

Classical and Contemporary Leadership Misdeeds Thwarting Africa's Development: Nigerian Case

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Abstract: *The past and present in/deliberate misdeeds of Africa's neo/colonialists and Africans themselves, especially African political leaders and other elites, continuously thwart the development of the continent. The misdeeds of most African leaders and elites are worse than those of the colonialists, which the same crops of elites often re-emphasise as the only cause of Africa's ageing woes. Other misdeeds against Africa are hatched by the African populace. This paper thus aims at rousing consciousness to the ageing and rising misdeeds against Africa, towards attaining deserving development. Relying largely on secondary data, employing qualitative approach, objectivism and the plausible tools, it reveals that while the colonial invasion of Africa left it naked, poor, underdeveloped, and in various nationhood woes, the post-independence African political leaders and elites aggravated the problems, meting out worse cruelty on the continent and its peoples. The contemporary leaders and elites are the worst. The citizenry also contribute to the leadership misdeeds thwarting Africa's development. Consequently, bad/failed leadership, paralysed democracy and elitism, abject poverty, hunger and suicide, endemic corruption, heightened illiteracy, ignorance, insecurity, violent crises and social vices, westernisation and culture erosion/attrition, over dependence on foreign aids, international debt, etc. characterise Africa. Africa's ideal development that would have been attained by now remains a mirage because of the sustained and continuous misdeeds and plagues unleashed on Africa by its leaders, elites, populace and the neo/colonialists. Patriotism and rejection of dubious and incompetent leaders and elites are major ways out.*

Keywords: Classical/Contemporary, Leadership Misdeeds, Thwarting, Africa's Development, Nigeria

Introduction

It is regrettable that in contemporary times, the world's poorest nations are in the Third World countries of Africa and Latin America. It is equally true that political instability, economic depression and social unrest are most prevalent in these areas (Okoye, 2006). African leaders and elites from Nigeria, the giant of Africa, have been leading in the misdeeds against Africa. Among the paramount misdeeds (factors) thwarting Africa's development are abject poverty, illiteracy, misrule or bad leadership and unproductive elitism, insecurity/terrorism, incessant ethnic and religious crises, social vices, and neo-colonialism, westernisation and western mimicry. It is in view of the correlation between poverty and crisis that President George Bush of America once said, 'In Africa, promise and opportunity sit side-by-side with disease, war and desperate poverty.' Most of these countries also maintain a high birth-rate which out-spaces the growth in local food production. Experts say they also have the world's shortest life expectancy of 47 years (Okoye, 2006:13). This is not unconnected with many years of slavery and early, centuries of colonial exploitation and imperialism that left most of the countries trapped in what Rene Dumont calls 'a permanent state of beggary', forcing them to depend abjectly on foreign aids and loans to balance mounting trade deficits and feeding of their people. Next to the colonial raid and impoverishment is the failed greedy indigenous elite class since independence, dubious toothless bull dog elites of doom (Robert, 2018). In fact, other misdeeds are premised on these.

Africa's ideal or supposed significant development is thwarted by various misdeeds, indigenous and alien. There are various forces or factors working against Africa's development. Abject poverty, hunger and epidemics as well as severe health challenges, corruption, failed leadership/bad governance, elitism, corruption, heightened insecurity, paralysed democracy, god-fatherism and obnoxious policies, tribalism, favouritism and nepotism, illiteracy and ignorance, erosion of culture (tradition, oral knowledge, customs, norms and values), poor diplomacy and inadequate international co-operation, excess use of foreign languages, poor technology cum technical-know-how, international debt, population explosion, negative effects of the international market on Africa, ethnic and religious crises, sour intergroup relations, among others (Maathai, 1995; Mazrui, 2000; Anyanwu, 2003; Aseka, 2010; Nwauzor, 2014; Besong, Dibia & Robert, 2016; Besong, 2017; Robert, 2018). These identified forces or factors constitute the core misdeeds thwarting development in Africa.

As noted above, most of the developing nations had first been impoverished by their colonialists, Africa's invaders, and later through this era by the indigenous leaders and elites that are of Western built, orientation and footprints. As Okoye (2006) observes, the truth of the matter also is that when the African colonies and those in Asia became independent between 1945 and 1965, their political leaders were faced with two major problems. The challenge of consolidating their political power and achieving domestic stability and peace is the first problem. The second is how to transform their countries' economies from what they had become under colonialism-producers of raw materials through the exploitation by the colonialists of cheap, unskilled labour of the indigenous populations. Asian countries in spite of the many bloody conflicts in the early years of their post-colonial domination, which had been resolved by 1965, except Indonesia's that continued into the 1970s, had far differed from those of Africa, where many conflicts are continuing and new ones erupting. Regrettably, amidst plenty, Nigeria and Nigerians still lack. As Okoye (2006:6) notes, extreme poverty, as is obtained in many Third World countries, causes people to commit suicide. Frustration is a strong contributory factor to suicide. In her words,

In [sic] the developing African continent, especially the developing Third World, there are many more factors that cause individual and societal stress and tension. Most prominent of these are devastating poverty, loss of hope and not knowing where your next meal is coming from. Others are constant civil unrests, tribal clashes, religious rivalries, strikes, political killings [thuggery and assassination], rape, destruction of public properties [vandalism], unemployment, etc.

Colonialism and Neo-colonialism as Misdeeds Thwarting Africa's Development

The development models and training left by Europeans, when they retreated from the African Coast, could not sustain the economic boom recorded in the early years of Independence, as these countries still rely on imported technological skills and technical assistance to explore and harness their abundant human and material resources (Robert, Besong and Dibie, 2016). In the words of Ezeoke (2004) 'Nigeria was managed as a Feeder nation of raw materials for the teeming industries in Britain.' In his book, *The White tribes revisited*, Richard West avers that 'the Whites tend to be almost as powerful as they were in former colonies. The main difference now is that they no longer pretend to feel any responsibility to the Africans. Of course, that is neo-colonialism. But unfortunately the other worse sets of neo-colonialists on the continent in the present generation are the indigenous rulers of some of the third world countries.

