

THE POVERTY OF LEADERSHIP AND SCIENCE OF PRODIGALISM IN NIGERIA: A PHILOSOPHICAL INQUEST

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Abstract

Post independent Nigeria has experienced and still experiencing series of transformation be it in the negative or positive. As the most populous black nation in Africa, it occupies a significant and formidable position in the continent as its fondly called “giant of Africa” cannot be for a joke. It is a country that has experienced all forms of political leadership ranging from colonial, military, civil and interim leadership all in an attempt to fashion out a safe leadership engineering and structuring for the good of its citizenry. It is equally blessed with abundant human and material resources. The natural deposits are so enormous to adequately ensure a robust economy for the benefit of the members of the society. This phenomenon is altered by the leaders’ psychology of self esteem and interest and Philosophy of “it is my turn syndrome”. This paper centers its logic on a philosophical trite that the ruler- ruled contract has evidently collapsed consequent upon the inability of the ruler to see his leadership position as that of a trust. It further argues that the bond enshrined in the country’s national pledge particularly the expressed wordings “to be faithful loyal and honest... to defend her unity and uphold her honour and glory” were mere fury words and of no evidential or pragmatic consequence going by the leadership policies and attitudes of the leaders. The paper arguably posits that the leaders’ inept practices and act of prodigalism were due to lack of vision, projection of self interest and clear absence of leadership credentials. It is the logic and projection of this paper that adequate leadership credentials, application of mental creativity in leadership and use of appropriate leadership tools will eliminate wasteful spending and prodigalism and also assist in aligning to the symbolic expression of the National pledge.

Keywords: Poverty, leadership, Prodigalism

Introduction

It defeats a growing intellectual debate on whether or not there is a social pact existing between the leader and the led in a socio- political formation. This position is premised on the fact that there is an existing, unmitigated and evidential pact between the leader and the led of any existing political state. Through this and from this social pact, the leader has the obligation to discharge its responsibilities to the people and the led in turn, reciprocates this gesture by discharging its civic responsibilities and observing the rules of the land in totality, except where it is justifiable to disobey the rules when they are obnoxious, draconian and inhuman too.

Observedly, this constitutional and contractual obligations have not been fulfilled due to personal and parochial considerations. The leader or league of leaders may have allowed illogical sensibilities and parochial consideration to mar and pollute their sense of leadership directions. Issues of ethnic chauvinism, religious cleavages, greed, excessive acquisition of wealth or what Asouzu calls ambivalence of human interest were the many factors affecting effective and qualitative services to the people.

The challenge in this case is that the expected dividends of leadership have been compromised in the alter of self esteem, the sanctity of qualitative leadership and even/ quality representation are completely lost and/or sacrificed. This paper having x- rayed the symbolic and dynamic nature of the components of the National pledge as a reasonable moral creed, and realizing the extent of its vitiation, endeavours to seek for a proactive and pragmatic remedy for the need and good of the people. It does not suggest that the leaders know the dialectics of leadership and the fact that people (the led) should continue to repose confidence on the leaders.

This phenomenon has orchestrated series of ill feeling, animosity and lack of confidence. It is however, anticipated that a positive radical redirection of policies that are people –oriented, friendly and sound leadership philosophies of the Platonian, Socratic and Aristotelian bent will surely act as a confidence –building measure and catalyst for ruler –ruled harmony in the society.

LEADERSHIP AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN PRE-INDEPENDENCE NIGERIA

Between and about the year 1900 down to 1960 and 1963, the state of Nigeria was under the control of British government as Nigeria then was under British colony. By implication the political sovereignty of Nigeria as at the period was under the control of the British colonial master. It was Frederick Lord Lugard that was the first Governor General whose wife actually gave the name Nigeria. In the wisdom of the colonial masters, particularly, Lugard's administration, the policy of amalgamation of the

Southern and Northern protectorates for administrative convenience was carried out in 1914.

Consequently, after this period, the Clifford constitution of 1922 came into being and elective principle was primarily one of the achievements of the constitution. The constitution excluded Nigerians from the executive organ of the administration. The castigation of this regime brought about a speedy development that saw Bernard Bourdison and later Arthur Richard.

Indeed, Richard's constitutional history will not be forgotten in a hurry due to its stern effort to regionalize Nigeria. During this period, Nigeria was pacilated into regions and with the mandate of managing and controlling its resources. As an agrarian society, the regions were known for palm oil, cocoa, cotton, groundnut and other related allied agricultural products.

