

Leadership Flaws and Curse in Nigeria; The Military Perspective

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Abstract

The problems of every nation is determined by the quality and vision of her leaders. Since independent, Nigeria is one of the few unfortunate nations of the world devoid of quality, competent and effective, even purposeful leaders who will have the required skills, features, value and ideas of turning her great natural potentials into real economic and political power. The absence of valuable leaders with the required skills undoubtedly hike the crisis and slowed down the pace of national development. It is also necessary to understand that, bad leadership coupled with improper handling of the nation, snowballed the challenges and problem facing Nigeria including the strive for nation building and national integration since independence. The paper emphasis on keynote about leadership by prolific figures in Nigerian political regime, while examining common leadership flaws taking into consideration the military perspective in Nigeria.

Keywords: Leadership, Flaws, election, Dictatorship, Military

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a process by which an elected person has the effect on others to achieve specific objective, and like wise endowed with the ability to control a designated group or organization in such a way that makes it more fused and united. Leaders are expected to carry out this process carry by applying their leadership attributes, such as their experience, skills, knowledge etc.¹ The concept of leadership is continuous, process of influencing behavior, because one of the quintessential attributes of leadership is the mutual relations between a leader and his followers. One of the major and important role of a leader is that he influence the behavior of individuals or group of individuals around him to achieve particular goal. Dynamism of leadership cannot be left out, which is so essential when we desired to study the concept. Considering the dynamic process of

leadership, it can also been seen as relational process involving interactions among leaders, members, etc. Good leaders are made not born. If you have the desire and willpower, you can become an effective leader.²

In the managerial field and practices, leadership development is an important issues. Considering the important aspects, it involves developing the good qualities and attitudes of leader in managers which would help them to have clear vision into the future and to bring necessary improvement pertaining to different leadership styles.³

On the other hand, leadership Flaws is when a leader exhibits lack or poor working etiquette, a lack of drive and intergrity in his team, this which could lead to a disorganized workplace or even a state of anarchy. These types of unprofessional working etiquette

¹<https://www.google.com/search?q=the+concept+of+leadership&oq=the+concept+of+leadership&aqs=chrome..69i57j0i512l4.6609j0j4&client=ms-android-transsion-infinix-rev1&sourceid=chrome-mobile&ie=UTF-8>

²<https://www.economicdiscussion.net/management/leadership/what-is-leadership/32116>

³ Ibid

unraveld the weakness of a leader and hence, leadership weakness, this especially if a team leader fails to acknowledge and work on improving their weaknesses.⁴

It's so glaring that Nigeria is blessed with human, materials, and natural resources, but faced with the problems of having a purposeful, creative, and innovative leadership, hence her natural and material resources were left unharvested since leadership based on cultural values needed to achieve this feats of success so that he country could seive out of the dangerous situation it has found itself. However, due to leadership failure, corruption, and bad governance, the country is still underdeveloped.⁵

Since the flag of political independence in 1960, Nigerian leaders and their regimes have been deeply engrossed in excessive acts of corruption and bad governance. Though, every means has been put into consideration by Nigeria Political Leaders to take over power to the extent of manipulating election process in 1962, manipulation of census figures in 1963, violence, thuggery, tribalism, ethnic sentiments etc. Relegation of public interest, malpractices of all forms, crimes of every description, mendacity, lack of candour, readiness to cheat, grabbing, ethnic and sectional inclinations are the only game in town. All these have hastened social dislocation, insecurity, violence, abject poverty, socio-economic and political instability. National integration has been elusive, yet it is needed to achieve the universal goal of development, that is, the pursuit of people's material welfare and well-being. A society that is unjust and devoid of equity and equality will inherently be unstable.⁶

The Military Dictatorship in Nigeria

The military rule in Nigeria was the period when the Members of the Nigerian Army siezed power from 1966 to 1998. The military regime rose up to prominence in political power through the tactics of coup d'états. Since independence from 1960, and becoming republican state in 1963, Nigeria had experienced series of military coup and counter-coup, (with an interregnum from 1979 -1983), up to 1999.⁷