Neo-colonialism manifests in various phases till date. The West has raided, impoverished, underdeveloped and failed Africa, and continues to do worse to her while at the same time claiming to shoulder or share the lasting burdens that it had plagued Africa with and still adds unceasingly (Bolton, 2007; Robert, Besong and Dibie, 2016), especially through it imperialist agents like the World Bank, the IMF, Western Union, European Union, European Economic Area, United Nations, etc. (Bolton, 2007). These bodies continue neo-colonialism and racism in disguise. They assume the 'supremacy of God' over developing nations, which had been/are impoverished, stripped naked, battered, raided, underdeveloped, cleansed, etc. by the powerful nations of Europe and America (Rodney, 1972: 5; Bolton, 2007).

Till date, the West still shows unlimited authority virtually everywhere, especially on developing nations that had begot their woes from them since the colonial era. The agents of neo-colonialism and imperialism of the West are meant to sustain European and American 'imperialist supremacy.' The Blacks are only given menial positions and jobs in all these and other diplomatic bodies. They politick unquestioned through near-covert, fancied racism and rhetoric, 'justified' by their development, education, religion, politics and civilisation (Robert, Besong and Dibie, 2016). For instance, the declaring of the position of World Bank President opened for general contest is a mere propaganda and international political cajole, as victory to the position remains almost the exclusive preserved of the White (Besong, 2016). Perhaps, it is on that basis that Okonjo-Iweala lost, when she contested, as the supremacist politics had gone on underground. Scholars have lamented the extent and menace of neo-colonialism in Africa, with the case of Nigeria taking the lead, said to have been particularly entrenched in the system by the Obasanjo's administration (Alliance for Democracy, 2004). The Obasanjo's economic policy of a total sale of the country to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank snuffed out the lives of many Nigerians (Okoye, 2006:16). That of President Buhari is worse and has worsened the poverty in the nation, as Nigeria now leads the world in poverty ranking.

The hypocrisy of the European Union (EU), U.S. and Japan is continuously made manifest. African countries are told the benefits of lowering tariffs. But they [US, Japan and the rest] are practising the opposite of what they preach (Ayodele cited in Okoye, 2006). He further notes that retaining the subsidies and export guarantee to farmers in the EU countries, United States and Japan rob farmers in African countries of decent livelihood, and burden consumers in industrial countries with higher taxes and food prices. Ayodele notes that rich countries spend \$1 billion a day to support their farmers. What obtains in many African nations, like Nigeria, is the direct opposite. Farmers are barely supported. Agriculture is largely discouraged in numerous ways. Subsidy has to be phased out and protection in high-income countries could attract new investment and lead to increases in annual income in developing countries up to \$150 billion and \$400 billion.

In a report, 'paying the price', released on Monday, 6 December, 2004 by the British-based development group, the Oxfam warned that unless the world's wealthiest nations complied with their past pledges, some 45 million children in the poor nations would die needlessly over the next decade. The report, which was carried in *The Guardian* of Tuesday, 7 December, 2004, noted that despite the fact that the group of Seven (G7) countries: Germany, France, Italy, Japan, Britain, the United State (US) and Canada are now richer, they spend only half as much in real terms in development assistance, as they did in 1960. And of the paltry assistance they provide, about US \$50 billion a year, only about 40% of the money is actually spent in poor countries. The rest goes back to their nations. Besides, much of the aids often arrive late. The Oxfam's Executive Director, Jeremy Hobbs, lamented that 'across the globe, millions of people are being denied the most basic human needs of clean water, food, health care and education. People are dying while leaders delay debt relief.' Oxfam therefore calls on the G7 to urgently cancel the debt of all poor countries and double development aid to them. It posited that failure to do so would almost certainly put the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) agreed upon by the entire membership of the United Nations (UN), for reducing poverty, out of reach. The report had it that in 2003, the US ranked dead last in foreign aid amongst all the wealthy nations. So, boasting of helping developing nations is a clear case of political propaganda at international level. It is estimated that the entire development aid spending in 2003 was just 10% of what it spent on the Iraq war that year. It is to that end that Hobbs has lamented:

The scandal must end. Aid can get millions of children into school, save millions of mothers from dying in child-birth and lift even more out of poverty. Moreover, much of the aids is tied to purchasing of goods and services by the G7 and is therefore not even spent in poor countries. The report said that the United States and Italy were the worst offenders.

More so, the impact of globalisation has also been uneven, reflecting the opportunities and constraints in time and space. It also reveals the unequal relations among nations in terms of the capacity of harnessing the benefits and overcoming the perils or disadvantages of globalisation, which is the continuation of imperialism with the attendant further intensification of the marginalisation and exploitation of African (Third World) countries. This is particularly so because western capitalism, which spreads out its tentacles to control all economies of the world, does not have mercy on the weak (Ike and Ngwoke, 1997:1). Globalisation is a comprehensive phenomenon in both historical and contemporary contexts, touching on all aspects of individual and corporate life: political, social, scientific, cultural, technological, environment, intellectual and/or ideological (Anyanwu, 2003:74). Most Third World countries, including Nigeria, should be realistic enough to appreciate and interpret the implications of this perception of globalisation for their development. They should not be so naïve about the negative sides of globalisation. Only the positive sides should be absorbed and sustained.

The westernisation of the globe, which had been on since 1500 is perhaps the dominant of twentieth century, stressing that what human greed, missionary zeal, and dreams of empire failed to accomplish before 1900 has been achieved in this century by modern technology, the media, and popular culture. The world today is a global village, much of it dominated by western values and styles of life (Matthews and Platt quoted in Osofian, 2005). As a process of increasing interdependence and integration, which occurs as money, people, images, values and ideas flow-over more swiftly and smoothly across national boundaries, suits the beneficiaries and directors of globalisation. In reality, globalisation is aimed at eroding all national barriers that inhibit politics, trade, investment and financial relationship among countries, the intention being to end protectionism, to attain better co-operation and relationship as a viable requirement for development. It is not domesticated in Nigeria, following the near absence of the facilitators of globalisation, such as appropriate technology and communication systems and education (literacy level) or knowledge tradition.

The dilemma is whether to globalise or not. No proud civilisation has evolved on the bases of disjointed, uncoordinated and ill-programmed agenda, as Nigeria has tended to typify (Anyanwu, 2006).

