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LEADERSHIP AND THE CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA: AN ASSESSMENT OF PRESIDENT GOODLUCK EBELE JONATHAN ADMINISTRATIVE STYLE.

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Abstract

Leadership crises coupled with policy inconsistency and summersault are no doubt serious problems confronting Nigeria and Africa. In the case of Nigeria, several policies, political and constitutional reforms and conferences have been put in place by previous regimes in order to address the question of leadership, development and good governance in Nigeria. The findings in this study revealed that apart from the on-going National Conference in Nigeria, several other conferences including the 2005 National Political Reform Conference have taken place in Nigeria. The study also shows that the structure, composition, and national spread of delegates at the on-going National Conference make the issue of consensus-building not only imperative but fundamental. Further findings also revealed that leaders in Nigeria have adopted different leadership styles depending on their back-ground and orientation. A careful study of President Goodluck Jonathan's inaugural speech at the National Conference and several other policies of the administration clearly revealed that the Goodluck Ebele Jonathan administration has adopted more democratic values and principles. However, the post-behavioral approach was applied in explaining and analyzing the subject-matter. In terms of methodology and scope, descriptive analysis and secondary sources of data (textbooks published articles, journals and internet materials) were relied upon. Despite the socio-economic and political challenges facing Nigeria, the paper posits that Nigeria and Africa can surmount its problems and challenges if political leaders and followers discard all forms of tribal politics and primitive accumulation of wealth. Equitable distribution of resources, a balanced intellectual and social development should also be promoted and accorded top priority in the process of policy formulation and implementation in Nigeria and indeed Africa.

Keywords: Leadership styles, Good-governance, Challenges, Nigeria, Africa, National Conference, and President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan

Background to the Study

The historical development of Nigeria can be traced to the pre-colonial era when the British colonial authorities ventured into Africa through missionary activities which later transformed into effective political control in 1861 with the annexation of Lagos and other This development led to the introduction of indirect rule which led to the bastardization and balkanization of African culture, tradition and territories including the unilateral amalgamation of Southern and Northern Protectorates by Lord Frederick Lugard in 1914. Protests against colonial rule led to several riots and demonstrations such as the Aba Women's Riot of 1929, Akassa Raid of January 29, 1895, the Benin Massacre of 1897 etc (Onwubiko, 1973:P.100, 193). The above protests no doubt led to increased political awareness and nationalist movements in Nigeria and across Africa between 1919 and 1950. It will be recalled that the activities of Nigerian nationalists compelled the British Government to convene series of constitutional conferences aimed at granting independence to Nigeria. Notable constitutional reforms embarked upon by the British within this period include the Hugh Clifford's Constitution of 1922, the Sir Author Richards Constitution of 1946, the Macpherson's and Littleton's Constitution of 1951 and 1956 These efforts by Nigerian nationalists culminated into Nigeria's independence in October 1st 1960. Constitutional development continued up to 1999 when the present constitution was signed into law by the Sani Abacha led administration. However, a fresh attempt to chart a new cause for Nigeria failed in 2005 when members of the then National Political Reform Conference failed to reach consensus on major national issues. Thus, the struggle to build a new and prosperous Nigeria started again when the President

Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan in 2012 assured Nigerians that the issue of National Conference will be revisited by his administration. In fulfilment of his promise, a Presidential Advisory Committee (PAC) on the National Conference was set up in October last year (2013) with Senator Femi Okurounmu as Chairman. The committee which was charged with the responsibility of designing the framework and modalities for a productive National Conference later submitted its report in December, 2013 and the result was the birth of a new National Conference which will afford Nigerians another opportunity to reexamine critical national issues and also take positions on centripetal and centrifugal forces that will either weaken or strengthen Nigeria's unity, stability and democracy. In the light of the above historical background, this paper will examine the place of leadership and its Challenges: An Assessment of President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan Administrative Style.