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https://www.google.com/search?q=what+is+leadership+flaws&client=ms-android-transion-infinix-rev1&sxsrf=AOaemvJKjffbidISHI7Q1n6LO1k6L6-xg%3A1632571255643&ei=dw9PYb_sJoexUuuwYAO&oq=what+is+leadership+flaws&gs_lcp=ChNtb2JpbGUtZ3dzLXdpei1zZXJwEAMyBQghEKABMgUIIRCgAToECAAQRzoHCCMQ6gIQJoECCMQJzoFCAAQkQI6BQgAEIAEOggIABCABBCxAzoECAAQZoHCAAQsQMqQzoNCAAQsQMqQIQRhD5AToECAAQCjoHCAAQsQMqQjoKCAAQgAQQhwIQFDoGCAAQFhAeUIlbWN1wYLKAAWgBcAF4BIAB0wSIAbVqkgELMi0xNi4xNy41LjKYAQCgAQGwAQ_IAQJAAQE&scient=mobile-gws-wiz-serp

⁵ C. J. Igbokwe, "Leadership, Corruption and Governance in Nigeria: Issues and Categorical Imperatives" AFRREV, VOL. 9(2), S/NO 37, APRIL, 2015.

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Ugorji, Basil. From Cultural Justice to Inter-Ethnic Mediation: A Reflection on the Possibility of Ethno-Religious Mediation in Africa. (Outskirts Press.2012) p. 183.

The military rule in Nigeria began with the incursion of the first military coup d'etat of 1966 which was organized and executed by a small group or band of

revolutionary Nigeria armed nationalist, the initial phase of the coup was that it began as a small rebellion military cell under Emmanuel Ifeajuna, which included Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu who was the major actor of the coup attempt, which the involvement of five other army majors namely; Timothy Onwuatiegwu, Chris Anuforo, Don Okafor, Adewale Ademoyega and Humphrey Chukwuka, it operated as a small secret movement of junior officers after Nigeria had gained her independence from the period between 1960 to 1966. "The plot received support from left-wing intellectuals, who rejected conservative elements in society, like the traditional establishment of Northern Nigeria, and sought to overthrow the First Nigerian Republic".⁸

Coups and Counter Coups during the Military regime

There have been a large number of successful and failed military coups in Nigeria since the country's independence in 1960. A military coup is the sudden, illegal, and often violent change of government either by the civil society or an armed group. Nigeria had witnessed and had an uninterrupted military coup and counter-coup between 1966 and 1999 where the army held power apart from a short-lived return to democracy between 1979 to 1983.⁹

At the first coup, Major General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi was made the Head of the Federal Military Government of Nigeria, after serving for six months, there was a counter-coup of 1966 which he was overthrown and assassinated The coup was reported to have been carried out mostly Igbo army officers, the likes of Major Kaduna Nzeogwu, Major Emmanuel Ifeajuna and others.¹⁰ The Prime Minister Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the Sardauna of Sokoto Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Premier of the Western Region Samuel Akintola, the finance minister Festus Okotie-Eboh among others were the casualties of the coup.¹¹

The same year of 1966, General Yakubu Gowon succeeded Aguiyi-Ironsi and established a Supreme Military Council. He held power until July 1975, when he was overthrown in a bloodless coup.¹² It's popularly known as the Nigerian counter-coup of 1966, in July, saw Major-General Gowon succeed Ironsi.¹³

⁸ Bah, Abu Bakarr. Breakdown and Reconstitution: Democracy, the Nation-state, and Ethnicity in Nigeria (1st pbk. ed.). Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005., p. 108.

⁹ Nigeria - RETURN TO MILITARY RULE". countrystudies.us. Retrieved 29 May 2020.

¹⁰ First, Ruth (1970). Power in Africa. New York: Pantheon Books. ISBN 0-394-44118-4. OCLC 118213.