Political Misdeeds and Paralysed Democracy

The political, economic and socio-cultural misdeeds of numerous African politicians continuously thwart Africa's development over the years. Bad political culture has been established and sustained by most African political leaders, especially those of Nigeria. Nigerian politics is characterised by political extremism, do-or-die and ethno-religious politics, evils, character assassination, brutal killing, mobilisation and use of thugs and ethno-religious militias for attacking and assassinating opponents, unleashing mayhem on the society and paralysing democracy, such as for perpetrating electoral crimes, ballot snatching, election rigging, etc. The rule of law is largely breached by politicians and their allies, and because it is not operational, as to being supreme to every citizen, the law defaulters are mostly not punished duly. They often complement their misdeeds with nepotism, with which they install their allies and relatives whom they use to replace themselves in power and public offices, imposing their allies on the masses.

Democratic processes are compromised, abused and paralysed. Injustice takes precedence. The judiciary is manipulated and bribed by politicians to squash just cases against them. State institutions are brought under exclusive control by politicians, including the media, electoral commission (Independent Electoral Commission), the Para/military, schools (tertiary institutions in particular), ministries, etc. For example, it is shocking that a particular media granted Muhammadu Buhari of APC over two hours for live studio media presidential debate/chats and granted Atiku Abubakar of PDP, his opponent, only seven minutes for the same exercise. It is also disheartening to hear a professor, an INEC returning officer in Imo, declare that he announced Rochas Okorocha, Imo former governor, the Senate winner for Imo West Constituency, under duress. The protest from the masses and some members of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) made the professor declared that. Many others bribed and/or forced to announce losers the winners of Nigeria's 2019 presidential and Federal House of Representatives did not make such public declaration. But many resigned after the February 23, 2019 presidential and Federal House of Representatives elections, informing the press that they were not ready to face the same (worse) intimidation and all what not that they faced in the first phase of the elections in the 2019 March 9 governorship and state assemblies elections. The 2019 rigging was a uniquely first of its kind in the history of Nigerian democracy, following the misdeeds of the incumbent power-mongers/extremists of the All Progressive Congress (APC).

Politics in Nigeria is conceptualised by various factions of the elites as a competition for crude accumulation for personal wealth. It is portrayed as a means of enhancing ethnic interest. Thus, political competition has fuelled ethnic conflicts, instability and violence (Ojo and Fawole, 2004). Politics among the ethnic-based parties in the post-Independence years has been and is dominated by competition for hegemony among the dominant ruling class. The ethnic elements in elite formation in Nigeria have implications for the balance of power that shapes policy choices and implementation as well as its results. Various instances of failed leadership with bad examples and legacies that characterise Nigerian post-colonial politics abound and will continue uncontrollably, if not proactively and radically checked now. They are mostly learned, not ignorant, but for being 'superior to others and the law', they breach the law with impunity, unperturbed, unquestioned and unpunished.

By so doing, they plague Nigeria as well as Africa and thwart development in nation and continent. Different Nigerian government, at all levels, have callously dehumanised and impoverished honest and successful Nigerians who happened to have worked diligently in the services of their motherland before retirement. Even when some die in the service to their fatherland, they are not honoured in any way, particularly those who had no godfather/s and were not fortunate to be top elitist oligarchs. Their next-of-kin's are mostly denied their legal entitlement, as those in-charge of such funds simply gamble with them to make away with such money/benefits. Their families are left to ruin. People who suffer the worst of this are military and Para-military officers of low and middle cadres.

The policy process is a combination of political and technical aspects. However, in Nigeria, the relationship between the actors that are involved takes different dimensions, as ethnic politics and abuses of public administration, among others. There is no clear separation of power among the three arms/tiers of government, and between politics and public administration. This has clear

implications for the role and behaviour of elites in the policy process. Nigerian bureaucratic elite are mere agents of politicians that end up pursuing their own interests. This has affected national development efforts and plans. The concept of development here means the process that raises a nation's standard of living to the global standard, so as to free its population from subsistence agriculture, and afford the citizenry basic social amenities, education and improved health and standard of living, free from abject poverty and lack, and enable the nation effectively join the global commercial community.

Africa's political elites have driven their economies backwards. This was against the expectation of the World Bank, as revealed in its seminal study, entitled 'Can Africa claim the 21st century?' The study had projected that Asia would remain mired in poverty, while Africa would steam ahead. The opposite however happened. Moelletsi Mbeki, in his article 'NEPAD and Africa's growth', published in *The Punch* of Tuesday November 23, 2004, compared Ghana in Africa and South Korea, two countries that were at a similar level of development in the 1960's, reflecting on the World Bank report that in 1965, incomes and export per capita were higher in Ghana than in Korea. But Korea's exports per capita overtook Ghana's in 1972, and its income level surpassed Ghana's four years later. Between 1965 and 1995, Korea's exports increased by four hundred times in current dollars, while Ghana's increased only by four times, and real earnings per capita fell to a fraction of their earlier value. Mbeki said that what has gone wrong in Africa is massive mismanagement by the ruling political elite of the economic surplus generated in Africa over the years.

African Elitist and Leadership Misdeeds, as in Nigerian Elites

African leaders and elites, especially those of Nigeria that are supposed to set pace for their contemporaries of other parts of Africa, have Africa and its populace. The failure has been continuously sustained over the years. The elitist class of the pre-colonial African (Nigerian) societies comprised traditional rulers, princes and chiefs, wealthy distant traders and priests/priestesses. Thereafter, new crops of elites emerged with advent and acquisition of western education. These then new elites united in their struggles against colonialists, and earned the label 'nationalists'. But it soon became clear that they merely united because they had a common enemy – the British, their colonialists. The unity as well as patriotism collapsed soon afterwards, as the new elites began showing and struggling for their selfish interests and regional agenda.

