

Poor Leadership, Indiscipline & Corruption Undermines Peace in Northern Nigeria

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Abstract

The study focuses on leadership and corruption as an impediment to peace, stability and development in northern Nigeria. It posits that since Nigeria got her independence in 1960, the succession crises arising from the inability of the political parties, Politicians and elites' refusal to abide by the rules of elections as well as the verdicts (results) has mostly ended in crises and violence. In view of this development, some groups see this as unacceptable. As a result, this had encouraged some groups to the formation of political, religious, social and ethno-political groups in places like Jos, Bauchi, Taraba, Nasarawa, Kaduna, Yobe, Gombe, Kano and Borno. Among this groups, are Kalare in Gombe, Yan-daba in Kano, ECOMOG in Borno and "Akasa a tsare" in Bauchi among others. In conducting the study, the researchers relied solely on secondary data and personal

Introduction

Nigeria has been described as diversity and complexities of ethno-cultural, social and religious groups co-existing of interaction with one another living in peace side by side since and before independent. This was attributed due to the good leadership, there were lesser corruption, high employment opportunities and as well as sense of security in the first and second Republics as the roads then were described as not only good but also very safe. As such, people could travel freely in the night and be confident of their safety. However, shortly after then, came the third and fourth Republics characterized by culture of institutionalized corruption, greed, political thuggery, indiscipline and violence. This was contributed to high level of unemployment, poor government policy and implementation thereby led to crimes and criminalities across the north and Nigeria at large. This marked the beginning and evolution of political, social and economic instability in the region and the country at large after the Nigerian civil war of 1967-1970.

It was during this period, that things began to deteriorate due to indiscipline, corruption and frustrations caused by lack of justice, economic inequality and poor leadership believed to be responsible for many cases such as bomb explosions, mindless killings, kidnapping, assassinations, robbery and other political and social vices, (Sunday Trust 2011). The truth about Nigeria Hyginus (2011) concluded was that "most Nigerians lives in abject poverty due to injustices meted out on them by their fellow countrymen and women who stole or wasted their opportunities through corruption and leadership inefficiency. Due to the foregoing, corruption and inefficiency he continued, have led to the unprecedented level of poverty, unemployment and terrorism. Apparently, today we are all witnesses to Nigeria's 'growth without development' and lack of political will to address the issue squarely by our successive administrations.

Today, there is growing level of instability and insurrection leading to terrorism in parts of the country which contributes to the menace of bomb blasts and targeted killings, which defy solutions and regrettably there are no sign from the appropriate authorities to end the violence or visible efforts at addressing the roots causes of the problem. According to Peter (2011) some of the government policies are believed to be responsible for triggering these menaces.

In line with this position, Chinua Achebe (1985), in his book "the trouble with Nigeria" put it that the problem of Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership," he concluded that these problems were created as a result of widening gaps that has existed between ideals and reality in the realm of social injustice in the country.

In addition, the political economy promotes inequality than solve it and even when it appears, that efforts are made to implement social justice. However, what actually obtained in practice is, individuals are enriched while the majority of the citizenry are deprived. Instead, he further noted that because of the outflow of the resources perpetuated by a few, there have not been ample resources to provide the social service but also too little and too late. The implementation of social justice has been fraught with certain discriminatory policies culminating in its politicization and commercialization. Conclusively, this has created a permanent scar of social, economic and political injustice between the rich and the poor and between the led and the leaders in the region. As a result, those who do not have it want to have it, often by whatever means, trained themselves and learned how to shoot and bought themselves a lot of weapons to prosecute it.

Similarly, it is also an undisputable fact that peace is a state of harmony characterized by lack of violent, conflict and can commonly be understood as the absence of hostility. In international relations, peace is suggested as the existence of healthy or newly healed interpersonal, prosperity in matters of social or economic welfare, such as the absence of war or conflicts among individuals, groups or nation state to tolerate one another. Today, due to globalization, people feel free to do what they please, because most of the information coming through satellite, people now know what is happening all over the world as they unveil within minute of its occurrence. Furthermore, since the majority of them are unemployed and whether it is a riot or robbery, people want to copy it and at the end affect both economic and social development. It was against this backdrop that the federal government of Nigeria in January 2012 declared state of emergency in fifteen (15) local government areas cutting across four (4) states namely; Borno, Yobe, Plateau and Niger while some states like Gombe, Kano and Adamawa were put under curfew. Subsequently, in April, 2013, states like Adamawa, Borno and Yobe were again put under state of emergency up to the time of conducting this research. These areas are now socially and economically affected as people have to confine their business and themselves to certain periods of time.