By the time Richard's constitution was over, John Macpherson came into being and introduced quasi federal system of government. The beauty of a federal system of government in any political leadership is the devolution of power between the center and component units. This arrangement negates unitary system where power is concentrated at the center without any form of recognition for the units.

The British hegemonic and monopolistic posture in the leadership of Nigeria continued unabated and with the renewed efforts of Nigerian elites in calling for independence, Nigerian citizens seem not to be safe in the hands of the colonial masters. The Nigerian elites such as Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Herbert Macaulay and the likes fervently lit the candle of struggle for independence in order to liberate the country from the over bearing dominance of the British colonial government.

In as much as this political leadership of independence is very germane and necessary Nigerian citizens shall not lose sight of the fact that Nigeria today as a political entity remains a creation of British phenomenon. Without the British colonial masters, there would not be any thing called Nigeria. Ezeani buttressed this position when he posits.

After hundreds of years of Arab and European slavery and colonization, these and other nearby nations were amalgamated by the British Government through the instrumentality of Frederick Lugard (15).

The pacilation of the country into regions within the mindset of colonial wisdom was for administrative convenience and easy, foisting of the Direct and indirect policies. However, even this regionalization has not been abandoned as Nigeria is still defined within the framework of the three main ethnic regions. Ezeani posits:

Indigenous societies ante-dated Nigeria, and these consisted of the three largest ethnic groups, the Hausa – Fulani in the North, the Igbo in the Southeast, and the Yoruba in the southwest, each of which now has a population of not less than 20 million (15).

Although, the pre- independence leadership in Nigeria did not involve Nigerian citizens greatly in social and political development, but it will not be denied that the same period occasioned the development of a legal system, which imperatively affected the development of Nigerian legal system. At least, it is on record that statute of General Application (SOGA), Received English Law and Doctrine of Equity are still in use in Nigeria in areas where local legislation has not been made to cover the lacuna in legal issues.

LEADERSHIP AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN POST-INDEPENDENCE NIGERIA

Post- Independence Nigeria is a period immediately after independence in October 1st, 1960 down to the year 2015 as the case may be with the renewed efforts of Nigerian elites and continued agitation for independence and self government, the people of Nigeria were granted political independence by the British colonial rule. The implication of this is that Nigeria by that act enjoyed political autonomy. The psychology of being independent after several years of dominance and slavery cannot be over-emphasized. Achebe in this sense posited:

The general feeling in the air as independence approached was extra ordinary, like the building anticipation of the relief of torrential rains after a season a scorching not Harmattan winds and bush fires. We were all looking forward to feeling the joy that India – the great jewel of the British Empire – must have felt in 1948, the joy that Ghana must have felt years later, in 1957 (40)

From the atmospheric description by Achebe, Nigerian were in high spirit to herald the change in guard from foreign domination to leadership by the self or the people. In October, 1960, the British flag was lowered and the Nigerian green white green flag was hoisted signifying autonomous leadership.

However, it must be noted that in the 1960 independence, the Nigerian head of state was ceremonial as the British Queen and her lieutenants still give directives in Nigeria. There were two major significant developments in the history of independence. One was that, the Federal

Supreme Court was not the highest Nigerian Court of Appeal, as cases were taken on appeal to the British privy Council. On the second hand, the 1960 independence constitution was not authotonous as the constitution was made for Nigerians by non Nigerians.

This mixture of leadership administration persisted until October 1st, 1963 when Nigeria became a Republic. The significance of the 1963 phenomenon is that British government lost control and directives of the affairs of Nigeria; the 1963 Republican constitution was drafted by Nigerians and the Federal Supreme Court Lagos was made the highest Court of Appeal in Nigeria.

The civilian leadership platform of 1963 led by Alhaji Abukakar Tafawa Belewa and Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe was parliamentary democratic arrangement. In this political leadership, the Prime Minister was the Head of Government and the President was the Head of state. The president is merely a ceremonial head as he takes instructions from the Prime Minister.

In a parliamentary democratic leadership, there is fussion of power as members of the executive arm of government are also, members of the legislative arm of government. This was the political situation of Nigeria between 1963 to January 15th. 1966 when Nigeria witnessed the first military intervention in the polity.