Generally, elites make up the essential elements of the political and social life of every nation or society. The stability of a nation and its significant national growth, development and achievement largely depend on the elite class. Essentially, elite formation is legitimated by their identification with the most pervasive goals in society. Elite therefore is a nexus of need fulfilment that binds situational demands and group membership. Thus, the failure and success of national development depends on elite's effectiveness in knitting together political influence so that they respond to functional demand on the system. Successful decision making, interpretation and discourse among the elite class are fundamental and crucial elements in national growth and development. In other words, power relations among the various elites reflect the policy process in the context of the country development (Kia and Vurasi, 2013; Okoye, 2006).

By personalising the national values and giving a relentless drive to development, the elite energise the productive capacity of their society. Indeed, the quality of a nation's elites and the image which they project upon the world constitute an important source of power. It has been observed that no amount of manpower or industrial or military potential would make a nation powerful unless its elites use their resources with maximum effect. China and America development status is a function of their elite's cohesion on national development exploit (Stoessinger quoted in Kia and Vurasi, 2013). It becomes clear that Africa's ageing underdevelopment basically arises from the failure of its elites to do the needful, as done by the functional elites of nations like China and America. Rather regrettably, Nigeria is paraded with elites that regard themselves as the canonical representatives of their personal, ethnic and religious interests. The elite class in Nigeria seems to have assumed dimension that is unusual of realistic functions in development context.

A scholarly examination of the prevailing contemporary situations in Nigeria undoubtedly indicates that the country's elite class has no consistent and significant linkage to its national exploit. The formation and conduct of Nigerian's elite group have not been translated into a source of national development. This works against scholars' observation that a nation's development is largely a product of its elites (Frank, 1991). In 1974, John Purcell, an American political scientist, noted that powerful initiatives from

within the elite groups are critically important for national development (Frank, 1991). The Nigerian elite class has had little disposition to contemplate the positive use of elite advantage as strategic instrument for engineering national development. Nigeria has realised very little of her potentials because of ineffective mobilisation of these potentials by the elites. A closely related form of elite co-ordination is the establishment of formal associational bonds across ethnic groups.

It has been argued recently that the density of cross-group associational ties is the critical determinant of inter-religious relations in India during episodes of communal violence (Varshney, 2002). Varshney (2002) highlights the case of Bhiwandi, near Bombay, where a determined effort to create inter-religious peace committees in the late 1980's successfully headed off communal violence in the aftermath of the 1992 Ayodhya Mosque incident, while nearby cities were engulfed in anti-Muslim pogroms. Today, the people [the masses] have limited access to education, lack of good drinking water and adequate medical care. Similarly, millions of 'ordinary' Nigerians are known to be suffering from various deadly diseases. There is a prevalence of poor income and unemployment, street trading by children, and hazardous reproductive behaviours, to mention but a few. The depressing picture of Nigeria is worrisome. In a class society, political economy is of a class character. Thus, in a capitalist society, such as Nigeria, there is bourgeois political economy and proletariat (Marxist/Leninist) political economy, expressing the interests of respective classes. George and Thomas in Osugwe (2008) have stated that societal changes and the direction of the changes are products of economic factors. It is therefore an approach to economic problems that recognises the importance of other non-economic social facts.

In most cases thus, elite are persons or authorities that exercise the utmost control of power, resources and institutions in both public and private sectors (Marc, 2008; Kia and Vurasi, 2013; Robert, Besong, Dibie and Robert, 2016). The imperial state was organised and consolidated through ethnic-based policy of regionalism, a political formation that post-colonial Nigerian elites found difficult to depart from. Today, politics of ethnicity or regionalism has become the ideology for creating and sustaining power structure among Nigerian [African] elites. People are now made to treat ethnicity/regionalism and/or religion as relevant to their personal and collective choice of a candidate during election. In this way, ethnicity becomes a mask for class privileges (Sklar, 1967).

The dominant classes are intrinsically unable to increase production because of their dependent nature on the capitalist relation of production. These classes depend on the state devices/means to increase their benefits from the society. Part of the ethnic scheme is seen to be part of the mechanism through which the political elite maintain power and exercise influences. It is the attribute of elitist behaviour that the educated elite become the chief proponents and purveyors of parochialism (Dudley, 1973). Mamdani (2002) has noted that the transference of cultural identities to the political domain by the political elite was to hijack power by using identity as a basis for condemnation, discrimination and marginalisation. Such segregation along ethnic division is employed to discriminate not because of the superiority of a particular ethnic group over another but in competition to control the economic spoil of the nation-state.

Developmental states are usually characterised by a leadership that is strongly committed to developmental goals and which places national development ahead of personal enrichment and/or short-term political gains. Only Nnamdi Azikiwe, Umaru Musa Yar'Adua and Goodluck Ebele Jonathan are Nigerians leaders have placed national development, growth, peace, unity and fair democracy above political egoism. The success of Asian Tigers [appears to] rest(s) on successful elite cohesion. The elites group function actively in terms of national development. In these countries, internalised elites cohesion contributed greatly to national development. The elites consciously risked political gain to achieve sound economic development. A good development policy is linked with regime survival, and sound economic policy is considered good politics.

With a weak economic base, Nigerian elite class was rendered incapable of fulfilling the historical role played by its European counterpart; i.e. the development of the forces of production. The dominant class at political independence was a pathetic parody of what a dominant class is (Ihonybere, 2001). They were merely recipient of a socio-economic system and state structure created by and for the metropolitan power. The elite seize control of the centre to redeploy it rather than transform it. They were unable to subordinate the relatively high developed state apparatus. According to Alavin (1972), the relatively autonomous role of the state apparatus allows the neo-colonialist bourgeoisies pursue their class interesting post-colonial societies. Loss of political legitimacy

is a crucial indication of state failure and collapse (Murunga, 2004). The incidents of vested interests and crisis of legitimating have been attributed to the configuration of the dynamics of social class.