Conceptual Analysis of the Problem

Conflict has its origin in difference in terms of ideology, objectives, interest, efforts, approach, timing, attitudes and the likes. In the words of Lammers (1969), Conflict is an overt behavior arising out of a process in which one unit seeks the advancement of its own interest in its relationship with others. This, he continued could be such that the interference must be deliberate and goal directed by, at least, one part or group. The concept of conflict incorporates such protest movements in formal organizations as promotion of interest, secession and seizure of power and could also be observed as a situation of disagreement between two parties (Amusan, 1996). Accordingly, a conflict situation is characterized by the inability of those concerned to iron out their differences and reach an agreement on issues of common interest. This inability manifests in one form of protest or the other such as strikes and other work disruptions. Similarly, to Ejiogu (1990) conflict is a mutual hostility and all kinds of opposition or antagonistic interaction including disagreements or controversies about ideas, values, and ways of life leading to condition of disharmony.

While, Banks (1984) in his view opined that a situation of conflict is one in which the activity of one is actually or forcibly imposed at unacceptable costs, materials or psychic, upon another. He further illustrated that for conflict to occur, it must be accompanied by three major factors which are intensity and salience of the issue at stake, the status and legitimacy of the parties and the clustering of interests and coincidence of cleavages within a community. These factors he observed, determine the extent to which conflict can stretch. In line with these positions, Imobighe (1992) observed that conflict is not limited to any particular level of interaction rather it could occur at any level of country. The Nigerian's democratic rule short life has been parked with successions of different styles of leadership from councilor of a ward to chairman, House of Assembly Member, Senate, Governor and to the President ranging from North-Southern part of the country. Therefore, incorporating several of these ethnic groups into a single political system as pointed out by Abdurashied (2007), Victor, (2008) means bringing together all these basic problems of ethnic, religious, tribal, regional together. Group loyalties dividing such societies can, and do undermine a common identity, national culture and consensus on democratic values. These he concluded, added more injuries to the little existing peace in the country.

Therefore, to take responsibility of a leadership in such community or societies in a multi-ethnic and religious society like Nigeria is an enormous task, given the present scenario of the democratic politics in which the country has found itself today. To this end, it may not be an over statement to assume that poor leadership, thuggery, indiscipline and corruption have added more challenges to the instability of the Northern region and Nigerian state as a whole. Since the coming of third and forth republics in 1999 and 2009 respectively, which was just barely a decade ago after the military intervention in the previous times, they came in with a series of culture of violence such as thuggery, indiscipline, corruption, kidnapping, bombing etc many of which occurred in the North. This development may be attributed to the primitive accumulation of wealth and exploitative tendencies as lamented by Antony (2008), “along with demographic and multifarious other reassures, greatly increased government indebtedness and reinforced a spiral of decline in the delivery of public services and of the economy generally”.

Explaining the situation further, Southall, (1998), he stated that in countries where Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) were implemented, there were massive layoffs and retrenchment in the civil service, and as such, many people lost their source of livelihood, hence increased levels of poverty and struggles for scarce state resources. Others include the privatization and commercialization of public enterprises and downsizing of the civil service have in one way or the other contributed immensely towards the spread of corruption as multinationals supported by Western governments and their agencies continue to engage in corruption on a vast scale in North and South alike” (Hawley, 2000). These conditions therefore “reinforced the systematization of corruption and graft that is common in Nigeria, as ruling politicians use such opportunities of incumbency factor to loot the public domain” (Rok, 1997).

