

An Appraisal of Robert Greenleaf's Political Model and Crisis of Leadership in Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper entitled, "An Appraisal of Robert Greenleaf's Political Model and Crisis of Leadership in Nigeria" concerns itself with the task of employing the expository and analytic methods of philosophical investigation to discuss Robert Greenleaf's theory of servant leadership as a panacea to leadership crisis in Nigeria. In executing this task, the research seeks to unveil the theory of servant leadership. The main thesis of this paper is that bad governance in Nigeria is as a result of selfish leaders who do not have the interest of the citizens at heart. The paper justifies the thesis vis a vis the tenets and requirements of servant leadership model as propounded by Greenleaf. Evidence shows that an investigation into the political system of Nigeria reveals that corruption and selfishness are the main qualities of Nigerian leaders as those saddled with leadership positions often do not have the interest of the public at heart. Accordingly, the paper maintains that this Machiavellian approach; which is cunning and manipulative pursuit of personal goals and gains is the bane of good governance in Nigeria. Though the theory of servant leadership is not devoid of its own flaws, however, the paper upholds that it is only when Nigerian leaders imbibe the qualities of servant leadership can the crisis of leadership in Nigeria be vanquished.

Keywords: Robert Greenleaf, servant leadership, political model, leadership crisis

Introduction

There is a big difference between a leader and a politician. While a leader is more concerned about effective governance that will benefit the people and guarantee a better future for the generation unborn, a politician is mostly concerned about the next election. An investigation into the major cause of underdevelopment in Nigeria is by extension, an investigation into the reasons behind the leadership crisis that has befallen the country shortly after

independence. What has been the widely adopted political model in Nigeria? Is this accepted model instrumental or detrimental to the development of Nigeria?

For far too long, the implied Machiavellian political model, where the leader is admonished to play a god by subjecting and commanding the people to his/her will, rewarding who he/she deems fit, exterminating oppositions and the application of all means necessary to obtain, maintain and retain power have been the mainstream logic of politics and leadership style in Nigeria. The dynamics of Machiavellianism in the political sphere as visible in Nigeria, accounts for the preponderancy of selfish, corrupt, nepotistic, bias and mediocre style of leadership. Hence, political leaders now consider themselves demigods, acting in ways that solely promote their interest at the detriment of the people. What model of politics, therefore, is needed to enhance a more robust political system that guarantees effective leadership?

In this paper, I investigate Robert Greenleaf's servant-leader political approach and how it could address the leadership problem in Nigeria. The paper adopts the Expository and analytic methods of philosophical investigation. Expository method of research in philosophy is a way of explaining or presenting philosophical ideas clearly and systematically, usually by analyzing, interpreting, and clarifying the views of a philosopher, a text, or a concept. Analytic method in other words, is the breaking down of concepts, propositions and issues (Ephraim-Essien and Chiedozie 226). Concepts such as servant Leader, Leadership etc. will be analyzed. The research shall examine the strength of his theory in addressing the problems of leadership in Nigeria.

Who is a Leader?

Leadership has been defined as "the process of influencing the activities of an individual or a group in efforts towards the achievement of goals in a given situation" (Simmons 2). According to Nick Barney and Mary Pratt (17) the concept of leadership is tied to the "ability of an individual or group of people to influence and guide the followers or members of an organization, society, or team". The source of influence maybe formal or informal. Leaders can emerge from within a group as well as being formally appointed (Ignatius, Ating and Udoeka 69). Leadership therefore, is a developable skill.

Leadership is akin to a dynamic process in which people come together to pursue changes and in so doing, collectively developed a world they desired. According to Eyo and Udofia, leaders differ from non-leaders because of the unequalled drive for achievement, unparalleled level of ambition, unwavering energy, unrelenting tenacity and high level of initiative in decision making, action and proactiveness (183-185). A good leader, therefore, is one who is able to distinguish between personalized power motive and socialized power motive (Udofia: *Leadership Philosophy* 112).

