

THE PROBLEM OF LEADERSHIP IN NIGERIA, 1960- 2015

By

Francis Paschal Nwosu, PhD

And

Tochukwu Asiegbu

Department of History and International Studies,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

Abstract

*The failure of leadership in Africa after independence to address the question of underdevelopment in the continent have manifested into problems bedeviling African States specially Nigeria. These problems include, and not limited to increasing crime wave, drug trafficking, advanced fee fraud, terrorism, economic crisis, political instabilities, etc. The work therefore, shows the political systems and primordial attachment that helps to build the leadership in Nigeria and the resultant issues that led to the poor performance of Nigerian leaders in governance since independence. The work shows reasons why in spite of many years of independence the country is still faced with challenges of **under development as a result of poor leadership**. It shows the constant interruption of the military in leadership even when they are performing poorly, the use of ethno-religious sentiments as measures used to either remain in power or as means to acquire political power and use it for selfish reasons. The study also gives tips on some leaders that mounted the leadership positions of Nigeria since its independence in 1960. The research adopted analytical cum historical method in arriving at its findings. The work concludes that the only thing wrong with Nigerian state is her been bedeviled with leaders without leadership acumen. What is wrong is the character of the leaders. The struggle to acquire power by Nigerian politicians or military personnel at all cost by using or generating sentiments in order to be in control of the resources and the people is where the problems lies- as there is no personal zeal to leave a legacy of an exemplary leadership to harness the abundant human and material resources available in the country for its socio-cultural cum economic development.*

Introduction

The numerous problems which have been bedeviling African states vis - a vis ethnic and communal clashes, increasing wave of drug trafficking, advance fee fraud, terrorism, economic crisis, political instabilities, etc, have been blamed on ineffective leadership.

The failure of leadership in Africa after independence to address the question of underdevelopment in the continent is one of the reasons African is still been classified as Third World countries in the committee of nations. African continent is blessed with abundant human and natural resources and should be classified as the richest continent of the world but its people are wallowing in abject poverty. In fact, Africa is the poverty headquarters of the world. African nations are faced with the challenge of political, social and economic crisis in the 21st century even when there is abundance of natural resources

that can accelerate development in the continent. This total failure of leadership in Africa is because there has not been the emergence of leaders in African States who have been able to launch the continent into the path of growth and development to effect the lives of the people of Africa.

African States leadership since independence have been enmeshed in ethnic nationalism instead of national interests of the various people in the different States they exercise these role of leadership responsibilities. They are selfishly corrupt instead of leading for the overall growth and development of the people of the States they rule. Even when they are ideologically prepared to take the lead of their countries towards the march for growth and development; neo-colonial tendencies crop up resulting to crisis of underdevelopment.

On this note the paper will discuss the following issues; the nature of party politics and political power in Africa, the parochial nature of African leadership, the syndrome of sit tight in governance, the lack of political will that are associated with African leadership after independence and the case of Nigeria leadership.

Nigeria Case of Leadership

Chinua Achebe in his epic, *The Trouble with Nigeria* noted that

-----the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squealy the failure of leadership. The Nigerian problems is the unwillingness and inabilities of its leaders to rise to the responsibility and challenge of personal example which are the hallmark of true leadership¹

It is vital to pin point some of the causes of military intervention in Nigerian political scene. These includes; Corruption, tribalism or ethnic politics, mismanagement of the economy, the neglect of military institution, election malpractices and selfish interest of some military leaders. Nigeria as a product of British imperialistic administration, united many independent ethnic groups or nationalities into one nation called Nigeria. As a result, Britain introduced her system of administration, education, economic and cultural system. Because most of the citizen of the country are ignorant of such a political system and because they were unable to internalize this system, this caused ignorance of political process to many people, but those who are enlightened in this system used it to their advantages. They made the majority of the citizens that were not enlightened in the system to be susceptible to their system. This is the major source of violence in Nigerian politics. As noted, the educated elites considered themselves to be Westernized and superior to their fellow Nigerians who had no exposure to Western influences, this they used as an advantage against them.

Tribalism, ethnic politics, sectionalism, stateism are among the factors which caused political upheavals in Nigerian politics.

Ethnicism and sectionalism: Tribalism, ethnic politics, sectionalism, stateism are among the factors which caused political upheavals in Nigeria politics. For example, the 15 January 1966 coup was accused of having tribal connection and even the July counter coup 1966 had tribal connection too.