Prior to this, the political leadership was eclipsed by corruption and moral collapse. The political class then in charge of the leadership administration lost sense of direction as indiscipline and all forms of attendant negative practices characterized the leadership. It was for the military as if Nigeria has collapsed just six years after independence and three years after republic. This development compelled the military led by Nzeogwu to embark on a comprehensive revolution so as to overhaul the entire network of leadership administration. Making firm his position, Nzeogwu stated:

The aim of the Revolutionary Council is to establish a strong United and prosperous nation, free from corruption and internal strife. My dear country men, no citizen should have anything to fear so long as that citizen is law abiding. Our enemies are the political profiteers, the swindlers, the men in high and low places that seek bribe... (Ezeani, 29-30).

To further justify the necessity of the military intervention, Ezeani citing Ojo argues that:

The six- year old nation, unhealthy since its birth on October 1, 1960, had, by January 1966, shown some terminal symptoms: a politicized 1962 census; the political anarchy in the Western Region; the bloody

TIV riots; a partially boycotted 1964 general elections; and other social ills such as ethnic chauvinism, endemic corruption, nepotism, economic stagnation, wanton arson, political thuggery, and an incompetent leadership at the centre (27).

Although, it is on record that Nzeogwu's coup could not be sustained owing to the obvious fact that he was far a junior officer to Aguiyi Ironsi. Expectedly, Ironsi being the most senior officer in rank, had to take over the government on the 17th of January, 1966.

Indeed, the 1966 January coup was conceived by well meaning Nigerians as a necessity due to high-level corruption and maladministration by the political leadership of Tafawa Belewa, same cannot be said of the July 13th, 1966 military coup of Gowon. The Gowon coup was rather Christained ethnic vendetta. The death of Alhaji Tafawa Belewa the then Prime Minister and that of the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Ahmadu Bello was seen as an Igbo conspiracy against the north and which the north vowed to retaliate. The July coup was purely unnecessary as there were no situation to warrant the change of government.

The military leadership of Gowon adopted unitary system of government. This type of leadership entails the concentration of power at the centre with weak component units. The military Head of state was the commander of the Armed Force and Supreme Headquarter.

The implication is that such a fellow is the head of administration as he performs executive functions and also, controls the legislature. The military Head of state upon taking over the political power, clamped down the constitution and immediately promulgated a decree. Because of the nature of the military take over of General Gowon, his leadership was not well recognized especially in the eastern region of Nigeria particularly, Ojukwu did not appreciate the philosophy of vendetta with which Gowon's coup and subsequently his administration took. This phenomenon gave impetus to the Nigeria – Biafra civil war of 1967–1970. Instead of aligning himself to the administration of Gowon, Ojukwu rather refused to acknowledge him and eventually opted for the Republic of Biafra. The civil war of three years and combative nature of the Biafrans, with lean resources, if it had survived by seceding, would come up becoming a great nation in the continent of Africa. The manufacture of the local bomb – Ogbunigwe by the Ojukwu bunker posed a very difficult challenge to the Nigerians and other parts of the world. To buttress this position, Stanley Diamond argues that:

...the defeat of Biafra is not a victory for the Nigerian people but for the neo-colonialist, whether Soviet or North – Atlantic ...Biafra would not have

been a blessing to Africa because if Biafra had succeeded it would have created an imbalance in the African continent, ...it would have been the most powerful and richest African country, thereby endangering African Unity (Ezeani, 44).

Gowon's military regime which lasted for nine years could not end the social ills of corruption and indiscipline, rather, all it geared up was to wage war against the Biafrans, and to further demonize them by denying them aid from external organizations. This immoral act was perfected through conspiracy of Chief Awolowo as the then Federal Commissioner. Achebe quoting Awolowo argues:

All is fair in war, and starvation is one of the weapons of war. I don't see why we should feed our enemies fat in order for them to fight harder (There was a Country: A personal History of Biafra, 233).

The avowed conspiracy by Awolowo to whittle down the powers and effort of the Biafrans may be viewed to have conformed with one of the stanza in the National pledge – "To serve Nigeria with all my strength, to defend her Unity and uphold her honour and glory". But to do so very effectively showed the height of immorality to a segment of the country. Though the unity of the country was realized, but it contradicted the right to self determination which was constitutional at both regional, continental and international levels. Sadly, the Gowon's regime was toppled by Gen. Murtala Mohammed who saw wisdom in creating additional states in Nigeria. Thereafter, Colnel Dimkpa overthrew him and Obasanjo took over and eventually returned Nigeria to a civil rule in 1979.