Objectives of the Study

The study is aimed at achieving the following objectives;

- 1. Examine the various problems and challenges facing leaders in Nigeria;
- 2. Identify the various types of leadership styles with a view to determining the best for Nigeria;
- 3. Examine the recent policy actions and decisions taken by President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan.

Theoretical Framework

In terms of framework, the paper analyses the Nigerian political system and the President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan's speech at the inauguration of the National Conference including his leadership and administrative style using the post-behavioural approach. It is important to state at this point that the post-behavioral approach is a protest against orthodox behaviouralism which was only interested in research, formulation of theories and concepts. In the words of James John Guy (Ntete-NNa, 2004: P.124) the postbehavioral approach looks at political science as having a public purpose. Thus, it should not only strive for generalization and the verifiable understanding of the political process but that practitioners and political leaders should commit themselves to making the world a better place. This approach, therefore, posits that leaders and political scientists should be able to communicate with the victims of society and the choice of research projects (in this case, the National Conference and the existence of a functional electoral and judicial institutions) must reflect an immediate concern for the daily struggles of the mass of the people not just elites in business. Furthermore, post-behaviorists therefore, are concerned not just with techniques of study but also with the broader questions of values such as justice and morality all geared towards policy engineering. Contextually, the Federal Government's National Conference and the inaugural speech of the President, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan and other policies and program of the administration represent a bold and pragmatic step aimed at resolving the socio-economic, political, and leadership challenges confronting the Nigerian State in line with post-behavioural ideals and philosophy.

Conceptual Definition of Terms

This aspect of the paper explained some keywords identified in the cause of the study. The identified keywords relevant to the paper include:

- 1. Leadership: From the management perspective, a leader is defined as a person who coordinates, combines and supervises other factors of production in other to achieve set goals and objectives within an organization, society or system. In his book the trouble with Nigeria, (1994) Chinua Achebe stated unequivocally that the greatest problem facing Nigeria and other third world countries is that of leadership failure.
- 2. Followership: This comprised of individuals, groups and citizens of a country who help in facilitating the emergence and removal of leaders whenever the need arises. In Nigeria, followers are often consulted only during election periods and after which, they are abandoned. It will be recalled that Jerry Rawlings, former President of Ghana in a public lecture organized by the Dr. Ken Nnamani Centre for Democratic Studies, Abuja, in 2010 castigated citizens and followers across Africa for their weak and dormant posture. According to Jerry Rawlings, all types of characters (military and civilians) find their way to leadership positions without any form of opposition or resistance.

- 3. Imperative: The BBC English Dictionary clearly defines the word imperative as something very important and needs to be considered or dealt with urgently. It further defined the word as an action, command, or task that is very urgent and must be dealt with quickly or urgently. The application of the word "imperative" in this paper clearly indicate that the various ethnic, religious, and social groups including non-state actors in Nigeria needs to move away from their hard line positions, make concessions and reach consensus with other stake holders and groups with a view to promoting the greater national interest of the nation.
- 4. Good-Governance: Prof. Eme Awa and Chinua Achebe in their books The Trouble with Nigeria (1994), Issues in Federalism (1973) accepted the fact that good governance entails effective delivery of public policies and programs at minimum cost. Measurement of good governance according to Attahiru Mohammed Jega must be based on the following essential elements:
- (a) Popular democracy
- (b) Unrestricted political participation in government by citizens.
- (c) Free press.
- (d) Transparency and accountability.
- (e) Rule of law etc.