Tribalism: Tribalism was planted into Nigeria politics in 1945 following the introduction of the Richard Constitution which divided Nigeria into three regions, North, East and West. Representation in the Federal Parliament and the distribution of the necessary incentives from central government to the people was through these regional divisions. This attitude compelled the citizen of each region to be more loyal to region than to the central government. They regarded people from other regions as enemies or people from another country. The then prime minister of the federation Alhaji Tafawa Belawa once said that *the greatest danger facing the country is tribalism which has to be fought if Nigeria cooperate. I have been in the house.*²

He added that:

*Southern Nigeria, at that time does not know
the north, and the north did not know the
South. And if you ask those who were with me
In legislature council in that year 1947, they
Will tell you what a terrible man I was because
I was all out to fight the south and did not
Understand why I was fighting them so hard,
Later I realized that I had to change. The north
And south must go together, otherwise, there
Will be no Nigeria'.³*

Regionalism: This regional attachment was much that even the parties were formed along tribal line which led to ethnic politics in Nigeria that had spearheaded election malpractice in Nigeria. The political parties were formed based on tribe or ethnic lines. This ethnic politics caused by tribalism had been one of the reason for military intervention as ethnic politics have resulted to many crises in Nigeria politics.

Poor Economic Development Plan: Poor Economic development of the country, immediately after independence, led to a desolate stage in the country. The leaders failed to tackle this poor economic problem. The needs of the masses were neglected by the government as the leaders continued in mismanagement and embezzlement of government fund. Like, Emeka Odumegwu Ojukwu asserted:

*military coups are inevitable where financial
institutions are completely misused for self
–aggrandizement of a number of adventurers
in position of power and affluence, where
mediocrities transplanted over night from
situation of obscurity into position of
affluence and corrupt power.⁴*

Truly in situation where power is seen as wealth there is no doubt there would be a lot of failure performance which can led to military intervention.⁵

Adverse Effect for the Struggle for political Power: The adverse effect of struggle for political power between 1960 to 1966 was so much that people neck –named it “mad

race". They saw political power as an easy way to be rich and glorified. They employed all means of violation in order to allow them to retain political power. They were unwilling to relinquish the position they occupied. A good example of this was when chief S.L. Akintola was asked to resign his premiership of Western Nigeria by the then Western Nigeria Governor, which was prescribed in the constitution, he refused to resign. This later caused conflict in the Action Group Party and later to the Western Nigeria government, and was the source of political turmoil of 1965 in the region which the military complained was the immediate cause for intervening.

Social evils such as Corruption, Bribery and Nepotism: Social evil such as corruption, bribery and nepotism had also been identified as some of the causes of military intervention. The extent of corruption during the first republic in Nigeria was too deplorable and sporadic. They embezzled public funds. They were known to take ten percent, where the public office holders inflicted this pain on the country. It is common for coup leaders to include corruption among their reasons for intervening. Major Kaduna Nzeogwu in his broadcast on Jan. 15 1966 indicated what the military hoped to achieve. They were:

*The restorations of law and order, the destruction of corrupt operation through which the politicians sought to perpetuate themselves in power. The elimination of such ills as corruption, bribery, embezzlement and the establishment of freedom from fear and all sort of oppression.*⁶

Corruption and nepotism were not only peculiar to civilian administration, many military governors under Gowon's regime were found guilty of corruption and personal accumulation of wealth. In general, many African leaders of post-independence cannot be exonerated from charges of corruption.

The use of military to perpetuate the ruling government in power. The negative effects of the use of the military men by the ruling civilian government to support their hold of political power exposed the military to an administrative system which lured them into partisan politics. At the early days of independence in Nigeria, the Nigeria army were used to quell some civilian's upheavals in the Tiv Province in 1960 and to protect some important personalities. During the 1964 general strike, they also policed the Western Nigeria after the 1965 Western Nigeria election. All these involvements in domestic politics acted as an invitation to the armed force into the administration of Nigeria. As Luckham pointed out:

*the internal security operation in which the military was asked to play a part, most notably in pacifying the Tiv in 1960 and 1964, maintaining essential services during the 1964 general strike and policing the Western Region after the 1965 regional election made it quite clear to those soldiers who cared about it that the survival of the existing political order depends upon them.*⁷

Even since then, the soldiers and the Armed Forces began to see themselves as the redeemer of the political culture of Nigeria and the politicalization of Army because their main concern.