The political development in Nigeria commenced by the institution of a constitution Drafting Committee which developed and drafted the famous 1979 constitution, the vehicle that ushered in the multiparty structure of the 1979 Presidential leadership of Alhaji Shehu Usman Shargari of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN).

Indeed, Obasanjo's military leadership prepared the platform for civil rule, but then glorification of corruption, inept leadership, nepotism and high-level ethnic and religious chauvinism characterized the political leadership of Shagari. Several avenues were created by the administration to siphon the country's wealth outside the shores of the country. This ugly phenomenon continued unabated. It is against this background that warranted Gen. Mohamadu Buhari to overthrow the shagari regime in 31st December, 1983.

The Buhari and Idiagbon military regime which collapsed the second Republic came up with the intention of overhauling the entire network of administrative structures in Nigeria. The major challenge was to weed the entire country out of corruption. This made the regime to introduce the War

Against Indiscipline (WAI). For the period of Buhari's regime, there was discipline in Nigeria and for the first time, Nigerians learnt how to be orderly; how to queue up and wait for one's turn. This consciousness of living a disciplined life became a new moral creed or new morality for every Nigeria citizen. Those who could not abide by the moral creed were arrested, punished for the various offences committed. Some politicians who stash away public funds were prosecuted, and imprisoned if found guilty.

Indeed, Nigeria under the military rulership of Buhari experienced high level international, continental and regional accolades. Confidence was rekindled. The economy that was battered became recreated as it bounced back.

However, the Buhari regime inspite of its sound ideological and philosophical trappings of fighting corruption and other allied negative practices, was not liked and celebrated by every one. An ideological conspiracy by the elite class was convoked both civilians and military and a trap was set which saw his removal by Gen. Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida, the then Chief of Army Staff, in August 27th, 1985.

Babangida's overthrow of Buhari was heralded by mostly those who lived under fear and despair in Buhari's administration. The moral recreation and regeneration in the Buhari regime immediately collapsed in Babangida's administration.

Although Buhari's regime was eclipsed with moral sanity, it does not mean that there were no abuse of rights and liberties of Nigerian citizens. Prominent among acts, of rights infringements were the obnoxious decrees No 2 and No 4 of 1984. The decrees were clog on the wheel of press freedom and freedom of movement, association and press freedom. It was this decree that saw Nduka Irabor, Tunde Thompson, Fawehenmi and others in Jail. The decree termed', the state security (Detention of persons) Decree No 2 of 1984 has among other provisions that:

A detainee has no right to be informed of the reasons for his or her detention; he or she has no right of access to family, lawyers or private medical treatment; detention orders are renewable, thus permitting indefinite detention on grounds of "state security" without charge or trial; the courts' jurisdiction to review detention orders has been ousted, so that no civil proceedings may be brought in respect of anything done in terms of the decree, nor may the constitutionality of any action be inquired into by any court (Human Right watch Africa, May 10, 1996).

The morality of the decree as x-rayed above could be centered on the zeal of a leader willing to ensure the unity of the country and service with honesty as contained in the National pledge. The Decree No 2 and 4 1984 were so salient that other military Heads of state such as Babangida, Sani Abacha and Abusalami Abukakar retained them. The regime of Babangida came up and after years of rulership, he instituted a transition programme aimed at returning power to the civilians. Its structural Adjustment Programme was introduced. This programme encouraged austerity measures as it was a policy packaged by the IMF and World Bank the two known economic predators in the wake of the loan advanced to Nigeria by these world agencies.

The Babangida's leadership style which was described as dirarchy by some analysts was rich with intellectuals and had reasonable economic policies and reforms. Also, during this period, the war against indiscipline started loosing its weight. Although, there was an agency instituted by the government in the name of Mass Mobilization for Social and Economic Recovery (MAMSER) to enlighten the public on how to do what is right and lawful. MAMSER was to serve as a moral recreation in the lives of the people.

The leadership administration of Banangida instituted the Directorate for food Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI). The agency was to complement government efforts in the area of social services and infrastructural development. It however, instituted the longest transition programme since the history of Nigeria, which later resulted in the annulment of the general election that was branded the freest and fairest election so far in 1993. Babangida's electoral and leadership misdeeds coupled with the looming signs of disintegration forced him to step aside in August 27th, 1993.