The elite exploited their strong position in relation to the private sector heirs of the colonial state. One of the problems that also generate tension in human beings world-wide is that people live under suppressive or repressive regimes. It is estimated that more than two billion people throughout the world are living under repressive regimes and lacking basic freedoms. In Nigeria for instance, Prince Kazeem Afegbua, in an interview with *Daily Sun*'s Onuoha Ukeh in *The Sun*'s publication of Friday, February 25, 2005, opined that five years of Nigeria's President Obasanjo's administration had been five years of anguish and pain. He observed that no matter how brutish a dictator may be, the people's will, the people's voice, the power to reject will always make a dictator to fall no matter how powerful they are, with their army, their police, Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) and what have you. What is needed in a developing economy, such as Nigeria, with market economy orientation, is transformation. Transformation remains a mirage in Nigeria, as the selfish rulers and elites merely transform themselves, their families and allies. They transform from nobody to somebody; from 'ordinary' to *special* citizens; national/local personalities and deals, transactions and connections to international ones. The foregoing does not apply to Nigerian elites and leaders alone. It is only that they seem to lead in all ills (misdeeds) against Africa, perhaps as leaders and elites of Africa's giant. As many people already know, even better, there are many African leaders that misleading their people(s) and under-developing their nations.

Westernisation and the Erosion of African Culture, Norms and Values

Traditional African societies were controlled by norms whose enforcement (sanctions) worked to maintain order in society (Nwauzor, 2014:104). This implies that contemporary African society lacks sanctions for the breach of norms and values work to maintain law and order in the society. Aseka (2010) observes that African communities are linked by shared values that are fundamental features of African identity and culture. These values and norms of communal living were subjugated by colonialism. The shift from the classical African ways and means of life, including the sources of earning/living, indigenous enterprises and economies, among others, has greatly affected Africa, particularly Nigeria, and continuously erode African culture and impoverish the masses (Robert, Besong and Dibie, 2016).

Westernisation began creeping into African socio-cultural milieu with the contact of Europeans with Africa, a consequence of Berlin Conference in the quest for imperial pilfering of African resources, and the later consolidation by the unstoppable wave of globalisation (Robert, Besong and Dibie, 2016). Arowolo (2010) stresses the trend of civilisation and that colonialism distorted and retarded the peace and tempo of cultural growth in Africa. One of the most profound consequences of colonisation has been how the political and economic rape of the colonies has also led to what sometimes seem to be an unbridgeable cultural gap between the nations that were the beneficiaries of colonisation and those that were the victims of the colonial assault. The era of colonial pillage and plunder led to the relative stagnation and often precipitous decline of traditional cultural pursuits in the colonies. Upon the subjugation and domination of Africa, the Western culture and European mode of civilisation began to thrive and out-grow African cultural heritage (Arowolo (2010; Nwauzor, 2014; Robert, Besong and Dibie, 2016; Besong, 2016). Traditional African cultural practices paved the way for foreign ways of doing things, as Africans became fully 'westernised.' Western culture is now regarded as frontline civilisation. African ways of doing things became fully 'primitive', 'archaic' and regrettably 'unacceptable' in public domain (Prah, 2009). To that end, Besong, (2016) writes,

The extreme contemporary shift from everything Nigerian/African to Western ways, culture, values and norms is decried by Robert in what he entitled 'Who becomes the owner of our treasures?' He poetically laments on the trend of western mimicry as to westernising Nigerians and Africans in post-colonial times, most especially this 21st century, championed by the elites, leaders and social institutions led by the mass media and science and technology.

Mazrui (2000) makes a case against poor developmental progress and mediocrity on the African continent, blaming it on the relegation of African values. Also, there is the inability of the elites to harness the potentials of the Western education and African values for optimal performance. In his words, 'African elites failed to match their western education with their African values in both their intellectual development and continent's progress.' He regrets that African universities are used as a vehicle of Western

influence on African culture. Lack of progress on the continent is linked to the influence of Western values. And, Ali Mazrui considers Japan's technological progress as a parameter for measuring the African continent.

African cultures, including indigenous languages, are eroded. And many African leaders, elites and institutions promote westernisation and culture imperialism. For example, on 23rd February, 1995, the Kenya government banned a pamphlet entitled, *Inooro*, published by the Catholic Diocese of Murangá. It was the only source of national news in a local language with a circulation of 15,000 copies, greatly impacted on many rural areas in Kenya. Similarly, *Mwangaza Trust*, which was producing its information on democratisation and methods of empowering the civil society in 9 local languages, was threatened with a government ban. It fought in a court of law for survival but eventually succumbed to pressure and folded up (Maathai, 1995). It is clear that African leaders and elites thwart the development of the continent with such misdeeds that work against Africa and its peoples, cultures and panorama.

The over dependence on foreign culture and aids has and manifests lots of adverse effects on the continent as well as the people(s). The over dependence of foreign aids is the next factor responsible for the international debt incurred by many African nations, including Nigeria. In *This Day* of Friday 29th October, 2004, the then Nigerian Finance Minister [of Obasanjo administration], Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, said that Nigeria was under pressure from the Paris club creditors (mainly Western creditor nations) to increase payments on the country's \$34 billion foreign debt. She wondered how the country could pay that, and urged lenders to extend the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Relief Programme to other nations such as Nigeria. According to the Minister, with per capita income of about \$300 a year, Nigeria is one of the poorest countries in the world.

However, in spite of the above, as long as the exploitation policy of the lending institutions is not redressed, the dream of international peace remains an illusion. In an article published in *The Guardian* of Monday, November 15, 2004, it was stated that 'African creditors from the 1980's devised a set of criteria for serving and rescheduling debt arrears of African countries pending when individual countries would export enough to fully defray the backlog (Okoye, 2006:17). Lame Rotimi, as quoted in Okoye (2006: 17), argues that 'the reason African leaders have been going to G8 Summits to beg for one thing or the other is because governments are simply not doing what they ought to be doing. The global economy is governed by rulers that are largely anti-Africa.' He reiterates that African leaders have a responsibility to work towards a change of rules that will promote significant and sustainable growth and development on the continent.

Corruption Misdeeds

Corruption, conceptually, operationally and otherwise, constitutes a multi-faceted misdeed against God, humanity, nations, individuals and groups. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP 1999) has lent credence to this fact, as it conceptualised corruption as the misuse of public power, office, or authority for private benefit through bribery, extortion, influence, drugs peddling, nepotism, fraud, speed money or embezzlement. Corruption is one of the cankerworms ravaging the African continent, especially the Nigerian society, in numerous ways. It takes various forms and perpetrators. Faboyede (2009) traces the root of corruption in Nigeria to the military era that subdued the rule of law, facilitated the wanton looting of public treasury, dilapidated public institutions and free speech, and instituted a secret and opaque culture in the running of government. The result has been total insecurity, poor economic management, abuse of human rights, ethnic conflicts, capital flight, etc. Poverty and the enormous wealth inequality in Nigeria are deeply rooted in the country's pervasive corruption. Corruption remains a major challenge to Nigeria, against the realisation of meaningful and sustainable socio-economic, political, cultural, technological and educational development of various phases.