In line with the above propositions, the military takes opportunities and accuses the civilian administration of such each time they seize power. Example, the Military administration in Nigeria which lasted for about thirty-eight years of the country’s fifty-three (53) years of independence had not witnessed such kind of this corruption, including the collapse of public sectors, institutions, political instability and insecurity. This became apparent as the ordinary Nigerians who have a fundamental right to dignity have now been enslaved by a few Nigerians whose main interest and objectives were not only to perpetuate themselves in public offices but equally also to share the resources of the country amongst themselves, friends and their children. It was against this development that Patrick (2002) concluded that:

Government invariably found itself at the centre of promoting conditions of insecurity and spread wide indiscipline in terms of some of its policies and programmes. Most importantly, civilian rule appears to have inculcated a culture of promoting violence among them.

Consequently, these problems defied solutions and have been institutionalized in the public and private sectors of the Nigerian society. This has been acknowledged not only by individuals and groups in Nigeria but equally among international communities, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), union leaders. Attempts made to address these problems in the past by successive military and civilian administrations failed; while some were short lived. Example, the past governments had attempted to focus attention on good leadership, indiscipline, prudence, transparency, accountability and good governance through number of ways, including establishment of Code of Conduct Bureau by the Murtala Mohammed Administration in 1975, Ethical Revolution by Aliyu Shehu Shagari’s civilian administration in 1979, War Against Indiscipline and Corruption by General Muhammadu Buhari Administration in 1984, Mass Mobilization for Self Reliance, Social Justice and Economic Recovery by General Ibrahim Babangida in 1985 , Failed Bank Tribunals by General Sani Abacha in 1994, Anti-Corruption Bill by Olusegun Obasanjo in 2000.

Similarly, in 2007, the former late President Umaru Musa Yar’adua made it a cardinal policy to observe rule of law to enhance public accountability and stamp out corruption and indiscipline in the Nigerian society an attempt that yielded no result. Furthermore, the present administration of President Good- luck lack indices to show whether or not he is succeeding in the fight against corruption as the government is being over shadowed by series of high level of poor leadership and corruption. Example, the President Jonathan’s recent pronouncement to pardon the former Bayelsa State Governor Alamiyeseigha alleged to have defraud the state treasury of billions of Naira while, Olabode George who recently completed his two years jail terms for alleged corruption is now member Board of trusted for the ruling party (PDP). Above all the country is over shadowed by frequent strikes, violence, such as bombings, killings, assassinations, kidnappings among others all served as an indication that the purported war against corruption by the present Good-luck administration is winning.

Frame-Work of Analysis

According to Linda (2011) philosophers, political scientists and psychologists have produced extensive literature on leaders and leadership, but despite that, there is still no comprehensive consensus as to why and under what circumstances some people emerge and become good leaders and others remain followers. It is against this development that Plato believed that only a few selected with superior wisdom should be leaders. While, Machiavelli felt that those who had the ability to organize power and knowledge in defense of the state should be followed. He believed that people are weak and dishonest therefore, manipulation is acceptable to achieve one's goals when the end justifies the means. Thus, the concepts of leadership in general, have often tended to reflect and center on the views of the work of Plato, Machiavelli, among others. The definitions of leadership varied across times and culture. Then, the concept of leadership was more limited to kings and rulers. While, in our contemporary time, we refer to a leader as one who leads a group of individuals for the purpose of achieving organizational goals and objectives. In the words of Machiavelli (1963) cited in Encyclopedia of Sociology (2001); the definition of leadership later came to include managers in the organizations as leaders. Varma (1975), says leadership could be understood in the context of responsibility and authority.

Human societies all over the world are usually more or less self-sufficient associations regulated by a common conception of justice aimed at advancing the good for its members. Nevertheless, Nigerian men and women are not indifferent as to how the greater benefits produced by their joint labors are distributed for, in order to further their own aims and objectives as each prefers a larger to a lesser share. The set of principles for choosing between the social arrangements, which determine this division and for underwriting a consensus as to the proper distributive shares, is what we called social justice. Perhaps, the most direct conception of social justice would be to maximize the overall good for the majority of the members of the society than for the self few which translate into social injustice. However, evidence shows that such co-operatives of mutual advantage are characterized by crises, aggression, instigations, conflicts and identity of interests.