Before, stepping aside, he instituted an Interim National Government headed by Chief Ernest Shonekon with the mandate of conducting a general election at the presidential level, having completed the other levels of election. Sadly, Gen. Sani Abacha's zeal to have a feel of what leadership at the apex was, coupled with the fact that a Lagos Federal High Court has declared the Interim National Government illegal, it became an opportunity for Abacha to safe-guard the integrity and sovereignty of Nigeria. Abacha therefore, in a palace coup, sack Shonekon in November, 1993.

Abacha took over and promulgated a Decree (suspension and modification of constitution) Decree No 1, of 1993. With this decree, all hitherto existing constitution and its provisions including democratic institutions were suspended. Also, the chapter 4 of the 1979 constitution which was on Fundamental Human Rights was also affected, leading to rights violation.

The regime of Abacha also maintained the military psychology and northern oligarchic structure. The regime paraded poor human right record as it focused its logic of human rights violations on the philosophy and logic of unity in diversity. It was evidenced that the logic of environment at the period of Abacha's regime required a strong arm regime compatible and comparable with the Hobbesian calculus. Some human rights and environmental activists were either killed, detained, imprisoned or other acts of inhumanity meted on them.

It is on record that Ken Saro Wiwa, Ramson Beko, Kudirat Abiola etc were killed during the Abacha's regime. Also, the uncompromising posture of the alleged winner of the June 12, 1993 presidential election, Bashorun Moshood Abiola, which was annulled was a very big threat to the sovereignty of Nigeria.

The negative human rights' record in the regime of Gen. Sani Abacha did not give room for objective assessment as regards to signs of socio-economic development in the country. The regime maintained and retained the stability of the economy by making sure that a controlled mechanism of checking the rise and fall of naira and dollar in the global market was carried out. The Naira was pegged at between N80 – N87 per dollar. Also change in pump price was not frequent as the excess from the pump price was channeled to the development of the country and infrastructures through the institution of Petroleum Trust Fund (PTF). This federal government agency was proactive in almost all the states of the country, carrying out intervention exercises in the critical sectors of the peoples' lives.

There was relative economic development and stability during the regime of Abacha and this claim showed on the quality of life of the people. However, the demise of Abacha while in office on the 7th of June, 1998 and Chief Moshood Abiola on the 8th of July, 1998 gave rise to the regime of Gen Abusalami Abukakar who handed over to a civilian democratic administration headed by Chief Olusegun Obasanjo of the Peoples Democratic Party in May 29th 1999. Obasanjo's administration in 1999 was the second time he had become the leader of Nigeria. The first time was in 1976 – 1979 as a military officer who eventually returned power to the civilian.

Today's Nigeria could be seen to be a product of many years of clamour for an end to military regime. The prolonged military regime was understood to have taken the country far aback from the commity of nations, and has also denied it its exalted place in the international circle. It was also reasoned, that military regime did not offer the country the opportunity for development in critical areas of the economy such as oil and gas, science and technology, solid minerals, communication and information technology.

The return to civil rule offered the country the opportunity to come

up with people- oriented policies that unbundled the hitherto monopolized critical sectors thereby encouraging healthy competition through the process of liberalization and commercialization.

These developmental strides were propelled by the Olusegun Obasanjo's civilian administration, though with its attendant ills that pervaded the administration. Corruption was seen to reach its crescendo especially in the power sector where a whopping sum of sixteen billion dollars was alleged to have been committed. Also, the administration carried out the policy of revamping or rehabilitating the four known refineries for optimal use so as to ease the importation of refined petroleum products. This with the resources committed to it did not see the light of the day.

Also the post independence social political development in Nigeria saw the country opening up democratic space thereby, encouraging even participation in politics. The women were able to be actively involved in participatory politics both in the administrative and legislative positions where they were either appointed or elected. The period witnessed the first woman governor and speaker of the Federal House of Representative.