Literature Review

This aspect of the study will examine materials relevant to the study. In a newspaper story captioned "Jonathan towing the path of Abacha - Obasanjo", published in The Punch Newspaper of 11 December, 2013, Segun Adeoye while reacting to the issues raised in Obansanjo's letter to President Goodluck Jonathan stated that the letter and the issues raised if not addressed could degenerate into national crises. He cited the Boko Haram insurgency as an issue that requires urgent national attention. In a related development, Sabella Abidde while trying to compare the Abacha, Babangida and Jonathan regimes submitted that the Obasanjo administration was the most wasteful and licentious and directionless of all. In her article titled "Jonathan, Obasanjo and Boko Haram", published in The Punch Newspaper of 14 May, 2014, Sabella Abidde expressed her sympathy for the President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan administration when she said "the last three - four months must have been really difficult for President Goodluck Jonathan. The criticisms against his administration, and personal attacks against his person, have been relentless. The audacity and ferocity of the Boko Haram attacks have not made things easy for him. The international press and global audience are also now turning against him. The New York Times and The Economist have been particularly harsh. And world capitals are also starting to wonder, what's going on in Abuja and with Jonathan?" While reacting to the letter Obasanjo wrote to President Jonathan, the writer unequivocally stated that Obasanjo lacks the moral right to raise issues relating to good governance and integrity. According to her "it was Obasanja who refused to strengthen our governing institutions. He failed to diversify our economy. He failed to build modern infrastructure. He didn't even have the decency to lay the foundation for growth and development. It was

Obasanjo, not Babangida or Abacha, who made mediocrity stylish and acceptable. It was he who made the worse type of political god fatherism a part of our national culture. In essence it was Obasanjo who brought us to where we are today. Today and in the last couple of years, when he is not giving Jonathan wahala (trouble), he is busy going from state to state dancing and amusing those who can stand his type of comedy. And every so often, you'd find him on the global stage pretending he has good global standing. He does not, she stressed.

Leadership Styles

Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia (2012) defined a leadership style as a leader's style of providing direction, implementing plans, and motivating people. There are also many different leadership styles that can be exhibited by leaders in the political, business or other fields. Leadership style includes the total pattern of explicit and implicit actions performed by the leader (Newstrom, Davis, 1993) it will be recalled that the first major study of leadership styles was performed in 1939 by Kurt Lewin who led a group of researchers to identify different styles of leadership (Lewing Lippit, White, 1939): This early study has remained quite influential as it established the three major leadership styles;

- 1. Authoritarian or Autocratic: According to the research, the authoritarian or autocratic leader tells his or her employees what to do and how to do it, without getting their advice.
- 2. Participative or Democratic: In this case, the leader includes one more employees in the decision making process, but the leader normally maintains the final decision making authority.
- 3. Delegated or Laiseez-fair: The leader in this case, allows the employees to make the decisions, however, the leader is still responsible for the decision that are made. Although good leaders use all three styles, with one of them normally dominant, bad leaders tend to stick with one style, normally autocratic.

The study went further to list the following forces or factors that influence the style of leadership to be used;

- 1. Amount of time available
- 2. Are relationships based on respect and trust or on disrespect?
- 3. Who has the information you, the employees or both?
- 4. How well your employees are trained and how well you know the task
- 5. Internal conflicts
- 6. Stress levels
- 7. Type of tasks, such as structured, unstructured, complicated, or simple?
- 8. Laws or established procedures, such as OSHA or training plans

Continuum of Leader Behaviour

Tannenbaum and Schmidt (1973) expanded on Lewin Lippit, and White's three leadership styles by extending them to seven styles and placing them on a continuum

indicating that as you go from left to right, it moves from manager oriented decision making to team or subordinate oriented decision making, thus, the team's freedom increases while the manager's authority decreases. On their part, Howell and Costly (2001) maintained that there are seven behaviour patterns or styles of leaders which include social leadership. They argued further that the behaviour patterns of leaders will certainly produce negative and positive actions and that positive and progressive minded leaders will use rewards such as education, independence etc. to motivate and command respect while negative or autocratic leaders will emphasize on penalties and sanctions (New storm, Davis, 1993). The above analysis therefore imply that the success or failure of a leader depends on a number of factors including the leadership style or styles adopted, the attitude of the leader and the level of reward/motivation etc.

