

LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE AND NATION BUILDING IN NIGERIA

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Abstract: Since independence, Nigeria has suffered many and different forms of bad leadership and governance. This invariably has had its toll on the nation building process of the country as bad leadership and governance are synonymous with low development and disunity, especially when considering the dissatisfaction that arises from the different quarters of the country shaking the country's foundation and threatening the unity of the country and disrupting real development and progress in the body polity. There are extant scholarly works on leadership, governance and nation building in Nigeria. However, it appears that the existing works have not been able to raise a louder alarm and raise a red flag against the prevailing corrupt and bad status quo in the political arena of the country which has worked against the nation building effort of the country. This paper intends to raise such alarm while warning the political leaders against impending revolution by patiently giving an account of leadership in Nigeria and the flaws of the Nigerian political leaders as they have had implications on the nation building process of the country. The paper makes use of historical

methodology by analyzing data and information derived majorly from secondary sources such as books, journal articles, chapters in books, internet sources, etc. The paper has found out that many factors are responsible for good or bad governance and leadership in Nigeria which in turn have implications on the nation building process of the country. In all the paper has revealed that for there to be good and true governance and leadership in Nigeria that would affect nation building process positively, true and purposeful leaders must emerge to replace the bad ones that have existed over the years, and selfless and personal sacrifice must replace selfishness and greed in the minds of Nigerian political leaders.

Key Terms: Governance, Leadership, Nation Building, and Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Leadership and Governance have been recognized as imperative for the attainment of nation building. The importance of leadership to governance is seen in the fact that good leadership sets the

tone and standard of governance¹. Various programs and policies have been evolved by Nigerian leaders to promote nation building. These policies have in some ways helped the country in promoting nation building. It has also to some extent fostered unity in diversity among the various ethnic groups in the country thus integrated the country. However, Nigeria is replete with records of governance and leadership that in most cases lacked vision, and highly engaged in corruption, mismanagement of public resources, which consequently resulted in economic setbacks and national insecurity. Therefore, to achieve good leadership and good governance in Nigeria, there is a need for a vibrant civilized society committed to ensuring free and fair election leading to the enthronement of political leaders founded on distinct sound value systems and with a probe for integrity and accountability².

Since the attainment of independence in 1960, Nigeria has been struggling with the problems of nation building. These problems have been the inability of Nigerians to bring up a real leader whose commitment to the effective development of the country would be patriotic and nationalistic. The succeeding governments since independence have been characterized by flaws, thereby making good governance an illusion. During the civilian and military regimes in Nigeria, most of the leaders have been unable to come up with programs and effective policies that should be beneficial to the Nigerian nation. Most of these leaders have been after selfish gains and thereby amass wealth for themselves.

It is axiomatic that the quality of leadership in a country affects the level of development. Poor leadership and bad governance can yield to political instability and underdevelopment. Nigeria is blessed with an abundance of mineral resources and a vast land area. It is not a daydream to expect Nigeria to soar high like the well known economic giants of the global north, but still, Nigeria wallows in socio-economic, political and infrastructural decadence and sluggishness. To this end, it becomes a thing of worry for one to begin to imagine how Nigeria will ever rise out of decadence and her impoverished state being that those that are meant to steer the wheels of the nation towards the nation emancipation and prosperity lack the sanity and morality to do so.

It is against this background that this article reflects on Leadership, Governance and Nation Building in Nigeria. The article is divided into eight sections. This section is the introduction while section two dwells on the concept of leadership, governance and nation building. Section three focuses on nationalism and the making of Nigerian leaders. Section four critically examines the positive impact of leadership, governance to nation building. Section five looks at the challenges of leadership, governance to nation building in Nigeria. Section six and seven discusses godfatherism in Nigeria and docility of followers and finally section eight is the conclusion.

LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE AND NATION BUILDING: A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS.

The terms ‘leader’ and ‘ruler’ are often used erroneously and interchangeably³. A leader is someone who wants to show the way. He acts as a guide; he supervises actions, policies, and workings of a group of people, an organization or even community i.e. someone that formulates or give directives essentially for the purpose of achieving set out goal. A leader must key into the dreams of the people he is leading because the people see him as a person leading them to the ‘Promised Land’. In other words, a leader is an embodiment of the group essence. He represents the wishes and aspirations of the led. Thus, he must exude some positive attributes such as the ability to be visionary, integrity, good education,

¹ Binger B.T, 2010. The Poverty of Leadership in Nigeria 1960-2010. In A. Olayemi, M. Mamman and U. Patrick (Eds). *Nigeria at 50: The Challenges of Nation Building. A Publication of Historical Society of Nigeria*. P.4.