To this end, social injustice is a concept relating to the claimed unfairness or injustice of a society in its divisions of rewards and burdens and other incidental inequalities. The concept is distinct from those of justice in law, which may or may not be considered moral in practice, or from the concept of justice within a coherent ideological system, which focuses on just process rather than on incidental inequalities. Opposition to social injustice is increasingly a platform of emerging political parties. Social injustice arises when the distribution of advantages and disadvantages in society is far from being equal or evenly. Therefore the occurrence of aggression always presupposes the existence of frustration and, contrary wise that the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression. Social injustice is caused by certain barriers that prevent full social justice and some of the major barriers include may prejudice, discrimination, oppression, corruption, indiscipline, political thuggery among others which culminated into poor governance due to poor leadership.

This singular act translated to frustration and anger due to bad leadership and corruption. Furthermore, where the gap between the haves and the have-nots is increasing at a geometric proportion and where law serves the interest of the few and as well as where most people are hopeless, unemployed, frustrated and angered. If one looks at this situation with reference to the instrumental acts and goal-responses concerned, it appears that there are elements of instigation to such. As result of the foregoing, pressure groups such as religious, social and political like the Kalare of Gombe, the Yan-daba of Kano and the ECOMOG of Borno to mention but a few evolved. These groups culminated into different types of clashes either political, social, religious, ethnic/tribal etc. According to Coalition for social security (CAPS) 2013, a total of 201 crises were recorded in the North with Plateau state leading with 74 reported cases of conflicts while, states like Bauchi, Gombe, Kaduna, Kano had witnessed averaged of 3 crises each. Despite efforts to pacify them, members of these groups have remained intransigent.

From the above analysis, it clearly shows that the more successive responses of non-aggression are extinguished by continued frustration, the greater is the probability that the instigation to aggression will eventually become dominant so that some response of aggression actually will occur. This shows that organization where credible leadership is lacking is bound to be perpetually in a position of social, political and economically misguided. To this end, it may not be an exaggeration to conclude that the northern leaders, both military and democratic, ruled Nigeria lasting for about forty-one years of the country's fifty three years of independence, caused a number of problems, such as the collapse of public sector, institutions and the process of administering them in the region.

Political and Ethnic Crises in Northern Nigeria

In Nigeria, politics is manifested by acrimony, assault, assassination, intimidation, harassment, killings and destructions of both public and private properties. This trend is not a phenomenon of recent; rather the behaviours have been with us for the past four decades. To buttress this position, the former president Olusegun O. (2002) once stated that: we fight, and sometimes shed blood to achieve and retain political power. Since for us in Nigeria, the political kingdom has for too long been the gateway to the economic kingdom.

This statement clearly demonstrated to us how blood is being exchanged for political power in Nigeria. The use of thugs in some quarters especially in the North by the leaders has not only led to waste of human resources, but also resulted in the dearth of able-bodied men and women who may be useful in the future development of the region and the country at large.

Thuggery therefore simply means an acts of violence or acts of misguided behavior (Oxford Dictionary of Current English, 1998). When politics is criminalized, it is left in the hands of ruffians, thugs and hooligans for the purpose of scaring or frightening the public away. On the other hand, violence simply means “the illegitimate and unauthorized use of force to effect change or decisions against the will or desires of others” (Wolf, 1969). This shows that thuggery is synonymous with violence and it is evident that Nigerian politics is characterized by thuggery and it is an indisputable fact that politics in the North is not violent-free. In fact, contemporary events, across the region have visibly demonstrated that politics in the region has been hijacked by political thugs. Consequently, most Northern leaders’ particularly during the democratic dispensation, elective leaderships without doubt, since independence to present time were characterized by promotion of thuggery and violence for various offices.

This shows that politics in the north is exclusively the right of thugs, hooligans and their sponsors taken the advantage of majority of Nigerians presumed predominantly illiterate. Example, it is due to politics which ECOMOG was formed in Borno state by the administration of former Governor Ali Modu Sheriff, Kalare group in Gombe, Yan-daba in Kano, *A kasa a tsare* in Bauchi among others. As a result, most Northern leaders (Politician) exploited this situation (illiteracy) and thereby engage the youths to do whatever possible. The above statement clearly demonstrated the attitudes of the Northern leaders towards recruitment, training and empowering of thugs to frighten and victimize perceived political opponents and opposing views against their political ambitions.