In a research paper titled Minorities at Risk (1994) Prof. Ted Robert Gur cautioned that if the rights of minorities are not respected and their feelings taking into consideration in the process of policy formulation and implementation, the rate of conflict and insecurity may rise in Africa in the 21st century. Thus, for effective consensus-building process to translate into good governance and leadership in any political system there must be territorial and constitutional integration as well as minimum consensus. This is important because most of the units or ethnic groups may contain a culturally homogeneous group of people or a heterogeneous group. In other to preserve the Nigerian federation, there is need for the delegates at the National Conference and the federal government to preserve and protect the essential elements of the particularity of each unit or nationality group. While appraising the impact of leadership on development and good governance, Prof. Eme Awa stated that whether it is situational, traditional or charismatic styles of leadership, scholars and researchers are unanimous that good leadership is necessary and crucial for the survival, growth and development of any society. For leaders and followers to experience good governance, Prof. Attahiru M. Jega noted that there must be transparency and accountability by public office holders in discharging their duties. According to Prof. Attahiru M. Jega who is also a political scientist, "a democratic political culture developed over time creates the basis for sustainable processes of good governance in democratic countries including Nigeria (Jega, 2007: P.158).

Methodology and Scope

This section of the paper provides a description of the sources of data used and the applicable methodology. Most of the data and materials used in this paper were sourced from secondary sources (published text books, journals, newspaper reports and magazines including internet sources) and descriptive analyses were relied upon. Emphasis in this paper is to investigate and interrogate how Nigeria can positively utilize its multicultural and multidimensional background through consensus-building to promote and encourage effective leadership, followership and good-governance.

Highlights of Mr. President's Speech at the Inauguration of the National Conference and the Presentation and Analysis of Data Showing the Leadership Qualities and Styles of President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan

This aspect of the paper will examine key aspects of the president's speech in other to determine his administrative and leadership style. Thus, only essential aspects of the speech was captured and analysed via content analysis. While justifying the fact that the administration is a people friendly administration, the president stated as follows; "The power we hold is, without question, in trust for the people. Sovereignty belongs to the people. Their voices must be heard and factored into every decision we take on their behalf. This National Conference is a very important avenue for the voices of our people to be heard. Our people have yearnings and desires that need to be discussed. Their representatives at this conference are neither usurping the role of the National Assembly nor the Executive. They are complementing us in our march towards a greater and stronger union. Over the years, well-meaning Nigerians have drawn attention to inadequacies in our current constitution. Some have described it as a military-inspired document which does not take into full consideration the genuine desires and wishes of the people. The phrase in the preamble that says "we, the people" has been variously criticized as being misleading because, according to the critics, the constitution was not written by the people. There are also those who believe that the constitution is not our problem but the political will to faithfully implement it for the peace and progress of Nigeria. While opinions on the matter can be as diverse as rain showers, I believe that irrespective of our personal views on the issue, no one can deny the fact that every constitution is a living document that needs to be revised and improved upon from time to time. The United States, which is the model democracy in the eyes of many, has amended its constitution 27 times since it was first adopted in 1787. Some of our compatriots also believe that because we have held several conferences in the past, we do not need to hold another one. I do not share that view at all. A deeper look will reveal that the challenges we faced before each of the preceding national conferences were different. The challenges of 1956 are certainly not the challenges of 2014, and definitely not the challenges that the nation will face in years to come. It makes sense, therefore, that as the challenges before us evolve, and we must be constant and proactive in our search for fresh solutions. We cannot continue to proffer yesterday's solutions for today's problems. We must seize this opportunity to cement the cleavages and fault lines that tend to separate us. On the need for all Nigerians to pursue national interest the president in the speech further stated "We must re-launch our country. I know the task before you is onerous; but there must be only one winner, and there can only be one winner if we do everything right, and that winner must be Nigeria. I urge you therefore to focus strictly on the Nigerian Agenda. I expect that, as persons of integrity and honour, you will do nothing in this Conference that will undermine our efforts and desire to build a truly great nation.