² Samuel O and Nchekwube O .2015. Leadership and Good Governance: The Nigerian Experience. *LASU Journal of Public Administration and Management*. Vol 1. P.112.

³Ogbogbo, C.B.N . 2011. Leadership and the Development Crises In Africa. In C.B.N Ogbogbo (ed) *Perspectives in African History*. Ibadan. Bookwright Publishers. P.4.

deep knowledge of history and must be well enlightened in almost all aspects of leadership and administration. It is pertinent to note that in talking about education, it is not within the context of western education, rather education in this context is used in a very broad term to mean vast knowledge and experience of things about life, purpose, and essence of life, and leadership with a great sense of responsibility and responsiveness, all of which constitute civility. A leader could emerge in various aspects of human activities and this could be in the religious, political, economic, and social domain⁴. A ruler on the other hand is someone who rules or governs a set of people by exercising dominion or control power over them, and this is against leadership which has to do with the ability to inspire, direct, motivate and encourage others positively to targeted ends⁵. Thus, leadership can be defined in its simplest term as the quality of being good at leading a team, organization, a country, etc⁶. The qualities a leader must possess include but not limited to humility, competence, integrity, confidence, creativity, strong character, decisiveness, capacity to manage conflicts, ability to transcend parochialism and emotionalism, deep knowledge of his environment and the world at large, ability to stay focused at all times, openness and so on⁷.

On governance, there are various views articulated by scholars on the concept. Governance can be defined as the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised⁸. This includes (1) the process by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced, (2) the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies, and the respect of citizens and the state and the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them⁹. Although power is central to governance, it is not absolute, and should never be absolute, as accountability, transparency, and delegation/representation check and diffuse power. Thus, governance is the ability to use power in its right propensity and direction to achieve a group's goal for the benefit of all in the group and the overall development and progress of the group or system.

A nation is a body of people that live in a definite territory usually united and loyal to one another because they belong together and share a common history, values, customs, hopes, etc¹⁰. Nation building refers to the concerted effort to bring people or peoples together for the purpose of achieving common objectives as one people. According to Adekanye(1981:38):

Nation building involves the psychological reconstruction of individuals, a process of infusing into the people of new

⁴Ogbogbo, C.B.N (Eds). 2011. Leadership and the Development Crises In Africa.Ogbogbo. *Perspectives in African History*. Ibadan. Bookwright Publishers. P.4.

⁵ Binger B.T, 2010.The Poverty of Leadership in Nigeria 1960-2010. *Nigeria at 50: The Challenges of Nation Building*.OlayemiAkinwumi, Mamman Musa and Patrick Ukase (Eds). Historical Society of Nigeria. P.4.

⁶OlogbenlaDerin K. 2007. Leadership, Governance and Corruption in Nigeria. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*. Vol.9. NO.3. p. 97.

⁷ Remi Aiyede,TundeBabawale and Antonia Okoosi. 2010. Governance and Leadership in Nigeria . *50 years of Nationhood: Experiences in, and Prospects for Sustainable Development in Nigeria*. LabodePopoola, David Aremu, OlanrewajuOlaniyan, Remi Aiyede and OlukayodeOgunsanwo (Eds). Ibadan. Univerity of Ibadan Centre for Sustainable Development. P. 131

⁸ Remi Aiyede,TundeBabawale and Antonia Okoosi. 2010. Governance and Leadership in Nigeria . *50 years of Nationhood: Experiences in, and Prospects for Sustainable Development in Nigeria*. LabodePopoola, David Aremu, OlanrewajuOlaniyan, Remi Aiyede and OlukayodeOgunsanwo (Eds). Ibadan. Univerity of Ibadan Centre for Sustainable Development.P.128.

⁹ Remi Aiyede,TundeBabawale and Antonia Okoosi. 2010. Governance and Leadership in Nigeria . *50 years of Nationhood: Experiences in, and Prospects for Sustainable Development in Nigeria*. LabodePopoola, David Aremu, OlanrewajuOlaniyan, Remi Aiyede and OlukayodeOgunsanwo (Eds). Ibadan. Univerity of Ibadan Centre for Sustainable Development. P.128.

¹⁰FadeiyeOladele . 1997. *Social Studies*. 3rd ed. Ibadan: Glory Land Publishing Company. P. 62.

independent territories who differ widely in languages, religion and values, with a new sense of common belonging and share an identity¹¹.