A number of studies show that from 1960 till date, Nigeria as a nation has had the misfortune of being ruled by a number of corrupt political leaders. In the First Republic, corruption in the country assumed a number of dimensions ranging from massive rigging of elections, stuffing of ballot boxes, outright bribing of voters, to collaboration with law enforcement agents to further the course of one party against the other (Dode, 2007:7). Generally, corruption has caused incalculable damage to 'social and political development of Nigeria, and, indeed, of most polities in Africa (Onoja, 2000). Odo (2012: 18-20) notes that corruption has severe challenges, damages and effects to Nigerian development, administratively, politically, economically and socially.

Corruption effects on the Nigeria society since independence are grave, enormous and multifaceted. The economy, politics, public and private sectors, culture, military, government (executive, legislative, judiciary and traditional and religious institutions), social life, development, education, growth and other spheres of Nigeria are plagued by the grave effects of corruption. Odo (2012:15) elaborately writes,

Corruption is a key factor in every crisis that had rocked the Nigerian nation since independence. The sabotage of the nationalists and the demise of the First Republic; [the] fall of the Gowon regime; the overthrown vagaries and the annulment of June 12 presidential election; the derailment of the Babangida transition programme; etc. are all indices of these crises.

Obasanjo (1994) is cited in Odo (2012:2) to have noted that no society that treats public funds and property with utter disregard and cares only for personal accumulation on the principle of 'steal and go' can make progress. The corrupt practices of the political leaders and other elites are rarely punished. It is to that end that Besong, Dibia and Robert (2016) aver that corruption has been institutionalised in Nigeria, only for the oligarchs (politicians, elites and the bourgeoisie). It is observed that nothing is as destructive to a society as the rush to quick and easy money, which makes fools of those who work honestly and constructively (Frisch, 1994 cited in Odo, 2012). Similarly, Adibe (2012) cited in Odo (2012) laments,

The politicians entrusted to protect the common patrimony of Nigerians steal the country blind; law enforcement officers see or hear no evil at a slight inducement; government workers drag their feet and refuse to give their best, organized labour, including Universities lecturers in public institutions, go on indefinite strikes on a whim while journalists accept brown envelopes to turn truth on its head...

Corruption plagues every nation that indulges in it. It also generates as well as intensifies poverty (Besong, 2017). As the Centre for Advanced Social Science (CASS, 1993) has observed, the problem is that the government which is needed to defeat corruption is the core of the problem in Nigeria. It is government that has contributed mostly to lowering the moral tone of [the] society in Nigeria. It is in government that corruption thrives most, wasting resources we need, defeating all prospects of democracy and development, all sense of patriotism and turning all of us into hardened cynics with no concern for public good, no faiths [sic] in public morality or even in its possible. In her contribution, Jeje (2012:134) points out the following implications of corruption to national development:

- (i) Corruption amounts to underdevelopment.
- (ii) It poses a serious developmental challenge.
- (i) It undermines democracy and governance and legitimacy of government– this is the more reason why Nigeria is still battling with political in-capabilities, which has not been able to propel developmental strategies for constructive achievements.
- (ii) It reduces accountability and distorts representation in policy-making by elected or appointed members into government.
- (iii) In the judiciary, corruption compromises the rule of law.
- (iv) In public administration, it results in the inefficient provision of services, procedures are discarded, and resources are siphoned.
- (v) In the economic sector, corruption leads to increase in cost of business as a result of illicit payments. These dealings distort investment, quality service and infrastructure development and increase\ budgetary pressures on government.
- (vi) Significantly, corruption scares away foreign investments (investors), which is part of the indices for national development.
- (vii) The recent attempt to introduce Five Thousand Naira (₦5,000) note is a means of skyrocketing corruption by devaluing naira, increase inflation and most importantly make corruption more comfortable or convenient to perpetuate.
- (viii) The prevalence of corrupt practices breeds unruly youths and the culture of 'everything goes' among citizens. This tempers with the political, social and economic systems of the country and thus, creates a violent ridden

society which we have today as everyone would want to pursue their selfish interests at all cost, not minding who is affected.

Until Nigeria suddenly or someday becomes lucky to have the like of Nyerere, Mbeki, Nkrumah, Mandela and such others, issues like massive abject poverty, hunger/starvation, unemployment, ethnicity, religious fundamentalism, discrimination, etc. arising from corruption would continue to rise and degenerate sporadically. Until all African leaders follow legacies of African classical radical leaders and elites like Mandela, Nkrumah, Nyerere, Mbeki and the likes, development would continue to elude Africa or a mirage. Late Julius Nyerere of Tanzania retired as Kenyan President with not more than ten jackets and single personal house. The late President has to request for a three bedroom flat from the Government of Tanzania for the rest of his life. Meanwhile, his Vice-President resorted to teaching English in a community school (Magaji, 2000 cited in Odo, 2012). This is what many contemporary corrupt African leaders would not do easily. Rather, they keep vying for and moving from one higher position to another, killing their opponents and manipulating their ways into power and public offices.