I also expect that your discussions will be informed only by the noblest of instincts and persuasions. Our sole motivation for convening this conference is the patriotic desire for a better and greater nation. We are determined that things must be done in a way and manner that will positively advance that objective. While we recognize that groups and communities are the building blocks of our nation, we must emphasise that we need one another to build the solid and prosperous country of our dreams. We cannot join hands together to build with a collective vision if we continue to harbour negative biases and prejudices against ourselves. Yesterday's prejudices should die with yesterday. Today is a new day. This is the dawn of a new era. This is an opportunity to think anew. We must jettison the poisonous mind-sets of the past, which were built on unhealthy competition among our diverse groups and peoples. We need a new mind and a new spirit of oneness and national unity. The time has come to stop seeing Nigeria as a country of many groups and regions. We have been divinely brought together under one roof. We must begin to see ourselves as one community. We are joined together by similar hopes and dreams as well as similar problems and challenges. What affects one part of the community affects the other. An average Nigerian sees every part of the country as home. Let us seize the opportunity of this Conference to do more to further turn our diversity and plurality into unique national resources for strength and greatness. I have always affirmed that our ability to stay together despite our acknowledged differences, when other countries are finding it difficult to meet challenge is a powerful statement by Nigeria to the world on the virtues of tolerance and unity. It is a strong and compelling statement in a world much afflicted by strife and violence. We must sustain it. We must not allow the antagonists of unity and togetherness to prevail. We must work ceaselessly to remain one nation bound in freedom, peace and unity, as our National Anthem says".

While most Nigerians especially members of the opposition castigated the president and described the National Conference as a charade, others commanded the president and described the National Conference as a bold step that can move Nigeria to the next level. In a document titled "IPAC faults composition of delegates at the National Conference", the chairman of Inter-Party Advisory Council of Nigeria (IPAC), Yunusa Tanko, expressed its disappointment with the composition of the on-going National Conference taking place in Abuja. According to the group "the inclusion of men and women above 70 years with analogue qualifications, can never succeed in mapping out the future of Nigeria and That is why the National Conference has become "National Sleeping Conference" as we can see. It is another waste of public funds by recycling the same people that have kept us where we are at the moment". In a related development, Nigeria's former Minister of Information, Prof. Dora Akunyili, in a statement captioned "National Conference is Jonathan's Most Courageous Act" pasted on the internet, stated unequivocally that "Nigerians have for long clamoured for this National Conference. I regard this National Conferences as President Jonathan's best centenary gift to Nigeria: It is a testimony of the fact that he is a listening president", she said.

Findings:

We note from the above analysis that past leaders in Nigeria including President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan have applied different leadership styles which has impacted negatively and positively on the economy and people of Nigeria. According to the data and views expressed by Nigerians. Internal rivalry and corruption on the part of leaders are major problems facing leaders in Nigeria and Africa. The letter written by former president Olusegun Obasanjo to President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan in 2013 and the controversy it generated further affirm that greed and unnecessary rivalry among leaders and political parties remains a major challenge facing leaders in Nigeria. Related to the above is that people oriented policies and programs helps to build trust and confidence between leaders and followers in any society. Policies like the Almagiri Education Scheme in the North, special education for school drop out in the South, the National Conference etc have no doubt helped to promote democratic ideals which have made the Goodluck Ebele Jonathan administration quite different from previous administration in Nigeria. The study also shows that every leadership style is open to criticisms and public reaction which could be negative or positive. Borrowing the words of Sabella Abidde in the Punch Newspaper of May 14, 2014 "in so far as the Goodluck Jonathan administration goes, no one knows with any degree of certainty what the judgment would be. Nonetheless, one thing is certain: by 2015 or 2019, his administration would be adjudged by supporters, critics and the general public as the most maligned, criticized, scrutinized and vilified in the 54 years history of Nigeria.