Adekanye's conception of nation building fits very well into the Nigerian case. This is because the people that make up the new nations of Nigeria were hitherto independent entity who differed widely in languages, religion and values and operated under different political structures but were later merged together under a bigger political leadership to function as a unit of a people with a common identity. It is this new structure, and the attempt at consolidating it that has come to be known as nation-building process—a process that comes with its own tons of problems.

Nation building is indeed a complex system of establishing a polity in which “differences of tribe, language, religion, economic development and education, and loyalties to smaller groups give place to the nation as the desirable expression of unity”¹². When this state of development is reached, society will be based on mutual inter-dependence for individuals and groups who would inhabit that nation-state. Nation building aims at the unification of the people within the state so that it remains politically stable and viable in the long run. Nation building can involve the use of propaganda or major infrastructural development to foster social harmony and economic growth¹³. Nation building is therefore about building the tangible and intangible threads that hold a political entity together and gives it a sense of purpose.

NATIONALISM AND THE MAKING OF NIGERIAN LEADERS.

It is pertinent to go back a little on the memory lane, to understanding how Nigeria actually arrived at this sorry state of affairs. The British ruled Nigeria in regions—Northern Region, Eastern Regions, and Western Region during the colonial period. Later, they created a Mid-West region for the southern minorities but failed to create a Middle Belt region for Northern minorities¹⁴. When the British amalgamated the Northern and Southern Protectorates to form the country Nigeria in 1914, the nationalists who were to lead the movement for independence emerged from these regions. They were not national leaders but were regional leaders who wanted to get a mandate of their regions to enable them to gain control of the power at the center.

In 1960, when the British therefore handed overpower, Tafawa Balewa became the Prime Minister, Ahmadu Bello, became the Premier of the Northern region. Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe from the Eastern region became the president of the country (a ceremonial head just like the Queen in England) and Obafemi Awolowo was for the Western region but he was later challenged by S.L. Akintola. These regional leaders belonged to the major ethnic groups in the country, representing the different regions. In the East were the Igbo, in the West were the Yoruba and in the North were the Hausa. There was no place for minorities.¹⁵

Looking at things from the time of colonialism and the effects of colonial rule on the body polity of Nigeria, one may come to terms with the belief that it is the lack of good leadership that explains generally the deplorable state of affairs in Nigeria. In the pre-colonial era, leaders emerged after having

¹¹Adekanye Bayo. 1981. *Nigeria In Search Of A Stable Civil-Military System*. England. Gover and Boulder. P.38.

¹²Lasisi R.O. 1981. *The Military And Nation building 1966-1979: An Assessment*- Term Paper Presented at the Department of History, University of Ibadan. P.3.

¹³Owoade A.A, Badr M.B and Olaleye O.N. 2015. Islam, Good Governance and Nation Building. Paper Presented at the Annual Conference on Islam in Nigeria at Osogbo. November 22. P.5.

¹⁴Binger B.T, 2010. The Poverty of Leadership in Nigeria 1960-2010. *Nigeria at 50: The Challenges of Nation Building*. Olayemi Akinwumi, Mamman Musa and Patrick Ukase (Eds). Historical Society of Nigeria. P.7.

¹⁵Binger B.T, 2010. The Poverty of Leadership in Nigeria 1960-2010. In A. Olayemi, M. Mamman and U. Patrick (Eds). *Nigeria at 50: The Challenges of Nation Building. A Publication of Historical Society of Nigeria*. P.7.

solved major societal problems. This, by default had an effect on nation building of that time. The story of Eweka Dynasty with reference to the establishment of monarchy in the Benin Kingdom is a clear and good example of this. It thus turns out to mean that in pre-colonial times, the peoples who became known as Nigerians had true and good leaders. The implication of this is that leaders in pre-colonial Nigeria, having solved societal problems, had better knowledge on how to lead their people, and they also developed the society and positively influenced their kingdoms expanding them beyond their original domains. With the advent of colonialism, new political structures comprising an aggregate of different peoples emerged as the system of the new state. In the post-colonial era, the new political players have only emerged essentially as rulers and not leaders because there have been a major disconnection between those who superintend over the affairs of the state and their citizens. Colonialism laid the foundation for the transmission of the political structure in Nigeria to produce rulers rather than leaders.¹⁶ This is as a result of the multi-ethnic nature of the new state which has posed the challenge of producing a leader that would be acceptable to the various regions and groups in the country. In the colonial period, Nigeria had leaders like NnamdiAzikwe who launched his West African Pilot newspaper in 1937 which preached freedom and nationalism. Also, Obafemi Awolowo was a successful lawyer with a nationalistic mindset. Most of the leaders during this time were successful and they were called to service. They did not go into politics because of money. As an anti-thesis, today people in positions are those whose aim and objectives or interests are to misappropriate resources and expand their personal empires at the expense of the nation's goals and interests. More so, a critical aspect of leadership in Nigeria is the intervention of the military. The first generations of the military rulers were illiterates who did not have quality education and little or nothing about good and true leadership and governance as well as nation building.