Tribalism, Favouritism, Ethno-religious and Gender Discriminations

Recent research suggests that higher levels of ethnic diversity are related to low provision of local public goods across United States municipalities (Alesina et al., 1999), and that ethnically diverse societies are prone to corruption, political instability, poor institutional performance, and slow economic growth (Easterly and Levine 1997, Mauro, 1995). Ethnic divisions are at the heart of recent conflicts in Europe, South Asia, and Africa that have had enormous human costs, including the Rwandan Genocide (DesForges, 1999). Addressing ethnic divisions is likely to be particularly important for sub-Saharan Africa, which is the most ethnically diverse and poorest region in the world (Besong, Dibie and Robert, 2016; Besong, 2017; Robert, 2018). Tribalism is one of the deadliest cankerworms ravaging Africa. It seems most pronounced in Nigeria. It breeds favouritism, as many people [tend to] only help or favour their tribal siblings. Ethnic and religious discriminations are very pronounced against those out their tribal and religious folks (Dibie, Gotau and Robert, 2016; Robert, Besong and Dibie, 2016). The discrimination on tribal line extends to and intensifies the discrimination against women. Gender discrimination causes the exclusion of women from every meaningful endeavour of the patriarchal African society (Robert, 2016; Besong, 2017). The existent gender gap in the African society is a product of gender discrimination. And no nation can attain any meaningful development without the inclusion of its women in all spheres of the society and in the development processes. Sexism is thus another misdeeds thwarting Africa's ideal development.

Primordial attachment has been found to be one of the preferred bases for fragmentation of hitherto autonomous political units in the independent states of Nepal, Sri Lanka and Nigeria, when they were re-organised into their present political units. This makes it clearer that primordial attachment plays a significant role in socio-political and economic development of ethnically divided states by virtue of some unaccountable absolute import, attributed to primordial ties. In other words, it means that people have the ability to construct and deconstruct the social political and economic realities around them; hence, the comfort and sense of belonging that stems from ethnic group identity.

The Nigerian leadership is yet to produce a system of governance and functional blueprint that can exploit and unify the differences among the Nigerian peoples. Each group or everybody accuses the other of marginalisation. The structuring of the regions at the inception of Nigeria's federalism also created an anomalous situation in which each region had a dominant majority and several oppressed and exploited minorities (Osaghae, 1986). This form of ethnic structure and inequality between the dominant majority ethnic groups and the exploited minority ethnic groups has resulted to unhealthy situation and fear of domination that has manifested as threat to nationhood, either as agitation for state creation or resource control. It is no longer plausible to account for the rivalry and disunity among ethnic nationalities in Nigeria strictly in terms of cultural divergence or irrational loyalty to primordial attachment, like what it was in India, Indonesia and Latin America. Since it was there and was got rid of by the same peoples, who came to terms with their differences, unified and attained even development through collective agenda, it is also possible for African nations, like Nigeria, to do same and attain deserving ideal development.

The Abandonment of Agriculture for Oil Economy

The gross and careless abandonment and drift from agriculture to a mono oil economy has for long been adding to Nigeria's poverty rate. This is likewise with many other developing nations. Agriculture has become a mere rural venture, which most of the rural people still shy away from, resorting to rural-urban drift, as a result of which many have been smuggled out of villages and their countries and trafficked far away from home. The youths are now after white-collar jobs, which are almost non-existent, since only a few fortunate citizens of the bourgeois and elitist class can get the jobs. The government worsens it all by making agriculture seem a frustrating venture left for the poor, the illiterates and the rural dwellers alone. The poor farmers are rarely supported by the government. Farmers are only gambled with many empty promises prior to and during elections.

Agricultural programmes and projects put forward are most often mere political propaganda. They are usually devised as means of looting the national, state and local government treasuries for personal aggrandizement, all to cajole the masses that such 'unused' funds have been spent on the agricultural programmes/projects. Credits and loans are only given to those who have people or *connection* in the realm of power. Such programmes and projects are rarely executed in full. They are neither duly monitored nor sustained. Farmers still battle with crude farming methods and tools. Agricultural produce are sold at peanut prices, while the same foreign products are costlier and more patronised/consumed. Most of the products easily get damaged for lack of storage facilities. The market is nothing to write home about. Poor roads, Land Use Acts, cultural embargoes on land, herdsmen's deliberate destruction of crops with their cattle and other ruminant/grazing animals (Besong and Robert, 2019), negative policies and attitudes, lack basic facilities, illiteracy, ignorance, poverty, lack/poor funding, high cost of farming implements, white-collar jobs mentality/drive, crude oil drive and lots more adversely affect agriculture in Nigeria and the like, with little or no supposed attention paid to the ugly development (Robert, 2018; Besong, 2018).

Paradoxically, Nigeria, the largest producer of crude oil in Africa and the seventh producer in the world has now resorted to the importation of refined oil. This is due to frequent breakdown of the four refineries in the country. Indeed, it is sad and shameful that more than 50 years after crude oil was struck in Nigeria, the nation still depends on other nations for the supply of all refined products (*The Punch Monday*, Friday 22, 2010). The refined products were usually imported from countries that originally purchase the oil from Nigeria in its crude form. Acute shortage of petrol products for Nigerian consumers and the practise of importing refined petrol products have added to another round of corruption in the country (Ebgerongbe et al., 2006). Rather than bringing social and economic growth and development to Nigeria, the oil industry together with the institutions of the state have resorted to constant increase in the local pump price of the product, thereby causing untold hardship in the wake of artificial scarcity to the ordinary and average Nigerian masses. Specifically, the administration of former President Olusegun Obasanjo (1999-2007) alone who doubled as Minister of Petroleum (1999-2003) and later, the President and Senior Minister of Petroleum (2003-2007) increased the local dump price of the product, eleven consecutive times (Musa, 2009:210-211). That of the present President Buhari administration will soon be the worst in recent times, before and since Independence. He too doubles as the President and Senior Minister of Petroleum. Buhari has hiked petrol price to ₦145.00 and prevailed on Labour Unions and the masses to accept it without the attempted protest, which he restrained Labour through the Abuja Industrial Court. This is the highest fuel price so far since independence. Kerosene doubles that of fuel, running between ₦250.00 and ₦320.00, even as this is the only oil product consumed by all, the poor and 'ordinary' citizens consuming more quantity.