¹¹ Omoigui, Nowamagbe. "Special Branch Report: "Military Rebellion of 15th January 1966". Gamji.com. Retrieved 1 May 2020.

¹² Gould, Michael. The Struggle for Modern Nigeria: The Biafran War 1967-1970. (I.B.Tauris,2011) p. 116.

¹³ Daly, Samuel Fury Childs, 1986-. A history of the Republic of Biafra : law, crime, and the Nigerian Civil War. Cambridge, United Kingdom.

Brigadier (later General) Murtala Mohammed succeeded Gowon. However his regime was shortlived in February 1976, he was assassinated by Buka Suka Dimka and others in a violent coup attempt. General Olusegun Obasanjo escape death who then succeeded Mohammed as head of state. Obasanjo handed power to the elected Shehu Shagari, the Supreme Military Council was dissolved ending the military regime and establishing a Nigerian Second Republic.

The Second Republic ended in the 1983 Nigerian coup d'état and was succeeded by Muhammadu Buhari, who was established a new Supreme Military Council of Nigeria as Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. "Buhari ruled for two years until there was another coup d'état in 1985 when he was overthrown by General Ibrahim Babangida".¹⁴

In 1985, General Ibrahim Babangida was announced as the President and Commander in Chief of Armed Forces he created his own constitutive act named the Armed Forces Ruling Council. Babangida promised a return of democracy when he seized power, However, his rule was the longest serving, he ruled Nigeria for eight years when he temporarily handed power to the interim head of state Ernest Shonekan in 1993. General Sani Abacha overthrew Interim National Government that same year (1993) and appointed himself Chairman of the Provisional Ruling Council of Nigeria.

Trend and patterns of failures

The Nigerian military began its involvement with governance on January 15, 1966, when junior workers made a bid for power, which terminated the Tafawa Balewa's government and inadvertently brought General Aguiyi- Ironsi to power. For him, it is generally recognized that the involvement of the Nigerian military in governance has done more harm than good. However, contemporary or the 21st-century Nigerian politicians elected into different offices today, holding one leadership position seems to have the tendencies of squandering opportunities of "democratic rebirth and regeneration".¹⁵

Military rule in Nigeria government exhibit military dictatorship. It's a known fact that the characteristics of military dictatorship is coup d'état, counter-coup, lack of respect to fundamental human right, lack of respect to the rule of law, and suspension of the constitution which is often replaced with military decrees. An example is the annulment of June 12 elections in 1993 and in November the same year, the interim government under Ernest Shonekan was overthrown by General Sani Abacha, he seized the control of the government in a bloodless coup. The Abacha regime imposed military administration on the entire country and to make sure he has overall authority, he dissolved all elected governments and legislatures at the state and local levels especially those who were against his seizure of the state political power.

In comparing the regime of Abacha who ruled from 1993 to 1998, with General Babangida regime. While abangida could be described as an intelligent dictator, one with vicious capacity to

convinced his victims that he is the best choice and product when it comes to politics, even though he was strangling them, Abacha on the other hand, "was crude and vicious."¹⁶ According to Odey (2007), Abacha was a "functional illiterate... but had a superlative degree of the type of debased military mind that was needed to plan and carry out the atrocities he committed against his country".

It's also necessary to understand here that in an attempt by Abacha's regime to legitimate his rule, he made plans to convene a National Constitution Conference to decide Nigeria's future form of government. Election for the proposed Conference was held, though the turnout was very low. In the same month, the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO) was formed to coordinate and focus the efforts of democracy groups. On the anniversary of the annulled election, Abiola reasserted his claim to the presidency. Odey (2007) further stated that "Abiola was arrested and imprisoned but in less than two weeks, on late June of 1993, the Constitutional Conference convened in Abuja, triggering off new protests, more arrests, and a debilitating strike by oil workers". The strike, which seriously reduced oil exports and paralyzed the domestic economy, the strike was joined by university and bank employees. In early September, the strike was finally broken by the government.¹⁷