At independence Nigeria adopted the Westminster system of government which also is called the Parliamentary system¹⁷. The nation later became a republic in 1963. The three regional leaders became the rulers of the new nation of Nigeria. NnamdiAzikiwe became the Governor General and President; Obafemi Awolowo the Premier of the Western Region while Ahmadu Bello and Tafawa Balewa were the Premier of Northern Nigeria and Prime Minister respectively¹⁸. Policies, therefore, had to come from them and when they were good, the nation benefited from such policies but when they were not good, as the case turned out to be, Nigerians bore the brunt of it. Corruption and lack of committed leadership can be traced to the period of the First Republic¹⁹. And inter-ethnic acrimony among the founding fathers, dirty and selfish politics of the nation prompted the first military coup on January 15th 1966 that put an end to the First Republic²⁰.

POSITIVE IMPACT OF LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE TO NATION BUILDING

During the colonial period in Nigeria, nationalists sprang up and agitated for the independence of Nigeria. There were leaders like NnamdiAzikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo, Anthony Enahoro, Hebert Macaulay, Ahmadu Bello, among others who came on board, not for the purpose of amassing the wealth of the country for their own personal interests, but they were individuals who had their own occupation

¹⁶Binger B.T, 2010. The Poverty of Leadership in Nigeria 1960-2010. In A. Olayemi, M. Mamman and U. Patrick (Eds). *Nigeria at 50: The Challenges of Nation Building. A Publication of Historical Society of Nigeria*. P.7.

¹⁷Ladipo A. _____ Politics and Administration in Nigeria. Ibadan. Spectrum Books Limited. P. 161.

¹⁸Abubakar, S. 2008. The "Challenges" of Nation Building: Nigeria, Which Way Forward? .in *C.B.N Ogbogbo and O.O.Okpeh, (Eds) Interrogating Contemporary Africa Ibadan*. Historical Society of Nigeria. P.36.

¹⁹ Binger B.T, 2010. The Poverty of Leadership in Nigeria 1960-2010. *Nigeria at 50: The Challenges of Nation Building*. Olayemi Akinwumi, Mamman Musa and Patrick Ukase (Eds). Historical Society of Nigeria. P.7.

²⁰ Binger B.T, 2010. The Poverty of Leadership in Nigeria 1960-2010. *Nigeria at 50: The Challenges of Nation Building*. Olayemi Akinwumi, Mamman Musa and Patrick Ukase (Eds). Historical Society of Nigeria. P.8.

before coming into the political scene thus they had the interest of the country at heart. For example, Azikwe's West Africa Pilot was wildly read in West Africa, Obafemi Awolowo was a lawyer as mentioned earlier. These leaders emerged to solve the country's problems of their time. Their effort on nation building is that their agitation resulted in the independence of Nigeria in 1960. After independence, Nigeria experienced different leaders and rulers; some were for the general good of all while most of them came on board to amass wealth for themselves. Nevertheless, several programs and policies have been evolved by Nigeria leaders to promote nation building in Nigeria. The introduction and establishment of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Scheme in 1973 by Yakubu Gowon was to bring Nigerian youths from different ethnic and religious backgrounds together and offer them the opportunity to live together, interact closely and intimately, share experiences, ideas, values and beliefs. This is a tool that has continued to foster unity in Nigeria and this program has brought about the promotion of national integration in Nigeria. Besides the introduction of the NYSC scheme, other contributions of Gowon to nation building are the creation of 12 states, launching of the first National Development Plan and establishment of modern infrastructure in Lagos.²¹

Under Murtala Mohammed and Buhari, the military leaders took a tough stand on indiscipline. The implication of this on nation building is that it brought about orderliness in the country. Also, the creation of states under the military heads of state aimed at promoting national integration within the country. The implication of state creation by the leaders on nation building is that it gave the minority group a sense of belonging in the nation. Also it allows more people to become involved in the politics of the country²². In the early years of independence, Nigerian leaders pursued a dynamic foreign policy that was Africa-central, for instance the creation of ECOWAS- Economic Community of West African States was an initiative of General Yakubu Gowon who was a former military head of state in Nigeria. Also, Tafawa Balewa upheld the idea of Africa as the center-piece of Nigeria's foreign policy when he maintained that "we belong to Africa, as such Nigeria will pursue the realistic of Africa policies".²³ Their contributions have had a positive impact on nation building in Nigeria as "Giant of Africa".

