Examination of Nigerian Leaders and Style of Governance

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ABSTRACT

Leadership is regarded as an outcome of awareness. Similarly, a leader is expected to apply diverse mental tactics that affect the reactions of a group to the environment they exist in. However, a typical Nigerian politician regards his chance at leadership and governance as an opportunity to enrich himself and better the lots of his kith and kin. This paper attempted to review the idea of leadership, governance and the mentality of the Nigerian leader. The paper further stressed the difference between the general use of the concept of leadership and its meaning as it pertains to governance. It concludes that a leader must understand that he/she is a servant of the people, and must show an attitude of servitude, as this will enhance good governance and the overall development of the Nigerian people.
Keywords: Governance, Leadership, Mentality, Nigeria, Power

INTRODUCTION

The term 'governance' simply means "managing or taking care of something.' This can be interpreted to mean managing the affairs of a group or society. A good government, in this case could consist of a set of inter-related positions exercising coercive power that assures on behalf of the citizenry, a worthwhile pattern of good results while avoiding an undesirable pattern of bad situation, by taking decisions that define expectations, grant power and verify the performance of offices [1]. Politics provides the platform on which governance as a process operates, for instance, during elections the citizens choose the candidates with expectations and the intention to judge their political activities, they may gain power through political action and they access performance through political behaviours of candidates. From this point of view, the idea of governance becomes practical in a scenario as large as a nation, a state, organisations, or any form of human engagement activity.

Governance

According to the World Bank, governance implies the exercise of political authority and the use of institutional resources to manage societal problems [2]. From another dimension, governance can be defined as the use of institutions, structures of authority and even collaboration to allocate resources and coordinate or control activity in society or the economy. Governance has also been defined as the 'proper functioning of institutions and their acceptance by the public'. Governance invokes the efficacy of government and the achievement of consensus by democratic means.

Questions such as what constitutes good leadership are usually prone to impressionistic answers, however there is no consensus on the method for making line distinctions, or ranking African nations according to those questions [3]. Transparency International provides an annual list of global countries by degree of corruption, but its rankings are based entirely on subjective inputs from in country's corporate organisations and leaders; information are provided by responses to questionnaires. Equally trying to measure corruption, the biennial African competitiveness report surveys levels of corruption within each African country based on subjective responses to surveys.

On this note, good governance can be regarded as when the performance of a leader can be quantified by how much of domestic goods his society had produced

within a specific period, that is, evidence of dividends of democracy that exist in the society. States exist primarily to deliver political goods to their citizens [4]. The key political dividend that is always expected of a state is the provision of security of persons and property. Other political benefits include a code of law and a method of mediating civil and criminal conflicts between persons; the construction and maintenance of physical and communication infrastructure; a system of schooling young people in basic literacy and advanced education; a preventive and curative medical regime, economic opportunity, including monetary and fiscal stability, the creation of a currency, and a framework for growth; and responsibility for safeguarding a nation's environment [5].

Leadership

There is need to state that the differences in leadership pattern should be expressed quantitatively, hence, using performance as a substitution for leadership quality; however, the outputs quantified would of necessity have to be of the produce of those of a leader's country during the period of his/her leadership [6]. In order to measure the performance of a leader, it is critical to include the matrix of only those substitute indicators which include those influenced by the actions of leaders and their perception. There is need to attune their output, that is, their various achievements, and because the attributes of leadership are usually aligned with charisma, style and intrinsic capability, which has to do with the psyche of the individual and his perception of the society. A positive leader can be identified by the following pointers: annual average GDP growth per capita, average levels of inflation, budget deficits as a percentage of GDP, gross domestic investment as a percentage of GDP, foreign direct investment inflows, attractiveness to tourist, levels of infant mortality, public expenditures on education as a percentage of GDP, number of enrolled students as a percentage of those eligible, telephone lines per capita amount of internal conflict, and regime of stability and instability [7].

Leadership encompasses an element of vision except in cases of involuntary leadership and often in cases of traditional leadership. Accordingly, a vision provides direction. A leader can have one or more visions of the future to aid them to move a group successfully toward a particular goal. A vision, for effectiveness, should possess the following qualities:

i.   Appear as a simple, but vibrant image in the mind of the leader;
ii.   Describe a future state, credible and preferable to the present state;
iii.   Act as a bridge between the current state and a future optimum state;
iv.   Appear desirable enough to energize followers; and
v.   Succeed in speaking to the followers at an emotional or spiritual level [8].

This means that in order for leadership to occur, the leaders must communicate the vision to others (that is the followers) in such a way that the followers adopt the vision as their own. Leaders must not just see the vision themselves; they must have the ability to get others to see it too. There are so many ways of achieving this objective, which includes the following technique: narrations, metaphors, symbolic actions, leading by examples, incentives, and penalties.