Political Violence: Political violence is also one of the cause of military intervention and overthrow of an existing government. As A.A. Akintola stated that the factor that spearheaded the usurpation of civilian government in Nigeria and its subsequent overthrow was the impurity of political system and the rate at which political violence is committed. The modus operandi of political violence in Nigeria is such that politics is based on zero-sum terms where the winners take it all which made politics a deadly business that led to politics of vandalism, acrimony, lack of politics of accommodation, politics of thuggery and so on.

Electoral Malpractice: This had been the major cause of military intervention in the first republic and second republic of Nigeria. Non-free and non-fair general election in Nigeria since independence has always been a problem to the political system of Nigeria. Politician adopt all means to attain the political power, it led to electoral malpractice or rigging and even hiring of thugs to terrorize political opponents. There was always news of illegal printing of ballot papers, disappearing of ballot boxes during the election in order to influence the election result. There is what is called election coup d'etat – this is a situation whereby one can win in election whether voted for or not. The attitude of some electoral officers during the election is suspicious. Some change the actual figure of votes, others declared wrong candidates' winners. As a result of all these, many politicians find it difficult to accept the result the electoral board announced, for example, in 1965 regional election in the West FEDECO announced the election result to be NNDP 65 UPGA 10, Alhaji Adegbenro announced UPGA 68, NNDP 25. After 1979 and 1983 election, many politicians sued the electoral board to court for the manipulations of result. According to Eze

there is no doubt election malpractice like thuggery rigging etc and it's accompany violence, chaos and near-anarchy have directly or indirectly enraged and prompted the military to overthrow the existing government.⁸

Selfish Interest of some military personnel: Another factor that caused military intervention in Nigeria politics is the selfish interest of some military personnel. Some do usurp state power to achieve a selfish ambition which may be in contrast with national interest. The desire to have political power and instant wealth for themselves, friends and families, so that they can live comfortable life. With physical power of the army like machine gun, tanks and planes which was a monopoly to them, gave them the opportunity and made it easy task to overthrow existing government through coups. At the end of the day, they fabricate a long list of administrative dysfunctional, in these case the power hungry army officers present to the populace with false allegation against the existing government for the overthrow of the government. For example, the Feb. 13 Dinka abortive coup against Murtala's popular government.

Effect of Military Intervention In Nigeria Politics

The military junta's intervened and tries to justify their intervention by number of reasons,

not minding how justifiable their reasons may be. It has an effect on the political and social system of Nigeria.

Going through the practise of the various military government in Nigeria a number of side effects could be deducted from their performance and participation in the Nigeria political process. These effects of military intervention rule includes the following.

The military attempt at unseating civilian democratically elected government in the first place result to the breakdown and discontinuity of existing political structure and framework. This happened in 1966 and 1983, the military intervened in 1966 to stop a democratic government, and breakdown the parliamentary political system headed by prime minister Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balawa. No matter their reason for intervening, their exercise brought to an end the first attempt of Nigeria as a country to practise democracy and bearing in mind that the parliament dense. I am not saying that, the politicians were perfect, but that a perfect political system come from an experimental process which was the stage it was, before being interrupted, they were not given a chance to see their mistakes and correct them.

It should also be noted that the military which claims superiority of competence in government, within the preceding six months in government changed itself and plagued the country into one of the disastrous events, it has ever experienced, the Civil War. It is argued that in the real sense, they never wanted the war, but for lack of their bargaining skill, arrogance and personal motivation, they ended in a Civil War. These to a large extent demonstrates the inadaptability and incapacity of the military in the corridors of power. Even after 13 years of military rule and the introduction of the presidential system of government in 1979, a change brought about by the military elite in a way contributed to the failure of the first republic Parliamentary system of government. Just after one tenure, the army came back to continue governance where they stopped. The army has contributed greatly to the discontinuity of our political process, thereby causing political instability in the country. Inability of Nigerian leaders to build a foundation for a strong political culture from which strong political formula system could spring from is equally a problem.

Politicisation of the military: The military's involvement in politics has also led to the politicisation of the Army. Quota system was introduced in the Army to prevent the possible fear of the Army being dominated by one ethnic group which will make it unreliable to national issues. But if the quota system was politically desirable its feedback /effect on military was far from being integrative, the unintended consequence of the political decision to introduce a quota system was the politicalization of army. The Nigeria army had become sectional and ethnic oriented, that it no longer represent the unity of this country. A clear evidence of this statement was in the coup of January and July of 1966. The coup especially the one of July was ethnic oriented, the North wanted to unseat the Southern Head of State from leadership of the country and replace him with a northerner. Appointment within the governing military elite cannot be excluded from this politicalization where only officers from a particular region or religion were appointed to specific position. Also the Nigeria Civil War in part was caused by ethnic cleavages among members of the Armed Forces.