On his part, Olusegun reformed agriculture with the 'Operation Feed the Nation' program. He was the first Nigerian military head of state to hand-over power to the civilian and hosted FESTAC 77, the largest cultural event ever held on the African continent. He built Warri refinery and Murtala Mohammed Airport, set up the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) and introduced Universal Free Education (UFE)²⁴. Obasanjo's role is one of the major landmarks in the promotion of nation building. His diversified policies has helped to integrate the nation and to achieve effective nation building in Nigeria

Shagari was known for his food sufficiency program "Green Revolution", launched large- scale housing programs that built estates like the Shagari Estate. He completed the Delta Steel Complex, and invested heavily in the Ajaokuta Steel Complex, and the Steel Rolling Mills²⁵, though the Ajaokuta plant is yet to be relevant. War Against Indiscipline was the hallmark of Buhari's administration. He was known to be incorruptible leader and championed anti-corruption crusades. The effect of this on nation building is

²¹Ekeh Peter, Nigeria's Emergent Political Culture in Ekeh Peter, Patrick Dele Cole and Olusanya Gabriel(Eds). *Nigeria Since Independence- The First 25 Years*. Nigeria. Heineman Educational Books. P. 197.

²²Ekeh Peter, Nigeria's Emergent Political Culture in Ekeh Peter, Patrick Dele Cole and Olusanya Gabriel(Eds). *Nigeria Since Independence- The First 25 Years*. Nigeria. Heineman Educational Books. P. 196

²³Olukogbon Comfort. 2015. Celebrating Nigerian Leaders And Their Achievements. *ZaccheusOnumbaDibiaezue Memorial Library*. October 1.

²⁴Ekeh Peter, Nigeria's Emergent Political Culture in Ekeh Peter, Patrick Dele Cole and Olusanya Gabriel(Eds). *Nigeria Since Independence- The First 25 Years*. Nigeria. Heineman Educational Books. P. 196.

²⁵Ekeh Peter, Nigeria's Emergent Political Culture in Ekeh Peter, Patrick Dele Cole and Olusanya Gabriel(Eds). *Nigeria Since Independence- The First 25 Years*. Nigeria. Heineman Educational Books. P. 196

that during Buhari regime as the military head of state, there were minimal cases of corruption in the country, as the leader was able to curb the menace of corruption. He also changed the color of the Naira to prevent it from being hoarded outside the banking system. Babaginda launched primary health care programs aimed at extending immunization to all parts of Nigeria. The implication of this for nation building is that the health care center was improved upon. He built the Third Mainland Bridge in Lagos, made significant developments in Abuja and started the privatization and commercialization of public enterprises²⁶.

AbubakarAbdulsalem (1998-1999) returned Nigeria to democracy after 20 years of military rule; he ensured a quick transition program and constructed the Eagle Square in Abuja²⁷. He also promulgated the 1999 Constitution which is still in effect till date. Obasanjo stabilized democracy during his second coming as the civilian president of the country. He embarked on Pensions Reform, established the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) all of which have had tremendous implications on nation building by fighting crimes in the country. He secured debt relief for Nigeria from Paris and London Club, introduced the Global System of Mobile (GSM) and had an extensive privatization program of public enterprises²⁸.

Umaru Musa Yar'adua came up with the 7-Point agenda framework which constituted the most important policy framework of his administration. He also initiated the Amnesty Programme for Niger Delta Militants. The implication of the Niger Delta Amnesty was that it brought about peace to the region where there was chaos. He focused on the need to strengthening and consolidating internal governance and growth structures²⁹. Goodluck Jonathan rebased the Nigerian Economy making it the largest in Africa. The idea of "Good People Great Nation" under the umbrella of rebranding Nigeria under Goodluck Jonathan regime was to foster a sense of nationhood in the country in the sense that he (Goodluck) was making effort to remove Nigeria from the world list of terrorism and to make Nigerians to be seen as good people rather than bad people. He established Almajiri Model Schools for the northerners, embarked on reforms of the agricultural and power sectors. Jonathan invested in sports from which the nation reaped the benefit as Nigeria won the African cup of Nations, the African Women's Champion, the Under-17 World Cup and 11 Commonwealth Games gold medals during his dispensation. He also deepened democracy by conducting a credible election and conceding defeat in the 2015 presidential election.

CHALLENGES OF LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE TO NATION BUILDING

In, Nigeria, there have been cases of many non-leaders in leadership positions especially when one looks at the disaster that marked the administration of AlhajiShehuShagari, Babangida's atrocious regime and the horrible looting that occurred during the time of General Sani Abacha³⁰. General Babangida is still yet to explain to Nigerians what happened to the \$12 billion of Gulf War oil windfall³¹. There was widespread of corruption and economic mismanagement during ShehuShagari administration.