Types of leadership

Leadership is a quality a person may have. One can categorize the exercise of leadership as either actual or potential.

i.   Actual – giving guidance or direction
ii.   Potential – the capacity or ability to lead.

The Perception of Leadership

One of the differentiating factors between management and leadership is the ability or even necessity to inspire. A leader, one who can instill passion and direction in an individual or group of individuals, will be using mindset to affect that group either consciously or unconsciously [9]. Those who seem to be 'natural leaders' and effectively inspire groups without

really knowing the strategies or tactics used are considered charismatic leaders. The conscious leaders on the other hand, apply a variety of mental tactics that affect the 'reactions' of a group to the environment they exist in.

In the words of Julius Nyerere, governments bear the final responsibility for the state of the nation – its internal and external peace, and the wellbeing of its people [6]. It is the distinction between the words 'governance' and 'government' which draws attention to the reality that despite its enforcement agencies, government is not the sole determinant of whether those responsibilities are fulfilled, for there are always other forces within a country which, in practice, can help or hinder the effectiveness of a government, and which it, therefore, ignores at its peril.

This factor that directs resources toward goal attainment is called leadership. This factor influences and determines the direction of all activities of an organization or group [2]. The perception of leadership involves 'understanding of people's interrelationships to accomplish the objectives of organization.' The symbolic leader is regarded as one who has important personality traits, the suggestion here is that leaders are born, this personality that is believed to be born is also regarded as charismatic and such leaders have traits such as dependability, friendliness, enthusiasm, forcefulness or persuasiveness [7]. The leader becomes idealized as a prestige figure with almost unlimited powers and with none of the shortcoming found in their leaders, the leader is regarded as a symbol than an individual personality.

The formal leader is that person who occupies a position in an organization or holds a specific position or placed in a position of hierarchy in a formal organization. This recognition will disappear when the individual vacates the office [4]. The functional leader is a leader based on the amount of his functionality; that is, evaluating leaders based on the amount of contribution they can make or they have made to the well being of their society. All managers introduce a style of leading or motivating subordinates. Leadership style can be regarded as a pattern of behaviour geared toward interacting organizational and personal interest with the aim of achieving an objective. The three types are as follows:

i. The autocratic leader: the leader determines policy and assigns task to members without consulting with the people

ii. While the democratic leader: the leader involves the group in policy making

iii. The laissez faire leader: this leader grants complete freedom to members; and in such a situation the leader makes no effort to interfere with or participate in the course of events determined by others.

The Nigerian Leader

The average Nigerian leader is not elected but appointed by the group of politically powerful individuals as such when an individual finds himself in the corridors of power and leadership, he or she is confronted with either serving the power that installed him into power at the detriment of the entire society or serving the people trying to legitimize his leadership at the detriment of his political godfathers as have been experienced in the states of Anambra, Edo and Oyo, for instance [1].

The Nigerian leader is challenged by the reality of ethnicity and ethnic sentiments, as such at every point of governance mediocrity is a way of governance in Nigeria and this can also explain the high rise of ethnic and religious related violence in Africa which can also account for leadership seat tight situation in Africa [8]. The average Nigerian leader is naturally confronted with the thoughts of acquiring public wealth for both himself, relations, loved ones, friends and colleagues at work place and most especially for the group he represents, this is the predicament of the average civil servant, workers or politician as the case may be. In such situation, the newly appointee is confronted with fraudulent

thinking of how to make or enrich and enhance himself, his family and his community with funds, and resources meant for the other purposes for personal enrichment to the detriment of the larger society [2].

Leadership Challenges in Nigeria

The challenges of leadership in Nigeria are intertwined [9]. However, the problem of ethnicity has eaten so deep into the fiber of Nigeria. Accordingly, it is worth mentioning that Nigerian has never experienced true democracy. What this connotes is that Nigerians have never had the opportunity of choosing their leaders, rather, leaders are usually appointed [4].

A typical example is the case of Chris Ngige and Chris Uba, his political god father. Considering the complex and diverse socio-cultural nature of the Nigerian people, an individual's opportunity to the corridors of leadership and power/control is optimally utilized to the detriment of its entire citizenry at large, in such situation every other vice that goes with corruption tend to exist. The national cake syndrome is an attribute amongst individuals who intend to get to power or control of governance with the intention of bettering their individual and selfish interest, against the interest of the general masses.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION

This paper is focused on the mentality of Nigerian leaders who see their chance to power as an avenue to better their lot and their family/ethnic group, believing that the first assignment in the corridors of power is to acquire as much as possible and treat the larger masses as servants. Thus, this paper recommends that Nigerian leaders should be made to undergo a nationalistic orientation, or modification of their perception of leadership, governance, and government, they are meant to properly understand the true meaning of leadership. Leadership is a call to service; hence, a leader must understand that he/she is a servant of the people, and must show an attitude of servitude. This will enhance good governance and the overall development of the Nigerian people.

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