Military intervention also affects the economy: It often led to economic stagnation. Investors often run away from any country that has a military administration. Also many

International Multinational bodies refused or find it difficult to give loans and assistance to a country under military rule. The reason for these is simple. This is because their investments could be taken over overnight by the government without prior information, consultation or knowledge of the investors. For instance, the indigenization and nationalization of companies in Nigeria by Gowon in 1977. Even though the policy is not being condemned here, but being used to show the side effects vis-à-vis the military and the economy. In the case of loans and assistance, since military government in power came by force and declared itself legitimate, what prevent another section of military from doing the same and declaring the previous regime illegal, so the international bodies do not trust military government because of transient passing nature.

Ethnicism and sectionalism: Tribalism, ethnic politics, sectionalism, stateism are among the factors that do cause political upheavals in Nigeria politics. For example, the 15 January 1966 coup was accused of having tribal connection and even the July counter coup 1966 had tribal connection two.

Tribalism: Tribalism was planted into Nigeria politics in 1945 following the introduction of the Richard Constitution which divided Nigeria into three regions, North, East and West. Representation in the Federal Parliament and the distribution of the necessary incentives from central government to the people was through these regional divisions. This attitude compelled the citizen of each region to be more loyal to region than to the central government. They regarded people from other regions as enemies or people from another country. The then prime minister of the federation Alhaji Tafawa Belawa once said, that the greatest danger facing the country is tribalism which has to be fought if Nigeria will cooperate.

He added:

*Southern Nigeria, at that time does not know
the north, and the north did not know the
South. And if you ask those who were with me
In legislature council in that year 1947, they
Will tell you what a terrible man I was because
I was all out to fight the south and did not
Understand why I was fighting them so hard,
Later I realized that I had to change. The north
And south must go together, otherwise, there
Will be no Nigeria.⁹*

Regionalism: This regional attachment was much that even the parties were formed along tribal line which led to ethnic politics in Nigeria that had spearheaded election malpractice in Nigeria. The political parties were formed based on tribe or ethnicity. This ethnic politics caused by tribalism had been one of the reason for military intervention as ethnic politics have resulted to many crises in Nigeria politics.

Poor Economic Development Plan: Poor Economic development of the country, immediately after independence, led to a desolate stage in the country. The leaders failed to tackle this poor economic problem. The needs of the masses were neglected by the government as the leaders continued in mismanagement and embezzlement of government fund. Like, Emeka Odumegwu Ojukwu asserted that :

military coups are inevitable where financial

*institutions are completely misused for self
–aggrandizement of a number of adventurers
in position of power and affluence, where
mediocrities transplanted over night from
situation of obscurity into position of
affluence and corrupt power.¹⁰*

Truly in situation where power is seen as wealth there is no doubt there would be a lot of failure performance which can led to military intervention.

Adverse Effect of the Struggle for political Power: The adverse effect of struggle for political power between 1960 to 1966 was so much that people nick –named it “mad race”. They saw political power as easy way to be rich and glorified. They employed all means of violation in order to allow them to retain political power. They were unwilling to relinquish the position they occupied. A good example of this was when chief S.L. Akintola was asked to resign his premiership of western Nigeria by the then western Nigeria Governor, which was prescribed in the constitution. He refused to resign, this later caused conflict in the Action Group Party and later the western Nigeria government, and was the source of political turmoil of 1965 in the region which the military complained was the immediate cause for intervening.

Social evils such as Corruption, Bribery and Nepotism: Social evil such as corruption, bribery and nepotism had also been one of the causes of military intervention. The extent of corruption during the first republic in Nigeria was too deplorable and sporadic. They embezzled public fund. They were news of ten percent, where the public office holders inflict this pain on the country. It is common for coup leaders to include corruption among their reasons for intervening. Major Kaduna Nzeogwu in his broadcast on Jan. 15 1966 indicated what the military hope to achieve. They were:

*The restorations of law and order, the
destruction of corrupt operation through which
the politicians sought to perpetuate themselves
in power. The elimination of such ills as
corruption, bribery, embezzlement and the
establishment of freedom from fear and all
sort of oppression.¹¹*

Corruption and nepotism were not only peculiar to civilian administration, many military governors under Gowon's regime were found guilty of corruption and personal accumulation of wealth. In general, the African leaders of post-independence cannot be exonerated from charges of corruption.