²⁶Ekeh Peter, Nigeria's Emergent Political Culture in Ekeh Peter, Patrick Dele Cole and Olusanya Gabriel(Eds). *Nigeria Since Independence- The First 25 Years*. Nigeria. Heineman Educational Books. P. 196

²⁷OsuntokunAkinjide .2013. *Domestic and Foreign Dimensionof Nigeria's Politics*. Ekiti State. Nigeria. Ekiti State University Press. P.129.

²⁸Olukogbon Comfort. 2015. *Celebrating Nigerian Leaders And Their Achievements*. ZaccheusOnumbaDibiaezue Memorial Library. October 1.

²⁹Olusegun Adeyeri . Africa and the Challenges of Regional Integration in the 21st Century: A Historian's Viewpoint in Edo Victor and Salami E.F.K. *Issues and Trends in Nigeria's Development*. Ibadan. John Archers Publishers. P. 103.

³⁰ Binger B.T, 2010. The Poverty of Leadership in Nigeria 1960-2010. *Nigeria at 50: The Challenges of Nation Building*. OlayemiAkinwumi, Mamman Musa and Patrick Ukase (Eds). Historical Society of Nigeria. P.8.

³¹Akintola. 2009. Leadership and the Precolonial Nigerian Predicament. Ibadan. Ibadan School of History. P.10.

This corruption occurred during the period of decline in oil prices which led to a downturn in the economy. This economic downturn brought about increased hardship for the majority of Nigerians. It is true that Alhaji Shehu Shagari wasted the opportunity created by General Murtala Mohammed and Olusegun Obasanjo to keep the light of democracy shining in Nigeria³².

Alhaji Shehu Shagari administration was incapable of settling the political and economic crises that unfolded during the Second Republic³³. This resulted in disorder and chaos. The people lost faith in him and the military grabbed the opportunity to stage a comeback and rewind the tickling clock of democracy in the country. It was argued that if the majority of Nigerian voters were politically mature and educated, Shehu Shagari would not have been re-elected in 1983 considering his performance during his first term³⁴.

Leadership in many of today's communities in Nigeria is the pollution of leadership qualities. What exists as leadership is an adulteration of courage and valor and a shameful display of spineless acquiescence³⁵. Good and true governance entails the capacity to formulate and implement sound policies, and the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions, but what Nigeria has experienced is such that policies are not allowed to work when they are against the perceived interest and when they are allowed to run, they do not stand the test of time because of lack of direction³⁶. The former United States ambassador to Nigeria, Walter Carrington, while delivering the 29th convocation lecture of the University of Ilorin identified corruption, lack of good leadership and foresight as responsible for most of the economic problems confronting the country³⁷.

In Nigeria, some political leaders get into public offices and proceed to strip the public treasury for their pockets and their cronies. So bad is the situation that some corrupt leaders become the beloved, while the hated are those who spurn the vermin of corruption³⁸. These same corrupt leaders use their ill-gotten wealth to build up a status for themselves in a society that cares less about how they got their wealth but rather care about how much they can get from such non-leaders who carry themselves as leaders. Some religious leaders due to their desire for material wealth support these leaders who are mismanaging the nation's economy and resource.

Corruption has added colors to the way leadership roles are schemed in Nigeria because a close look at the leaders which the nation has produced over the years clearly shows that most of the leaders were corrupt and were individuals who were only interested in their well-being, self-aggrandizement and the interests of their families. It has been argued that every system of government appears to have failed Nigeria too³⁹. The parliamentary system which was known then as the Westminster model which the country inherited from the colonial masters (British), was condemned as a not too good model by the military men who thought that they had all it took to liberate Nigerians from the bad leadership of the

³² Binger B.T, 2010. The Poverty of Leadership in Nigeria 1960-2010. *Nigeria at 50: The Challenges of Nation Building*. Olayemi Akinwumi, Mamman Musa and Patrick Ukase (Eds). Historical Society of Nigeria. P.8.

³³ Nwolise. Nigerian Military in Nation-Building in Eleazu Uma Nigeria –The First 25 years. P.60.

³⁴ Binger B.T, 2010. The Poverty of Leadership in Nigeria 1960-2010. *Nigeria at 50: The Challenges of Nation Building*. Olayemi Akinwumi, Mamman Musa and Patrick Ukase (Eds). Historical Society of Nigeria. P.7.

