained through an impartial and effective legal system; and a high degree of transparency and accountability in public and corporate processes. Economically, good governance requires policies to promote broad-based economic growth, a dynamic private sector and social policies that will lead to poverty reduction. Economic growth is best achieved in an efficient, open, market-based economy. Investment in people is a high priority, through policies and institutions that improve access to quality education, health and other services that underpin a country's human resource base.

Effective institutions and good corporate governance are needed to support the development of a competitive private sector. For markets to function, social norms are needed that respect contract and property rights. Yet, careful management of the national economy is vital in order to maximize economic and social advancement. Governance comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences. Good governance means competent management of a country's resources and affairs in a manner that is open, transparent, accountable, equitable and responsive to people's needs.

Assessment of Leadership and Governance in Nigeria

Leadership is a set of functions that cover the leader, his followers and the conditions dictated by the situation. Leadership involves a type of responsibility aimed at achieving particular ends by applying human and material resources and ensuring a cohesive and coherent organization in the process. Ivancevich, Szilagyi and Wallace (1993), define Leadership as "the relationship between two or more people in which one attempts to influence the other toward the accomplishment of some goals". Despite the many diverse styles of leadership, an effective leader inspires, motivates, and directs activities to help achieve group or organizational goals. Conversely, an ineffective leader does not contribute to organizational progress and can,

in fact, detract from organizational goal accomplishment. For Robbins (1979), “leadership is the ability to influence a group towards the achievement of goals”. “Leadership is the interpersonal influence exercised in a situation, and directed, through the communication process, towards attainment of a specific goals”. The common characteristic that can be found in many of the definitions is the ‘influence’ exerted by the leader. That is, he tries to influence the behaviour of others in a specific direction.

The problem of development in Nigeria is a crisis of governance because most state officials in the country serve their own interests without fear of being called to account. Politics becomes personalized, and patronage becomes essential to maintain power. The leadership assumes broad discretionary authority and loses its legitimacy. Information is controlled, voluntary associations are co-opted or disbanded. This environment cannot readily support a dynamic economy” (World Bank, 1989). Though Nigeria obtained political independence over six decades ago, the country still lagged behind other countries in the march to development by measures of quality of life, provision of basic infrastructure, productive capacity, or degree of technological advancement. This development lag was at independence, attributed to number of factors, such as lack of qualified manpower to direct the ship of development, absence of finance and technological capitals, a post colonial state and marginal participation in a world economy dominated by the great powers. But should these factors still be blamed for Nigeria’s lack of performance in the march to development since independence? Of course, No, the major constraint to Nigeria’s development is lack of transformational leadership.

According to Onigbude (2007) poor leadership performance has remained with us despite years of complaints and suffering. Nigeria has since been subjected to the leadership of political misfits. The so much expected dividends of democracy eluded the mass of the people, while the leadership has remained unaccountable to them. Odekunle (2007) asserts that the elites significantly contribute to the low productivity in development output by distorting, exploiting and abusing the system and its inherent loopholes. The leaders in the country have not been at their best as people’s expectations of a better hope and opportunities have long been dashed, with governance ingredients still at its elusive stage to Nigerians. Most of the leaders only work for themselves and their family, hence, they have failed and disappointed the citizens economically, politically, socially and morally.

The country witnessed low growth, massive unemployment, and rising inequality between the rich and the poor. Poverty is widespread and more than 54 percent of the population is living on less than One US dollar per day and was ranked low on Human Development indices by the United Nations in 2007 as 157th out of 177 countries. Every government has always promised to eradicate corruption at its inauguration but corruption continued

unabated (Azeez, 2010). The current republic is a resemblance of the previous republics in terms of leadership and governance. It becomes difficult for anyone to distinguish military leadership from civilian leadership in Nigeria. There has been no evidence of leadership performance to differentiate civilian leaders from military rulers.

Leadership, Corruption and Governance in Nigeria.