The use of military to perpetuate the ruling government in power. The negative effects of the use of the military men by the ruling civilian government to support their hold of political power exposed the military to administrative system which lured them into partisan politics. At the early days of independent in Nigeria, the Nigeria army were used to quell some civilian's upheavals in the Tiv province in 1960 and to protect some important personalities. During the 1964 general strike, they also policed the Western

Nigeria after 1965 Western Nigeria election. All these involvements in domestic politics acted as an invitation to the armed force into the administration of Nigeria. As Luckham pointed out that:

*the internal security operation in which the military was asked to play a part, most notably in pacifying the Tiv in 1960 and 1964, maintaining essential service during 1964 general strike and policing the Western Region after the 1965 regional election. This made it quite clear to those soldiers who cared about it that the survival of the existing political order depends upon them.*¹²

Even since then, the soldiers and the Armed Forces began to see themselves as the redeemer of the political culture of Nigeria and the politicalization of Army because of their main concern.

Political Violence: Political violence is also one of the cause of military intervention and overthrow of an existing government. As A.A. Akintola stated that the factor that spearheaded the usurpation of civilian government in Nigeria and its subsequent overthrow was the impunity of political system and the rate at which political violence is committed. The modus operandi of political violence in Nigeria is such that politics is based on zero-sum terms where the winners take it all which made politics a deadly business that led to politics of vandalism, acrimony, lack of politics of accommodation, politics of thuggery and so on, all the existing government.

Electoral Malpractice: This had been the major cause of military intervention in the first republic and second republic of Nigeria. Non-free and non-fair general election in Nigeria since independence has always been a problem to the political system of Nigeria. Politician adopt all means to attain the political power, it led to electoral malpractice or rigging and even hiring of thugs to terrorize political opponents. There was always news of illegal printing of ballot papers, disappearing of ballot boxes during the election in order to influence the election result. There is what is called election coup d'etat – this is a situation whereby one can win in election whether voted for or not. The attitude of some electoral officers during the election is suspicious. Some change the actual figure of votes, others declared wrong candidates' winners. As a result of all these, many politicians find it difficult to accept the result the electoral board announced, for example, in 1965 regional election in west FEDECO announced the election result to be NNDP 65 UPGA 10, Alhaji Adegbenro announced UPGA 68, NNDP 25. After 1979 and 1983 election, many politicians sued the electoral board to court for the manipulations of result. According to Eze

*there is no doubt election malpractice like thuggery rigging etc and it's accompanying violence, chaos and near-anarchy have directly or indirectly enraged and promoted the military to overthrow the existing government*¹³

Selfish Interest of some military: Another factor that can cause military intervention in Nigeria politics is the selfish interest of some military personnel. Some do usurp state power to achieve a selfish ambition which may be in contrast with national interest. The desire to have political power and instant wealth for themselves, friend and family, so that

they can live comfortable life. With physical power of the army or soldiers like machine gun, tanks and planes which was a monopoly to them, give them the opportunity and made it easy task to overthrow existing government through coups. At the end of the day, they fabricated a long list of administrative dysfunctional, in these case the power hungry army officers presented to the populace false allegation against the existing government for the overthrow of the government. For example, the Feb. 13 Dinka abortive coup against murtala's popular government.

Politicisation of the military: The military involvement in politics has also led to the politicisation of the Army. Quota system was introduced in the Army to prevent the possible fear of the Army being dominated by one ethnic group which will make it unreliable for national issues. But if the quota system was political desirable its feedback effect on military was far from being integrative, the unintended consequence of the political decision to introduced a quota system was the politicalization of army. The Nigeria army had become sectional and ethnic oriented, that it no longer represent the unity of this country. A clear evidence of this statement was the coup of January and July of 1966. The coup especially the one of July was ethnic oriented, the North wanted to unseat the Southern Head of State from leadership of the country and replace him with northerner. Appointment within the governing military elite cannot be excluded from this politicalization where only officers from a particular region or religion are appointed to specific position. Also the Nigeria Civil War in part was caused by ethnic cleavages between members of the Armed Forces.