³⁵ Binger B.T, 2010. The Poverty of Leadership in Nigeria 1960-2010. *Nigeria at 50: The Challenges of Nation Building*. Olayemi Akinwumi, Mamman Musa and Patrick Ukase (Eds). Historical Society of Nigeria. Pp.8-9.

³⁶ Arowolo D.E. and Aluko O.A. 2012. Democracy, Political participation and good governance in Nigeria. *International Journal of Development and Sustainability*. Special Issue: Development and Sustainability in Africa- Part 1. Vol 1 NO 3: Pages 797

³⁷ Mokuolu, O and Abubakre, F. 2013 Carrington Blames Nigeria's Woes on the Neglect of the Agric Sector. *UNILORIN Bulletin*, October 28. Vol.5 No. 98.

³⁸ Binger B.T, 2010. The Poverty of Leadership in Nigeria 1960-2010. *Nigeria at 50: The Challenges of Nation Building*. Olayemi Akinwumi, Mamman Musa and Patrick Ukase (Eds). Historical Society of Nigeria. P.9.

³⁹ Hagher I.(ed). 2002. Leadership and Governance in Nigeria: A Christian Perspective. Jos: The Leadership Publication Series. P.14.

first civilian leaders⁴⁰. Also, there was the new generation of military men with different political ideologies, agendas and personal attitudes to life such as Buhari, Babaginda, Abacha and Abudulsalami. The lives of millions of Nigeria were wasted through hunger, protests, lack of amenities, frequent increases in the prices of petroleum products, deliberate elimination and execution of brilliant individual citizens. Gowon had successfully prosecuted Nigerian civil war and kept the nation one with “No victor, no vanquished”, and his Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Reconciliation policy⁴¹. Yakubu Gowon missed the opportunity to integrate Nigeria when he failed to properly utilize the huge amounts of petrodollars that poured into the country during the period of the oil boom, to develop the nation. Gowon made a calculated mistake of renegeing on his earlier promise to hand over power to civilians in 1976 and this brought his regime to an end⁴².

The implication of the above assertion on nation building is that the money meant for the common interest of all was siphoned by certain individuals to the detriment of the general citizenry. Also, the money that was stolen was taken to other countries which in turn was used to develop those countries while Nigeria remains underdeveloped.

Leadership selection has always been compromised by ethnic differences and affiliations to the extent that dissatisfaction with the political process is generally the outcome of electoral and political party processes in which items have ethnic colorations⁴³. The implication of this on nation building is the attendant political instability in the country. Leadership in Nigeria today from local to the national level is all about the well-being of the leaders, their family and cronies as well as the entrenchment of their rule by hook and crook means. In his search for the cause of the Nigerian problem, Chinua Achebe, lamented in his book ‘The trouble with Nigeria’ that the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. According to him, “there is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian land, climate or water or air or anything else”⁴⁴. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to their responsibility, to the challenge of personal examples which are the hallmark of true leadership.

The height of misrule and power drunkenness of Nigerian leaders is seen in the spade of onslaughts against perceived opponents. In the process, the interest and well being of the society are undermined or even ignored. This ought not to be since the essence of leadership is about the well-being of the people, society, or system.

GODFATHERISM IN NIGERIA

In Nigeria’s political scene the effects of godfatherism is glaring, thus cannot be over-emphasized. Godfatherism has done serious damage to the country’s political structure and its fragile unity. Godfathers are people who expend money and material resources to influence the victory of those vying for political posts. Examples of godfathers in Nigeria include Lamidi Akanji Adedibu in Ibadan, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, etc. The implication of this on nation building is that they become an albatross on the public officer’s (godson) neck and dictate what should be done and what should not be. Godfatherism

⁴⁰Binger B.T, 2010. The Poverty of Leadership in Nigeria 1960-2010. *Nigeria at 50: The Challenges of Nation Building*. Olayemi Akinwumi, Mamman Musa and Patrick Ukase (Eds). Historical Society of Nigeria. P.7.

⁴¹Binger B.T, 2010. The Poverty of Leadership in Nigeria 1960-2010. *Nigeria at 50: The Challenges of Nation Building*. Olayemi Akinwumi, Mamman Musa and Patrick Ukase (Eds). Historical Society of Nigeria. P.7.

⁴² Binger B.T, 2010. The Poverty of Leadership in Nigeria 1960-2010. *Nigeria at 50: The Challenges of Nation Building*. Olayemi Akinwumi, Mamman Musa and Patrick Ukase (Eds). Historical Society of Nigeria. P.7.

⁴³Osuntokun Akinjide .2013. *Domestic and Foreign Dimension of Nigeria’s Politics*. Ekiti State. Nigeria. Ekiti State University Press. P. 190.