The table below further shows the indices used in measuring the leadership style of President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan.

| No | Selected Policies | Outcome |
|----|--|---|
| 1. | Establishment of a National Conference | Encouraged popular participation by giving Nigerians from all walks of life the opportunity to come together and chart a new course for the nation. |
| 2. | Almajiri Education Program in the North-east | A strategic long term plan to curb child abuse and insurgency in the north by also deflating the ego of the ruling elites |
| 3. | Restructuring of the Independent National Electoral Commission and the Judiciary | Restored credibility in the elector al process in Nigeria and the recent sacking of some corrupt judges by the National Judicial Service Commission (NJC). Have also helped to build trust in the nation's judiciary. |

Source: authors' field work 2014

Conclusion

The above analysis further revealed that Nigeria's unity can further be strengthened when leaders learn to promote Nigeria's national interest above sectional, tribal and religious interests. Peace and development can also be enhanced when politicians and leaders also learn to cultivate and imbibe democratic values and tenets. Nelson Mandela himself stressed this point when he said "I also wished to send a message to the government that

while I rejected its offer because of the conditions attached to it, I nevertheless thought negotiation, not war, was the path to a solution" (Mandela, 1994: P.521).

Recommendations

The problem of leadership and lack of consensus among African political leaders is responsible for the myriads of violence and conflicts plaguing the continent. Thus, it is our belief that the following suggestions will go a long way in addressing the question and challenges of leadership and good governance;

- 1. All forms of tribal politics and primitive accumulation of wealth which French scholar Francois Bayart described as the politics of the belly should be discarded. Equitable distribution of resources and a balance intellectual and social development should be promoted and accorded top priority in the process of policy formulation and implementation in Nigeria and Africa as a whole.
- 2. Apart from the on-going National Conference which is a classic example of the postbehavioural model, the president and indeed the delegates and Nigerians should devise more proactive ways of resolving critical national issues. In addition, democratic leadership style should be encouraged at all levels in Nigeria.
- 3. Available statistics and records have shown that consensus-building requires some form of confidence-building measures and trust among all parties and groups in a particular political system hence, major issues affecting minorities in the country should be accorded priority attention. A situation where the National Assembly has used more than twelve (12) months to debate the revised Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB) does not send the right signal.
- 4. Acts of political prostitution in the name of cross carpeting or defection should be checked and controlled as this is the main reason for policy inconsistency and summersault in Nigeria and Africa. This, therefore, means that political parties should be founded on the basis of sound ideology and philosophy. Perhaps Nigerians needs to learn from these words of Nelson R. Mandela "I am a member of the African National Congress (ANC) and I will remain a member of the African National Congress until the day I die. Oliver Tambo is more than a brother to me. He is my greatest friend and comrade for nearly 50 years. If there is any one among you who cherishes my freedom, Oliver Tambo cherishes it more, and I know that he will give his life to see me free" (Mandela, 1994 P.522). We strongly feel that Nigeria and indeed Africa needs a new orientation and leadership philosophy which we prefer to call "Mandelatocracy", implying that the people and the state comes first before self and family. The revelations from his (Mandela's) wheel where 17% percent of his total assets was devoted to running his political party, the African National Congress further explains why the man Mandela was called Madiba (strange being/extra ordinary personality).
- 5. Psychologically, conscious effort should be made to promote an ideology which will be national in outlook. For instance, the term 'Americanism' is a concept which implies that Americans have a common set of ideals and a manifest destiny. In line

with the president's inaugural speech, conference delegates should tackle the issue of resource control, education, health, security and development without prejudice. It will be recalled that 80% of the president's inaugural speech focused on the need for Nigeria as a nation to move away from the past and chart a new course of action that will promote consensus-building, sustainable development and political stability in Nigeria. For us, (the authors/scholars) this is the way to go.

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