Indeed, what this period reminds the people of Nigeria is the issue of gender sensitivity and balancing which is gaining currency in the contemporary world. Prior to this period, some African States including Nigeria regard women or classify them to be on the platform of Aristotle's conception of slaves, tools meant for action. But on the contrary, women, especially in this 21st century have exhibited high – level competence in the assigned roles. In Nigeria today, women are seen as integrative driving force to socio political and economic sectors. To buttress this point, I had argued elsewhere that:

Women had exhibited high-level competence in the socio political and economic matters of the country in particular and the world in general. For instance, Nigeria was a debtor nation, but when Dr Okonjo-Iwela was made Finance Minister in Nigeria, she fought for the cancellation of the debts from the creditor countries, this she was able to achieve. In addition, Oby Ezekwezili was in charge of Due Process, through this, she was able to recover billions of naira that would have been corruptly converted to private use. Also, at a time, Nigerian market was a dump for fake drugs which were hazardous to corporate existence, people's lives were shortened due to the effect of these drugs. However, the competence of Dora Akunyili was brought to bear in National Agency for Food and

Drugs Administration and Control (NAFDAC), and she competently combated this virus and brought sanity to the market (Ikegbu, Ephraim A. The place of women in Political Development Nigeria: Citizenship Education second Edition, 2012 (39 8-413).

These giant strides reached and, or achieved by women in the socio-economic and political development of Nigeria did not negate the fact that there were areas the women have helped in collapsing the structures of the economy and polity. The financial misappropriation by the former speaker of the House of Representatives, the financial recklessness of the former petroleum Minister and the alleged twenty billion dollars NNPC unremitted money were among the many ills in the post independence Nigeria.

It must be accepted though arguable that political maturity, education, enlightenment and the likes are evidenced in the political development of Nigeria. At the wake of the prolonged absence of Nigeria's former President on ground of ill – health, a new political and legislative vocabulary was given birth to acknowledge and elevate the status of the Vice President to the Acting President. The concept of the Doctrine of Necessity was a 21st century Nigeria's political coinage to enable the vice president ascend the status of Acting President. The absence of political maturity and sound legislative education would have led to the collapse of the political and leadership structures of the Nigerian state.

Again, the post independence democratic Nigeria was both instructive and didactic of the Nigeria citizens and the world at large. It was the era that a sitting president conceded defeat in a general election by accepting result even before the final result was released. With the acceptance of the result of the presidential election won by the opposition party and the immediate concession by the sitting president to defeat, it has demonstrated to the regional, continental and global bloc that leadership is a contract between the leader and the led. It is a cynosure to the fact that sovereignty belongs to the people and not the individual. With the people, sovereign power can be withdrawn at anytime the holder can no longer act for the interest of the people. With the general election of Nigeria in 2015, the Lockean definition of the concept of sovereignty is a landmark.

PRODIGALISM AND THE ABSENCE OF CREATIVITY IN LEADERSHIP

We accept with utmost conviction that leadership carry's an array of challenge, by one who has accepted to lead others. Leadership is a position of trust where in the leader is the trustee. The confidence of the people is reposed on the leader or the trustee with the conviction that he will discharge

the leadership obligations in line with the social contract entered between the leader and the led.

From the point of view of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau and John Rawls, they maintained that transmutation from the state of nature to the state of civil society by the members of the society was through a social contract. The implication of this assertion is premised on the trite rule that members of the society were not compelled to transit the state of nature, but was by reason of free choice.

However, Thomas Hobbes' state of nature was perceived or conceived to be anarchic, chaotic, and rebellious owing to man's rapacious, cantankerous and bellicose tendencies. Again, in the prescribed state of Nature, there was an unregulated display of natural liberty which its consequences were war of all men against all men, collapse of industry, navigation, letters, communication and life became short, brutish, nasty and poor. For Hobbes, the solution lies on the people surrendering their personal natural liberties to one man or assembly of men called the sovereign (Leviathan).

On the part of Locke, man's state of nature was rosy and pleasant. Transmutation to the civil society was for the protection and preservation of the property and liberty of man. Locke argues that sovereignty does not lie in the hands of one man or assembly of men, but sovereignty at all materials times, lies on the people and the people have the liberty to withdraw it to whomsoever they had given it to. By the Lockean position, the weight and influence of the people are recognized and not based on the strength of an individual or group of individuals as contented by Hobbes.

Rousseau posturing a democratic flavor in leadership just as Locke did argue that man in his original state or state of nature was innocent, but was corrupted upon his entrance to the society. Indeed, man in his crude nature was an innocent man, free from corruption, vice etc. He became a different being when he aspired to be in civil society. His desire for fame, honour riches, nobility, wealth, education etc destroyed his innocence. For Rousseau, the individual will must give way to the general will.