Hence, the military incursion into the Nigerian Political Administration has a devastating effect on its leadership and managerial style. In this, one can conclude to say that the military is the problem. The military took over a system to perform the job they are most unqualified to do, a job which was against their role as a professional defense unit. The political instability, economic downturn and the absence of good governance in the country after the many years of military intervention made the elected civilian leaders to also have the inclination of political leadership as a golden opportunity for money laundering, in essence many people goes into politics today, to capture state power as the strategy of becoming rich.¹⁸ Ofebe (2005) critically examined thus, "military leaders who get more corrupt and looted the national treasury much more than their predecessors whom they overthrew on the ground of corruption. He singles out Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha as the worst examples of corrupt leaders of military regimes in the country".¹⁹

In his critique concerning the military leadership in the country, Amaucheazi (1980) has a different view, compared to what others scholars had written, in his view he stated that "...even while in power, the army in Nigeria has not been as autocratic as in many other countries, but had rather from the start involved the civilians

¹⁶ J. Odey,. (2007). Another madness called election 2007. (Vol.1). Enugu: Snaap.

¹⁷ J. Odey,. (2007). Another madness called election 2007. (Vol.1). Enugu: Snaap.

¹⁸ U. Ifediba, . Military Dictatorship: The Impact of a Tragedy. (1st ed.) Ekwulobia: Godamset.2003

¹⁹ Ofoebe, C. (2005). Scramble for Nigeria. Enugu: New Generation Books

¹⁴ https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_dictatorship_in_Nigeria

¹⁵ <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/og.v15i1.7s>

in decision-making and policy implementation."²⁰ Jega (1996) however opines that "the impact of prolonged military rule on Nigeria has not been consequential to the present crisis in the country"²¹. We must, however, acknowledge the difference in events and time between the 1980 of Amaucheazi's and the 1996 of Attahiru's here. Amaucheazi's 1980 was not only a time when civilians were in power but just after what appeared to be a humane military regime handed over power in strict compliance with the 1979 timetable it set by 1976 when it came into power after the overthrow of Murtala Mohammed.

The rule of law was not given its credence under the military regime, one of the constitutive act of the law was that all citizens including the heads of state are subjected under the law without fear or favour. According to the Oputa Panel Report, The court was not allowed to performed its duties, the court which ought to be seen as the saviour and last line of defense for the masses, the fundamental rights of the court as laid down in the constitution was suspended due to the nature of the military rule, the court was crippled in carrying out its day-to-day activities willfully, and was turned into a toothless bulldog. The court found it difficult to perform its basic functions of upholding the fundamental human rights of the people under the military dictatorship, lawlessness, and disregard for the rule of law became the order of the day. For Eregha "one important feature of the leadership during the military regime is flagrant violation of human rights and judicial orders. They have no respect of law and the constitution which is the supreme authority of a state."²²

Corroborating the issues on high rate of corruption in the polity, since Nigeria gained her independence in 1960, most Nigerian leaders have not clearly demonstrated sense of genuine national development. almost all of non is left out, Nigerian Military regime had more devastating effect on the nation's economy, ranging from money laundering, mismanagement of human and natural resources with absence or lack of necessary measure to curtailed the situation. Each of the armed ruling Forces are possessive, selfish, callous, greedy, and secretive with the absence of transparency and accountability in their administration and management of common and collective wealth. For example, the official figures recently published by the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBS), capture and underscore the paradox of the Nigerian situation. The database figures show the large inflow of proceeds from oil and the very sharp contrast between available resources and the living conditions of the citizens. The Bureau's report like many others has draw public attention to the hydra-

headed and repugnant virus of mismanagement and leadership failure.²³

It is along this line of though, an insight that an estimated \$380 billion of the country's collective wealth was stolen by its post-independence leaders: about two-thirds of all economic aids given to Africa during this period. Also, the regime of Ibrahim Babangida was unable to account for \$12.4 billion of missing oil revenues that were part of a windfall from the 1991 Gulf War. Corruption is an evil wind that affects everyone and retard societal progress. While there are several theories that explain its prevalence in society, the point to emphasize is that it has become a pattern and standard of living in Nigeria. This explains why it has been difficult to combat its rising profile.²⁴