In Nigeria the political leaders whether military or civilian since independence were people of selfish interests - they were less concerned with the interest of the State. The only time when the interest of the State is protected is when the leader's interests are at stake. Leadership is a self-serving venture in the country to the extent that it has affected the development goal of the nation. Leaderships forced themselves on the people through coup in days of military rule, under civil rule through godfather politics they are forced on the people. The Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) through their fraudulent conduct of "elections" which can best be described as selection (because the people's votes do not count) with the protection of the security agencies and the Judiciary giving such illegality a clot of legality through their court judgments bad leaderships are enthroned in Nigeria. These results in their poor performance in leadership - as what would have been used for development are misappropriated to maintain and appease these godfathers or section of the people that brought them to power.¹⁴

Ebgbulem narrate the problem of leadership in the country when he stresses that the Nigerian society has never been well governed since independence from the British in 1960 because;

good and strong leaders" have never been in charge. The Nigerian state, from the first democratic experiment in 1960 to military regimes and back to democracy as practiced today, has been managed by leaders who are selfish and corrupt. They accumulate wealth at the expense of national development without devotion to the cause of the people ... the state has produced leaders who have

blighted the lives of Nigerians who now wallow in poverty, illiteracy, hunger, and unemployment...¹⁵

An over view of the leadership in Nigeria since independence would help to support the above quote. The nation paraded leaders like:

Sir Abukakar Tafawa Belewa 1960 - 1966. The administration was brought down by ethnic politics and the inability to use the country's ethnic differences for the national development of its people.

General Aguiyi Ironsi January 15th 1966 - July 29th 1966 - this administration collapsed due to the insensitive nature of the government to come up with policies that would appease the aggrieved northern leaders and people who, leaders were killed by the Major Kaduna Nzeogwu led coup d'etat of 15th January, 1966. The reaction from the northern people resulted into civil war that lasted for 30 months with it serious consequence on the people and developmental infrastructures of the country.

The General Yakubu Gowon administration 1966 – 1975. The administration was blessed with oil wealth but could not use the wealth in the development of the country. The developmental Plan embarked on by the government of Gowon was marked with corruption and he did nothing to salvage it.

The Murtala Muhammed administration 1975 - 1976 - was a purposeful administration from the beginning given the reforms/ policies he introduced in the country that put corruption under check but was cut short by an abortive military coup that took his life.

General Olusegun Obasanjo 1976 - 1979 succeeded the Murtala administration, continues the policies of his predecessor and introduced his own policies when necessary yet the Third National Development Plan embarked upon could not bring the desired development of the country. There was allegation of wide scale corruption that marked the Obasanjo's administration of that era.

The Shehu Shagari administration - 1979 - 1983, this second civilian administration in Nigeria was also marked by ethnic politics and corruption. The austerity programme of the administration designed to fight the various economic problems of balance of payment, inflation, unemployment etc in the wake of the fall in oil revenue could not solve the economic crisis of the country at the period. The hunger and frustration which the Shagari austerity program put the people of Nigeria welcomed another military regime in the country.

The General Muhammadu Buhari administration 1983 - 1985, this administration introduced War Against Indiscipline and Corruption (WAIC) to make the country more disciplined and efficient economically. The WAIC program was inhuman and high-handed as it was directed against oppositions of the administration. The Buhari military regime could not revamp the economy despite the fight against indiscipline and corruption. The activities of the IMF this economy programme help to set in crisis.

The General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida administration 1985 - 1993, this administration embarked on a Transition to Civil Rule Programme from 1986 - 1993 that consumed huge resources of the country yet there was no result. At the economic level of his administration he introduced the country into the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) that totally collapsed Nigeria economy - as the IMF and World Bank had great time to roll out their conditions to exploit the country. The fifth National Development Plan

also known as the first National Rolling Plan, 1990 - 1992 could not address the crisis in the economy due to lack of manpower and instability in the government. The administration was corrupt and marked by human rights abuses. Following the annulment of the June 12, 1993 Presidential election by the Babangida regime, Chief Ernest Shonekan came to power.

Chief Ernest Shonekan administration August 1993 - October 1993 came on board. Shonekan continued with Babangida SAP policies with little reforms that gave the multinational corporations in the oil sector more grip on the nation's economy.