John Rawls who carried the sermon of Karl Marx to the contemporary era after the demise of Karl Marx acknowledged the ability of men in the original position who were wearing a veil of ignorance to make rational laws when called upon. According to him, in the original position with veil of ignorance, they do not know who will be affected by the laws that they would make. Supposing they knew who and who that may be affected by the law they intend to make, personal interest will be brought to bear, and the laws will no longer be based on reason, but parochial and primordial sensibilities.

As valid as the arguments of these philosophers may appear to the ordinary mind, we should recognize the fact that the argument did not fall short of the provisions of the Nigeria National pledge as contained in the first stanza: "I pledge to Nigeria, my country, to be faithful, loyal and honest," What the above situation reminds us is the determination of aspiring leaders to make a mark disregarding personal interest, but this aspiration, zeal and commitment disappear the moment personal interest, parochial and primordial consideration become part of the psychology of the existence of the would be leaders. Indeed, the attitude of favouring personal interests and sentiment will yield to prodigalism. Leaders, very often become prodigal and wasteful, embarking on ventures that cannot translate into economic and development realities.

One of the existing hallmark of leadership is creativity and absence of prodigalism and wasteful life style. The developed countries of the world today are leading others in the commanding height of the economy because they cultivated and retained the culture of creativity, thereby making their countries the center piece of innovation. This phenomenon does not represent the leadership style of the third world countries except very few of them such as India, Indonesia, Brazil etc that have woken up to the realities of time.

A prodigal and non creative, non-innovative leader wastes and consumes whatever that is in the coffers of the state without making provision for the rainy day. He is usually in a hurry to squander the resources and leaves the treasury empty. The bible is no less an authority of an account of a prodigal leader (son) who was in a hurry to take from his father his own share of the family largesse in order to start his own life in another location far from home.

Indeed, he has no leadership acumen and lacks creativity and innovation. But to him, what he has was more than enough to sustain him. The prodigal leader has no sense of the future, so he never considered the need to invest the large chunk of what he had taken from the father to enable him remain relevant. With the process of time, the prodigal consuming leader who never planted nor invested squandered all he had with him, and he started feeding on food meant for animals. This was because of his inability to periscope the future and invest for the rainy day.

Creativity as a hallmark and quality of leadership cannot be overemphasized, it is a quality that stands one out among its peers. It created an atmosphere of independence and/ or self reliance. It equips one with the confidence and conviction of providing solution to problems. To further buttress this art of creativity, the coat of many colours of Joseph in the Holy Bible and coat of many colours of Dolly Paton were both didactic and expression of epistemic ingenuity.

On the account of Joseph's Coat of many colours, his was an expression of royalty and affluence. From the biblical account, Jacob had special love for his son Joseph, and this love was further evidenced by the mark of the coat of many colours, which separated and, distinguished him from the ordinary person in the society. As a prince he was made to appear so in the eyes of other people. Joseph was revered, adored which attracted envy of his other siblings to him and consequently his siblings sold him to slavery.

On the account of Dolly Paton's Coat of many colours, hers was a symbolic expression of the art of creativity. In the said song, Paton's mother was a poor woman who could not afford school uniform for the daughter, but was determined to making sure that this situation does not prevent her daughter from going to school.

In order to ameliorate this condition of hers, she had to gather pieces of clothes of different colours and sew them together, eventually, that coat of many colours, became the one that was admired, even when it was done out of a painful and difficult situation at the material point in time. Paton's mother responded to the immediacy and urgency of the time and provided a solution by making sure that her daughter was not thrown out of school.

Arguably, some contemporary leaders with abundance of resources both natural and human are suffering from mental or intellectual poverty. Mental or intellectual poverty in this context does not imply absence of educational qualifications, rather, it is the absence of creativity. A creative leader knows what to do to create wealth for his nationals and leaves a formidable legacy at the end of his leadership career. Creative leaders translate to statesmen and not politicians.

To buttress this position, elsewhere, I have argued that poverty of leadership resulted to poor quality of laws made by legislators. This is stated thus:

One ugly phenomenon that is plaguing Nigeria's political landscape is the phenomenon of poor leadership in all spheres of existence. The poverty of leadership has grossly infiltrated into the mainstream of administration and has consequently collapsed the structures of political, economic, social and religious lives of the country. This perennial abysmal development was as a result of poor quality of laws and egocentric disposition of the law makers (Ephraim A Ikegbu; Dealing with the Self-Centeredness in National Assembly Business, 2012, 366).