Today, the culture of thuggery has not only been sustained as part of the regional’s political behavior but equally institutionalized in every part of the area and the country as a whole. This is in an attempt to capture and retain powers within their local, state or federal constituencies as they engage themselves from time to time in various acts that are politically immature, unwise and distrastrous to the detriment of peace. However, there is no doubt that the increasing insecurity and instability and tension in the north is no doubt over leadership methods adopted in solving the problems. The foregoing therefore captures the content of political class using thuggery and violence to retain or win a position using all means including intimidation, harassment and killings.

Indiscipline

The concept of discipline has two broad meanings, discipline as a field of knowledge and discipline as an order. The latter is the focus of this paper and this includes the order by conduct or actions which results from education, training or instructions by enforcing laws, orderly behavior and by contrast, indiscipline means absence or lack of order. Indiscipline can be defined as the breakdown of moral and ethical values bounded by the law of the land, but once the thin fine line between right and wrong is blurred, it is going to have an effect on the country at large. According to Max, if you speak to any Nigerian you will hear the familiar complaints about Nigeria’s plight of indiscipline, waste, mismanagement, corruption and as well as insecurity and political instability. In view of the above developments today, Nigerians are asking for good leaders that will tackle these problems head-on like 1984 Buhari/Idiagbon Military administration. According to Mustapha (2012) that:

Nigerians needs a tough, authoritarian regime to tackle its problems and implement the unpopular but corrective policies that a democratic government cannot afford to take for fear of being voted out of office. or else, the political change (revolution) which sweeps across the Arab countries like Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Kuwait, Bahrain and other countries in the Muslim world asking for their rights transparency and accountability and want to be part of the decision may not be far away from reality in Nigeria

Furthermore, Suleiman (2011) puts that when the Military intervention of Buhari and Idiagbon came in 1984, they quickly and correctly identified corruption and indiscipline as the main constraints on Nigeria's development. These twin evils have, in the view of many become a way of life for many Nigerians today. For this reason, they launched a nationwide campaign called "War Against Indiscipline" ("WAI") aimed at tackling the most anti-social Nigerian characteristics such as indiscipline, corruption, and lack of environmental sanitation. As a result, Nigerians learned and grudgingly accepted social behavior that was the norm in other countries around the world. As a result of this forgoing, indiscipline and moral decay had crept into the Nigerian society. Indiscipline is present in everyday life in every Nigerian which teaches them how to bypass the law to avoid punishment. It is the way youngsters regard the elders or the way common civic or traffic rules are flouted. The mind set has become that all rules have been made to be disobeyed and what they do is right. This include wrong ideals, idleness, lack of good leadership, injustice, lack of realistic rules, peer groups, bad home training and upbringing among others as achievements are no longer measured by commitment and capability but rather through influence and material wealth.

Corruption

Another major factor affecting peace and development in the north and Nigeria as a whole is the issue of corruption. This is because epidemic corruption by political office holders and civil servants at all levels of the government usually the citizens in the area denied the opportunity of having the basic necessities of life. Most often, resources meant for a particular project for a particular area in most cases are diverted to private individual accounts through various ways. For example, the recent revelations in Oil industries, Pension office as well as within the law makers themselves. The alleged monies distributed to all traditional and religious leaders during April 2011 general elections would serve as a clear testimony. Consequently, when violence erupted, some of the unemployed citizens targeted some of these corrupt officers and some of the traditional rulers whom from time to time connived with them to perpetuate such act became the first victims as it happened during the April, 2011 post election violence in various states in the north.