Since the discovery of oil in Nigeria, the country has been depending almost exclusively on it as major source of revenue. Over 80% projected and expected revenue over the years is from oil exploration activities. A glaring further demonstration of the over dependence on the earnings from the export of crude oil by the successive Nigerian administrations is the obvious classification of the source of its revenue as oil and non-oil sectors (see Obasanjo and Yar'Adua's separate budget speeches to the joint session of the National Assembly in 2007 and 2008 respectively). Agriculture which used to be the major source of national income now forms part of the insignificant 20% non-oil sector. Consequently, throughout the noted reviewed budget years, the projected revenue from oil was never met because of the volatile and dynamics of the violent crisis in the oil producing Niger-Delta communities (Ikelegbe, 2006). The Niger Delta communities suffer oil different health problems, diseases arising from industrial pollution, and environmental degradation. The insignificant compensations paid to them through their leaders and elites are misappropriated. Consequently, the Niger Delta militants rose to fight for justice or full compensations in the areas.

There is no doubt that oil is pivotal to the crisis of revenue allocation in Nigeria, while revenue allocation is central to the future of federalism in Nigeria. The immediate consequence of the over reliance on oil at the expense of the pre-oil agricultural resources of wealth generation, was the rate and magnitude, Nigeria felt the impacts of the global food crisis which hit the countries that export rice and other food items to Nigeria in 2008. The food crisis which resulted to shortage in supply was due to poor harvest resulting from natural disaster that subsequently push the prices of food items particularly rice above the ceiling price in Nigeria. *The Nation Newspaper* of Wednesday April 23, 2008 (p.24) Editorial wrote, ‘*Political Incompetence, FRSC and Slow- ways and Rice- riots*’, ‘We have money to import but no food to import. Nigeria children cannot eat oil, petrol, kerosene or dollars or excess crude accounts or foreign reserves.’

The editorial was literary referring to the Nigeria’s lost agricultural production capacity. Before the discovery of oil, Nigeria was known for many agricultural produce like cotton, ground-nut, cocoa, palm oil and cassava which were mainly produced in commercial and exportable quantities by the three major ethnic groups: Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo, representing the Northern, Western and Eastern regions of the federation (*The Punch*, April 24, 2008; 24). However, after the discovery of oil which is concentrated in the oil rich Niger-Delta region of the country, the country shifted from being a major exporter of these farm produce to being a major importer. The former Minister of Agriculture and Water Resources, Dr Sayyadi Ruma disclosed that ‘about \$3 billion was spent by Nigeria on food importation annually (*The Nation Newspaper*, Friday, 30May, 2008:25).

Conversely, however, other countries that took cue from her agricultural wealth, like Malaysia and Cote d’Ivoire, have become world majors in palm oil and cocoa respectively. Jettisoning agriculture has, with the benefit of hindsight, proved counter-productive. Exploring alternative vital sectors like revenue generation through voluntary tax compliance, transparent governance and vigorous development of agricultural and manufacturing sectors with oil wealth as well as proper utilisation are imperative. As Ukiwo (2009:2) observes, Nigeria oil industry has remained an enclave economy since over 50 years with little or no linkage to the regional economy. Oil exploration brought Nigeria into a mono-cultural economy and the abandonment of the product and export of cash crops such as palm oil, cocoa and ground-nut, the major foreign exchange earners before the discovery of oil.

The concentration on the oil sector and the gross neglect of other sectors of the economy, especially agriculture, limits the ability of the country to be self-sufficient in food production and as well thwarts its development. The *Punch* Editorial of Thursday, April 24 (2008:14) explains that over 90 percent of Nigeria’s foreign exchange earning still come from oil. Eight-two percent (₦4.2tn worth) of the total revenue (₦5.3tn) earned in 2007 came from oil and gas. The editorial further notes that ‘all tiers of governments in Nigeria now rely exclusively on oil revenue to pay salaries and meet other recurrent expenses.’ The *Punch* editorial aptly describes the situation that:

As in the case with other nations that rely on natural resources, Nigeria has not experienced total peace a nation; it fought a 30 month civil war partly because of oil. Because of the struggle to control the distribution of oil money, the nation’s politics has become volatile and polluted. The common refrain when people loot the till is, “is it not oil money?” The country’s values, to say the least have been distorted. The problem of poverty is worsening (*The Punch*, April 24, 2008:14).

Conclusion

So far, this paper has explored, at least in fair details, the leadership misdeeds against Africa and its peoples, which continuously thwart Africa’s development. Although the colonialists had laid the foundation for Africa’s underdevelopment so it would remain at the mercy and covert or indirect political control of the West, Africans themselves, especially African dubious, greedy, corrupt and incompetent leaders and elites, are to blame for the Africa’s development dilemma since independence. Africa’s ideal development that would have been attained by now remains a mirage because of the sustained and continuous misdeeds of African leaders and elites and the neo-colonialists, complemented by the populace who have imbibed their bad leaders’ and neo-colonialists’ legacies and dogmas.

The misdeeds are numerous. These include failed leadership/bad governance, elitism, corruption, heightened insecurity, paralysed democracy, god-fatherism, obnoxious policies, impoverishment of the populace and denial of access to basic human needs and

social amenities; tribalism, favouritism and nepotism; illiteracy and ignorance; westernisation and the erosion of indigenous cultures and excess use of foreign languages; poor diplomacy and inadequate international co-operation; poor technology cum technical-know-how; negative effects of globalisation and the international market on Africa and international debt; population explosion, ethnic and religious crises, sour intergroup relations, etc. However, some are imbedded in and thus discussed under the major ones that form the sub-headings of the work.

Recommendation

The following recommendations have been made:

- Patriotism and attitudinal change by all and sundry, and the rejection of dubious and incompetent leaders and elites are the major ways out.
- Contemporary African leaders should start leading by examples and as well imbibe the legacies of their altruistic predecessors, like Mandela, Nkrumah, etc. They should reduce the reliance on the West, international aids and loan and so on.
- It is high time the masses began fighting against oppressive leadership and the misdeeds against them, which also thwart Africa's development. The masses must drop their differences, unite and struggle for freedom as well as the installation of true democracy.
- The citizenry need not resort to being like or worse than their dubious leaders and elites. There is the dire need for wide sensitisation.
- Neo-colonialism should best be discouraged and kicked out by Africans themselves in all regards.
- The West should limit their misdeeds against Africa and its peoples. Their aids should not be politicised.
- Discrimination of all forms should be outlawed in Africa, and be backed with strong operational legislations. While criminalising the discrimination against women in the African society, the existent gap between them and men should be bridged.

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