Not so very comfortable with the practice of selfism, leadership emptiness, and absence of credentials, Ikegbu conversely aligns himself with the argument of Asouzu on the decay the fallacy of the nearer the safer and the better and what he (Ikegbu) calls “it is my turn syndrome” could do to a developing society.

Ikegbu constructively argues that:

In the African continent, the glimpse of democracy and eventual practice of democratic typology is also been felt but with high level differences, perhaps arising from the “ evils of self centeredness”, the “ idol of it is my turn syndrome”, and what Asouzu calls “the fallacy of the nearer the safer and the better (Ephraim A. Ikegbu, 366).

A leader with high level mental proficiency and good track record is more concerned with the position or place of his country in global rating. The welfare of his citizens gives him sleepless night and he braces up to tackle the challenges of poverty, unemployment, insecurity, corruption, infrastructural decay and other allied tasks of governance. A leader, disregarding subjective and prodigal display of sentiment on matters of religion, ethnicity, class, and/or language ought to display high level objectivity bearing in mind the concept of Gidi Gidi ba Ugwu eze. Any leader that in the art of leadership fails to enjoy the confidence and support of his followers is bound to fail. This is because, he draws his strength from the followers and not necessarily from his Kitchen cabinet members that only play sycophantic roles with no reflection of truth and objective assessment.

The contextual and conceptual meaning of Nigeria’s National pledge in the theatre of leadership is regularity of oath taking by leaders and followers, swearing by the Almighty God to do only those things that project the positive image of the country internally and externally. The obvious implication of this phenomenon is that all Nigerian citizens have failed, refused and neglected to objectively express the dynamics of the National pledge.

In what sense have Nigerians protected, preserved, strengthened and defended the Nigerian unity as a collective being? Could it be in the area of looting the public treasury such as the missing 20 (twenty) billion dollars of the unremitted NNPC fund, a contract inflation,? under invoicing and over invoicing? Rigging of electoral processes, diversion of contract? Etc, etc. Has the country been preserved or protected by the act of kidnapping, child trafficking, armed banditry, Boko-haram and other violent acts of insurgency? Indeed mental poverty has eclipsed the leadership class and has

taken away science of creativity which supposedly should be the hallmark of a formidable leadership structure.

It is objectively contended that absence of creativity in leadership yields high degree of prodigalism and wasteful lifestyle in leadership without due and adequate contemplation of the future of the country and its nationals.

CONCLUSION

This paper “The Poverty of leadership and science of Prodigalism in Nigeria: A philosophical inquest” has argued within its limit that the absence of creativity in leadership gave rise to prodigalism and wasteful spending in leadership. It argued that the ruler - ruled pact has been variously punctured by the ruler owing to clear absence of people-oriented policies that would navigate the process of even development and economic prosperity.

The paper also observed with disdain the absence of commitment in living to the thesis of the National pledge. The paper aligns its logic on the need to ensure that creativity and mental alertness constitute formidable framework for leadership positions in Nigeria. The growing mark of revolution in the area of science and technology taking place in the “Asian tigers” of India, Indonesia China, Korea, Singapore etc is as a result of the commitment and desire of the leaders to embark on mental revolution. Today, the Asian tigers are almost in the lead in the commanding height of the economy, reason being that there was a consistent resolve to reduce if not to eliminate poverty in leadership. By this Asian giant stride, they affected countries have ceased from becoming a consuming economy to a producing/ manufacturing economy.

The gains of creativity in leadership are enormous – it restructures and overhauls the entire system by determining the appropriate logic or model that would fit local circumstance in order to respond to the challenges of our existence; it provides an atmosphere of friendliness which gives everyone the confidence to engage himself/ herself in one form of vocation or the other; because, people are mostly not idle but engaged, insecurity is reduced to the barest minimum. Leadership with good sense of creativity and mental balance puts in place a good electoral process that will be free from rigging, snatching of ballot boxes, maiming and other violent acts that characterize the electoral process in Nigeria.

This paper arguably concludes that with the philosophy of creativity in leadership evidently put in place, prodigalism and wasteful living will be put in abeyance, and prosperity of national economy will be promoted. While the exact thesis of the National pledge will be apparently reflected on the lives of the people and the country at large standing out as a model for other nations of the world

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