The General Sani Abacha administration 1993 - 1998, this administration also embarked on Transition to Civil Rule Program in 1995. The government constituted a constitutional conference to draft constitution for the Nigeria while 1st October 1998 was fixed as a date for swearing in of a newly elected President and final disengagement of the military from politics. Abacha stage managed the transition programs to have him transit from military to a civilian President. He did it through intimidation and human right abuses of his oppositions. More so, the administration was marked with unprecedented rate of corruption in the history of the country as governments after him are still recovering his loots from European nations and other continent of the world several years later. He almost has his way to transit to a civilian rule until death took him away from the political scene. The Abacha administration left the image and position of the country in the World worse than he met it in 1993.

The General Abdulsalami Abubakar administration 1998 - 1999, the Abdulsalami administration transitioned the country into a civilian rule in May 29th 1999. This settled the problem associated with military transition to civil rule of that period. The transition program was costly and even the nation treasury that he met he emptied it to satisfy his selfish interests.

The Olusegun Obasanjo civilian administration 1999 - 2007 was marked with corruptions and even the anti - corruption agencies he set up to checkmate corrupt politicians were directed mostly on his oppositions. He privatized virtually every infrastructures of the economy to foreign and local investors where he and members of his government had interests. Today the policies and reforms of the Obasanjo administration on the economy have not been felt in the country. **Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua administration May 29th 2007 to May 5th 2010** - this administration came up with 7-point agenda to develop the country and revised some of the privatization policies of the Obasanjo's administration especially the power sector and other areas vital to the well-being of the average Nigerian. His poor health could not make him get hold of the programme of his administration - more so he was surrounded by corrupt politicians, his inability to probe them resulted to the recklessness of his government. He died few years into his government.

Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan May 6th 2011 - May 29th 2015, this administration privatized the nation economic infrastructures that the Yar'Adua administration was skeptical embarking on. He had strong security challenge from the northern part of the country coupled with his mismanagement of the economy to the extent that most of his supporters in his ruling party left and joined the opposition party against him. Serious revelation of corruption plays up in the Nigeria polity in 2015 when he handed over power to General Mahammadu Buhari in May 29th 2015. Buhari has begun his second coming in Nigeria leadership with another fight against corruption in the country tries

administration multiplied the woes of the citizens.

The above tips on the leaders that have ruled the Nigeria nation shows that the abundant of the human and natural resources has not been fully put into effective use for the development and growth of the country. Out of Nigeria's population of 150 million based on the 2006 census, about 69 percent of her people live in relative poverty, 60.9 percent live in abject poverty and 61.2 percent live on less than a dollar a day. The dividend of the return of the country to democratic since 1999 after several years of military rule has not been felt positively by the people given the social sciences measure of assessment of a developed or developing nation. Development has continued to elude the Nigerian nation due to the failure of leadership. This failure of both past and present leaders in Nigeria is the reason for Achebe assertion:

the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership, there is nothing basically wrong with the Nigeria character. There is nothing wrong with the Nigerian land or climate or water or air or anything else. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal example which are the hallmarks of true leadership¹⁶

This inability of Africa leaders to rise up to the responsibility of personal example as stressed by Achebe in the description of the Nigeria case is squarely a problem militating against the development of the continent of Africa. The continent is rich with resources but the people are poor. The factors for the poverty of the people are said to be both internal and external. A 2015 Publication by the World Bank on Millennium Development Government Goals (MDGs) has established that extreme poverty has been decreasing in all regions of the world with the exception of Sub-Saharan Africa. The record shows that about 45 percent of nations in the Sub region are substantially off-track from attaining the MDGs extreme poverty target. The reasons for the persisting rate of poverty in Africa as compile by Asongu include:

.. . social barriers to economic growth and technological change, deinstitutionalization of Africa, loss of traditional African institutions, inability to make a clear distinction between 'private property rights', and private use rights', overvaluation of foreign knowledge and under devaluation of local knowledge, over-idleness of natural resources, ignoring art as an expression of technological knowledge, excessive consumption of luxury, lack of capacity to acknowledge scarcity, negative influences from colonialism and neocolonialism, false economic preconditions which have resulted in lost decades of policy prescriptions from the Washington Consensus, less self-reliance, or over-dependence on development assistance, absence of qualitative

*measurements in Africa paradigms of development, inability to effectively negotiate for foreign aid, absence of favourable local conditions and presence of fragile institution, low levels of regional integration and, inter alia, corruption in international trade and asymmetric globalization fueled policies that are more favourable to developed countries..*¹⁷