⁴⁴ Achebe Chinua. 1983. *The Trouble With Nigeria*. Enugu. Fourth Edition Publisher. P.1

in Nigeria politics is a contest between elitism and democracy⁴⁵. Elitism is a system in which the exercise of political control by a small number of people is institutionalized in the structure of government and political activity⁴⁶. This has never been productive for the nation building process of any democratic states. Democracy has to do with the protection of interest of all and should not only focus on the narrow interest of the privileged in the society⁴⁷. The emergence of godfatherism in Nigeria is partly responsible for disunity among the various ethnic groups in Nigeria. Also, in term of resource allocation and good governance, the implication of godfatherism on nation building is that their opinions suit their own interest against the interest of the person elected which is supposed to be the interest of the nation. The excesses of the godfathers usually place a cog in the wheel of governance which is a hindrance to nation building because they believe their opinions must always prevail. Undoubtedly, this practice has hindered the progress of this country. Another implication of godfatherism on nation building is that in the conflict of interest, it often results to crisis and the masses suffer the most during the crisis. These individuals have positioned themselves as movers and shakers of the society, thereby playing with human and material resources that are supposed to be harnessed for the benefit of the generality of the society. All these results in political instability, which has negative implications on the nation building, because it often puts the country on social, political and economic stagnancy. Godfatherism has taken a ludicrous dimension in the polity. National development is the first victim. It breeds bad governance and diversion of public funds for personal use. Public officeholders have become stooge in one way or the other to their godfathers because, as the saying goes, he who plays the viper dictates the tune. Thus, the development will continue to be a mirage until citizens realize and take action against this menace.

DOCILITY OF FOLLOWERS

This is one of the problems affecting nation building. Followership in Nigeria has some problems that prevent the country from playing certain roles that can check the excesses of leadership. Poverty is one major factor that impairs the role of followership in Nigeria. Followers that are poor are afraid to criticize or checkmate the excesses of their leaders because of fear of oppression from the leaders. The implication of this is that with this, the wrong leader can come into power which will further oppress the people. Also, followers pledge loyalty to their tribe first before the larger society. In Nigeria, when the candidate contesting for election comes from a particular tribe and may not be competent enough, the people of that tribe would prefer to vote for such candidate out of tribal sentiment or ethnic loyalty, and this does not augur well for good leadership and nation building. Nigerian followers are fond of not telling their leaders the truth; they praise them, tell them lies but as soon as such leaders leave office, the followers soon turn against the leaders to criticize their lapses. Followers sometimes ally with leaders to create trouble in the society so that; they can divert the attention of the people, execute their personal interests. Followers must have the confidence to speak out when necessary and they must realize the importance of their role in helping the leaders make good or better decisions⁴⁸. Silence should not be accepted in followers who desire leadership. Docility of followers has posed a challenge of the 21st.

⁴⁵ Welsh, W.A. 1979. *Leaders and Elites*. New York. Rinehart and Winston.

⁴⁶ Welsh, W.A. 1979. *Leaders and Elites*. New York. Rinehart and Winston.

⁴⁷ Bello Iman and Obadan Mike (Eds) 2004. *Democratic Governance and Development Management in Nigeria's Fourth Republic 1999-2003*. Ibadan. Centre for Local Government and Rural Development Studies (CLGARDS) P.4.

⁴⁸ Sola Akinrinade. 2011. *Leadership, Good Governance and Sustainable Development in Labode Popoola, Olanrewaju Olaniyani, Bolanle Wahab, Godson Ana and Olawale Olayide (Eds) Global Change and Sustainable Development*. Ibadan. University of Ibadan Centre for Sustainable Development. P. 56.

century leadership in Nigeria. There is the need to build critical masses of enlightened followers that will hold the leaders accountable for their misdeeds⁴⁹.

CONCLUSION

Conclusively, this paper has extensively discussed the impact and effects of leadership and governance on nation building in Nigeria. The paper conceives nation building as an attempt to promote the survival of the nation and to build a virile and dynamic nation. Hence, when there is a poor leader, there will be poor development in the nation building effort. Bad leadership and governance cannot enhance nation building. It is therefore imperative for Nigerian leaders to focus on the general good of all than personal interest and ethnic interest to avert a looming doom which may extremely result in bloody revolution and elimination of the entire political/leadership class in the country as was the case with Ghana.

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⁴⁹Ogbogbo, C.B.N (Eds). 2011. *Leadership and the Development Crises In Africa*. Ogbogbo. *Perspectives in African History*. Ibadan. Bookwright Publishers P.8.

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