Leadership corruption is a perversion or change from the general accepted rules or laws for selfish gain. Corroborating the issues on high rate of corruption in the polity, Igbokwe-Ibeto and Okoye (2014) argued that since gaining independence in 1960, most Nigerian leaders have not clearly demonstrated sense of genuine national development. They went further to argue that most African leaders plunder, defraud, embezzle and mismanage their countries human and natural resources with so much impunity. They are possessive, egoistic, selfish, individualistic, callous, greedy and secretive and that transparency and accountability have no place in their administration and management of common and collective wealth (Igbokwe-Ibeto & Okoye, 2014).

Corruption is an evil wind that affects everyone and retard societal progress. While there are several theories that explain its prevalence in society, the point to emphasize is that it has become a way of life in Nigeria. This explains why it has been difficult to combat its rising profile. The reason why people seek power is not to care for the welfare of the citizens, it is rather for selfish reasons. The disconnect between the leaders and the citizens are evident. The leaders did not emerge from among the people; rather they were imposed on them by godfathers and political parties. Since the elected officials are not accountable to the people, the leaders engage in corrupt act and bad governance with impunity at the expense of the ordinary citizens. On the other hand, due to the nature of the society, a corrupt official remains a good man as long as he channels part of the money stolen to satisfy ephemeral yearnings of a few, jettisoning programmes and projects that will improve the life of the people.

Leadership vices in Governance in Nigeria

Lack of rule of law: The leaders in Nigeria do not show respect to the rule of law, especially, judicial decisions. This hampers the judiciary to effectively discharge its duties. The predictability of the judiciary is not yet a reality in Nigeria, the political executives still undermine the independence of the judiciary through patronage appointments, and judicial administration is characterized by weak enforcement capacity.

Absence of development-oriented leadership: Many observers of the development and governance crisis in Nigeria since independence agree that

poor leadership has been a major factor. Most of the Nigerian leaders were not committed to the development of their society.

Absence of accountability and transparency: There is complete absence of transparent and accountable leadership in Nigeria. A government is accountable when its leaders (both elected and appointed) are responsive to the demands of the governed. Respect for the rule of law and independent judiciary constitute key mechanisms for enforcing accountability as it affords the citizens to seek redress in the courts for acts of omission or commission by a government and its officials.

Corruption

Although corruption is a global scourge, Nigeria appears to suffer tremendously from this malaise. Every one appears to believe that the nation has a culture of corruption. Nigeria is a rich nation floating on oil and gas wealth, but almost none of it flows to the people. The countless reforms and lack of genuity and integrity of the leaders have left Nigeria corrupt as ever. Politicians are expunged and later re-admitted into their parties, giving no hope for good governance.

Electoral malpractices challenges: Electoral malpractices has become a popular phenomenon in Nigerian politics. An average Nigerian believes that elections cannot be won except it is rigged. Electoral malpractice is not a recent phenomenon. It has been existing since independence and has continued to exist, even, in a modernized fashion. The leaders are the architect of electoral fraud, for instance, in the first republic, the leadership of various political parties were accused and alleged of election rigging. The same happened in the second, third and fourth republics. The politicians are not ready to face free and fair election because they are desperate in their bid to clinch to power at all cost.

Conclusion

The analysis of leadership and governance in Nigeria since independence informed the suggestion that viable means of generating transformational leaders who are capable of entrenching and sustaining good governance in Nigeria is urgently required. It is advocated that candidate with clear visions and strategies for achieving such visions, strong commitment and determination for development should be elected into political and leadership positions. A society that desires development must respect competence and the electoral system and process must provide citizens of every social status the opportunity to vote in candidates of their choice. The quality of leadership determines the nature of governance. Good governance emanates from good leadership. Without transformational leadership, Nigeria may continue to lag behind in socio-economic development.

Recommendations

1. All hands must be on deck to enthrone effective leadership and good governance that could expunge the scourge of corruption from the nation's polity.
2. The followers should perform their obligatory and non-obligatory civic duties and responsibilities that can produce effective leadership for good governance
3. Good governance that promotes transparency, accountability, freedom and liberty for the people to pursue their individual and corporate interest should be put in place in Nigeria.
4. Anti-corruption enforcement agencies such as the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC), Independent Corruption and other Practices Commission (ICPC) should be intensified and be made more efficient and effective.

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