The lists of the reasons for the poverty of African people are endless; one thing is clear from the study so far, that leadership can solve the problems when leaders are willing to wake up to the responsibilities of governance with dedication and sacrifice. This lack of personal sacrifice by African leaders in governance is the reason why limited is the number of past leaders in Africa to win the prestigious MO Ibrahim Foundation Award established in 2007 to celebrate good governance. The prize is awarded to former African Executive Head of State or Government who left office in the past three years and democratically elected, served his/her constitutionally mandated term and demonstrated exceptional leadership. The award consists of a monetary prize totaling \$ 5 million over ten years and \$ 200,000 yearly for life. Since the inauguration of the award in 2007 only four people matched the conditions to win the award. They are - Joaquim Chissano from Mozambique who won it in 2007, Festus Mogae from Botswana in 2008, Pedro Pires from Cape Verde in 2011 and Hifikepunye Pohamba from Namibia won in 2014.¹⁶ The prize was not awarded in 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013 and 2015 as there was no one that met the conditions for the award. This is a demonstration of how bad leadership has been in Africa. When the Nigerian Former President, Goodluck Ebele Jonathan was selected among others in the continent of Africa to contest for the award, some of us thought that with the mere demonstration of statesmanship to succumb to defeat even when the results of the 2015 Presidential election had not been announced to avoid crisis in Nigerian democracy, he would be considered as a winner. The strong point against his nomination was that his government was corrupt to the extent that money approved by him to buy arms to fight Boko Haram insurgency ravaging the nation's democracy was diverted by his ministers under his watch.

Conclusion

In conclusion, leadership in Africa is marred by plethora of problems ranging from the above point raised in this paper and others not mention in this discourse. The reason for the underdevelopment of African continent is simply the failure of leadership. There is nothing bad with the political system in operation. What is bad is the character of the leaders. The struggle to acquire power by African politicians or military personnel at all cost, using or generating sentiments in order to be in control of the resources and the people is where the problems the in the continent of Africa. Hence there is no personal zeal by leaders in Africa to leave an examplinary leadership.

References

1. F. Omotoso, "Governance Crisis and Democracy in Nigeria, 1999 2012," *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, vol.4, no.14. 2013, Pp.128 – 129

2. J.C Ebegbulem, "Corruption and Leadership Crisis in Africa: Nigeria in Focus." *International Journal of Business and Social Sciences*, vol.3, no. 11, 2012, p.223
3. N. Ojiakor, *Social and Political History of Nigeria 1970 - 2006*, EWANS Press (Nig). Second Edition, 2014, Pp. 1- 267
4. P. A Essoh and H.D Udoh, "Leadership and the Development Paradox in Nigeria." *International Journal of Liberal Arts and Social science*, vol.2, no,3, 2014, p. 74.
5. P.A Essoh and H.D Udoh, "Leadership and the Development. . .P.65
6. Robins Luckham, *The Nigerian Military: A Sociological Analysis of Authority and Revolt. 1960-1967.* (Cambridge, University Press, 1971) p.31
7. Robins Luckham, *The Nigerian Military: A Sociological Analysis of Authority and Revolt. 1960-1967.*-----p.36
8. R. C. Eze, *Military Coups and Counter Coup d'etat in Nigeria*, (Enugu: Lauramby Publication, 2004) p. 24-25
9. James Orjiakor, *Nigeria Yesterday and Today*, (Onitsha: African Educational Publishers Nig. Ltd. 1981) p.189
10. R. C. Eze, *Military Coups and Counter Coup d'etat in Nigeria*,---p10
11. Robins Luckham, *The Nigerian Military: A Sociological Analysis of Authority and Revolt. 1960-1967.*-----p.14
12. Robins Luckham, *The Nigerian Military: A Sociological Analysis of Authority and Revolt. 1960-1967.*-----p.38
13. R. C. Eze, *Military Coups and Counter Coup d'etat in Nigeria*,---p10
14. J.C Ebegbulem, "Corruption and Leadership Crisis in Africa: Nigeria in Focus." *International Journal of Business and Social Sciences*, vol.3, no. 11,----12
15. PLO Lumumba quoted Achebe, in "Celebrating Africa: The Time for Africa is Now," *All African Conference Programme, heldjxt St. Mary's Pastoral Centre, Naruku*, 2010, P.4
16. S.A Asongu, "Ratioal Asymmetric Development: Transfer Pricing and Sub-Saharan Africa's Extreme Poverty Tragedy," *African Governance and Development Institute, (AGDI)*, Working paper 15/017, 2015, Pp.3-4
17. <https://www.naij.com/423389.rno.ibrahim..> Retrieved on 22nd September. 2015