Similarly, the widening gap between the ruled and the rulers has resulted into perpetual poverty, diseases, unemployment and underdevelopment in the region. The classes have widened and the condition of the exploited workers alike have deteriorated so badly that almost all the social structures in the country have collapsed. The increased incidence and intensity of indisciplined behavior have reached a conspicuous mark as once lamented by Achebe that more than 60% of the Nigerian wealth was consumed through corruption from 1979-1983 of the second Republic. What Achebe concluded is not far from what is obtainable in the present dispensation. Accordingly, some quotas in Nigeria have been described as the most corrupt and endemic society. However, it is not peculiar to any region and ethnic group but rather the entire country. Although, it is more conspicuous in some areas and it cuts across faiths, religious denominations and political systems and affects both young and old, man and woman alike. This does not, however, mean that the magnitude of corruption is equal in every society, however, some areas are more corrupt than others and so also the regions as pointed out by George Orwell in his book, *Animal Farm: All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others* (June 1996).

To this end, corruption as alleged is pandemic in the north and among the northerners simply of the believed that they constantly in control of political landscape of the country. Most of the fraudulent excises occurred in various ministries and agencies are with the collaboration of the northerners. Corruption therefore, is a behavior which deviates from the formal duties of a public role, because of private gains through Personal and close family, private clique, status gains regardless of its implications. It is a behavior which violates rules against the exercise of certain types of duties for private gains regarding influence (Nye, 1967). This definition includes such behavior as bribery (use of a reward to pervert the judgment of a person in a position of trust); nepotism (bestowal of patronage by reason of personal relationship rather than merit); and misappropriation (illegal appropriation of public resources for private uses (Banfield 1961). Furthermore, (Osoba, 1996) adds that corruption is an anti-social behavior conferring improper benefits contrary to legal and moral norms, and which undermine the authorities to improve the living conditions of the people Encyclopedia Americana, 1999).

Electoral corruption includes purchase of votes with money, promises of office or special favors, coercion, intimidation, and interference with freedom of election and the northern region is a good example where this practice is common. Votes are bought, people are killed in the name of election while, losers end up as the winners in elections, and votes turn up in areas where votes were not cast.

Corruption in office involves sales of legislative votes, administrative, or judicial decision, or governmental appointment. Disguised payment in the form of gifts, legal fees, employment, favors to relatives, social influence, or any relationship that sacrifices the public interest and welfare, with or without the implied payment of money, is usually considered corrupt. Nye (1967) in his own view pointed out that because of the corrosive effects of corruption in national development and given the relative limited resources or poverty in the region, Africa, and indeed Nigeria, can least afford to be corrupt. Yet, analysts tend to believe that developed countries are less corrupt than developing nations.

Conclusion

In conclusion, therefore, even though the analysis revealed that the north and indeed Nigeria at large is no way near the end of ethnic crises, socio-economic, religious and political instability. However, the recent evolution of civilian JTF across Borno state is a clear manifestation of the determination of Nigerian citizenry to not only contribute to the fight against such but also to defend itself in whatever form possible. This is simply because forces leave in its wake disenchantment and disillusionment which sooner than later, would manifest in another crisis of greater magnitude like in Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, and Bahrain among others. However, since good governance constitutes the basic requirement for peace and development, the basic responsibility lies with every northerner and Nigerians as a whole to search for it, by striving to prevent, manage and amicably resolve it. Consequently, the Nigeria's vast natural resources have continue to diminish and eroded by the strong and stubborn surge of mismanagement, uncertain policies, massive corruption (pre-bendalism) thereby resulting into massive poverty in the society, culture of impunity. This was necessitated due to weak penalties by both government and the society in general and lack of effective governance.

Recommendations

- i) The process of leadership selection, election and appointment should be reviewed from time to time in line with African democracy where seniority counts and also in line with option A4 as obtained during the Military era of Ibrahim Babangida.
- ii) All political leaders who must have served for in whatever capacity in the third and fourth Republics should be banned from contesting or appointment into any public office for the next 10 years
- iii) The use of presidential system is too expensive for Nigeria and therefore should opt to parliamentary system of government which is relatively lesser expensive and transparent.
- iv) The National and state Assemblies should enact a law controlling the use of political thugs in the state and Nigeria at large. The use of political thugs should be completely banned and any leader found to be using such should be tried and sent to jail.
- v) Government should create out more employment opportunities as well as entrepreneurship skills centers for the youths.
- vi) The recent youth collaboration called civilian JTF in some parts of the state to complement the efforts of the security agencies should be commended as well as asked to be incorporated into the main stream of the security agencies.

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