Another trend and pattern of failure of the military rule was on economic ground which were disastrous,, the traditional agricultural-based economy was abandoned- one of the basic areas where Nigeria could generate more revenue, instead Nigeria became extremely dependant on exports of oil "which due to frequent fluctuations in oil prices led to an unstable economy".²⁵ The Babangida regime of was characterised by "gross incompetence and unbridled, waste and mismanagement, the privatisation of public office and public resources, the neglect of non-oil sectors and misplaced priorities".²⁶ Essentially the focus was on the private sector as opposed to the good of the nation. With the result of the military economy policy grounded on both political and economic instability it was recorded that more than "45% of foreign-exchange earnings were going into debt servicing and there was very little growth. This led to a rise in poverty, crime, child abuse, disease, institutional decay, and urban dislocation".²⁷ The instability caused by the military economic policies was one of the causes of the consistent pattern of coups experienced during the military regime.

Conclusion

Some leaders are considered great, some good, some just good enough. Some may unwittingly destroy morale and inhibit organizational development. It is unlikely that any leader sets out with the intention to be non-effective. This poses a challenge in exploring the principle behind the fact that there are leaders who turn out to be downright destructive. If the measure of a good and effective leader is the propensity to attract willing followers, could it be that bad leaders simply fail at being able to adapt their leadership approach to suit prospective followers' needs? ²⁸

²³ C. J. Igbokwe. Leadership, Corruption and Governance in Nigeria: Issues and Categorical Imperatives. AFRREV, VOL. 9(2), S/NO 37, APRIL, 2015. p. 48

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ Max Siollun, Oil, Politics and Violence: Nigeria's Military Coup Culture (1966-1976), (New York: Algora Publishing, 2009), p. 2.

²⁶ Julius O. Ihonvbere, 'Are Thing's Falling Apart? The Military and the Crisis of Democratisation in Nigeria' in The Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol. 34, No. 2, (1996) p. 196.

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ D. A. Robinson, "Leadership Flaws and Organizational Stages" American Journal of Management, vol 17 (4), 2017

²⁰E. Amucheazi, (1980). Colonial Heritage and the Problems of National Development in Reading in Soil Sciences: Issues in National Development(ed). Enugu: Fourth Dimension.

²¹ A. Jega, (1996). The Political Economy of Nigerian Federalism: 1960-1995. Abuja: National Council on Intergovernmental Relations.

²² E. Eregha, and Agbro, E.Elements of Government and Politics of African States. Benin City: Eregha.(2005)

Ongoing improvement is an essential part of every organization's opportunity to grow, yet it is a challenging puzzle to manage transitions without turmoil and considerable emotional stress. Although organizational change can be top-down, lateral, or bottom-up, the leader remains the principal driver of organizational renewal, by virtue of their initiation and commitment to purposeful adaptations that influence the organizational culture.²⁹

Notwithstanding the need for consistency, effective organizational development also requires edging those dimensions ever forward toward the next step, organically tilting the bias gently in favor of a forward and upward projection. An organization's progress must be congruent with its strategic intent. Herein lies the paradox that few leaders can manage, as each order requires distinct sets of managerial processes, which, for as much as they must be mastered and consistently practiced, cannot be 'cast in concrete' as, by definition, their purpose is to be superseded and thereby rendered obsolete as the organization progresses. It is the complex inter-relationship between strategic intent, degree of orderliness, stepwise advancement, and consistency of managerial processes, that demands leadership orchestration and coordination.³⁰

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²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ Ibid