Defining Leadership Style

Leaders usually exhibit a style of leadership as they motivate and inspire their followers. Leadership style therefore, refers to the manner in which a leader chooses to lead and interact with their followers (Northouse 18). Leadership style is an expression of the leader's leadership approach. It reflects the leader's preferences, values, and beliefs about how to effectively lead and influence others.

Transformational Leadership Style

This is a leadership style in which the leader inspires and motivate his/her followers to achieve exceptional performance by creating a vision, setting high expectations and challenging the followers to exceed their own self- interest for the benefit of organization or society at large (Collins 19).

Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership is an approach that focuses on exchange relationship between leaders and followers. In this leadership style the leader maintains stability and achieves goals via the system of reward and punishment.

Autocratic Leadership

This style of leadership is known as a leadership system in which the leader holds absolute power and makes decision without any input from followers (Pearce and Sums 2002). Here, the leader exercises full control over the decision-making process and typically expects strict compliance from the subordinates (Bwalya 184).

Laissez-Faire Leadership style

Laissez - faire Leadership sometimes refers to as delegate leadership is a leadership style in which the leader has a hand off approach, minimal involvement and allows followers to make decision (vecchio et.al 2010). Northouse (83) observes that Laissez- faire leaders provide little guidance or supervision to followers allowing them significant autonomy and freedom to make decision and perform tasks.

Situational Leadership Style

Situational Leadership style is flexible Leadership style that adapts specific need and capabilities of Individual, followers or groups (Hersey et.al 2013). Situational Leadership style emphasizes the leader's ability to assess the situation i.e (readiness or she development level of their followers) and adjust the Leadership approach accordingly.

Summarily, the different style discussed above reveals the technicalities required for a specific leadership demand. However, a leader is not confine to a certain style of leadership but event, situations and the circumstances is the determining factor as to which style should be adopted to achieve the desired goal and ultimately the leader's choice must be guided by virtue.

The Theory of Servant-Leadership

The very notion of a servant as leader or "servant-leadership" as it has come to be known, is purposefully oxymoronic and arresting in nature (Smith 3). Though the concept is one that is timeless, however, the phrase "servant leadership" was coined by Robert K. Greenleaf in his work, *The Servant as Leader*, an essay that he first published in 1970. Greenleaf stressed that there were useful and important social benefits from serving and caring for other people. Servant leadership notions have been popular in many cultures and religions especially in the Christian theology that eulogizes the state of the servant and serving. It is linked to caring for other people by realizing and discovering the internal feelings of other people, their needs and using that as foci point to take care of them or serve them (Ajemba 235). The servant leader is one who devotes time to nurturing the growth and well-being of the followers. The servant leader is willing to share power and place the needs of the followers before his/hers. This is unlike traditional leadership models that has the leader at the top and served by other people (Abbas et al cited in Ajemba235).

Greenleaf believed that leadership should be based on serving the needs of others. He defined a servant leader as someone who is a servant first, "it begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first" (Greenleaf: *The Servant as Leader* 27) Greenleaf intentionally sought a descriptor that would give people pause for thought, and challenge any long-standing assumptions that might be held about the relationship between leaders and followers in an organization. By combining two seemingly contradictory terms, Greenleaf asks us to reconsider the very nature of leadership. Although aware of the negative historical connotations associated with the word 'servant', he felt it a necessary choice to turn established conceptions about the organizational pyramid on their head, and jump-start insight into a new view of leadership.

Eva et al. (111) define servant leadership as an 'other-oriented' leadership concept wherein the leader prioritizes the individual needs and interests of followers, and is oriented towards concern for others, including society at large. This definition reflects key dimensions of the servant leader as having a deliberate focus on the interest and well-being of others, personalized interactions with followers, and a broader concern for organizational actors and larger community. In his review of the theory, van Dierendonck (1228) rather assessed the concept of servant-leader as constituting of six characteristics viz a viz: (1) empowering and developing followers by cultivating a self-confident attitude and giving followers a sense of personal power; (2) humility to seek the help of others, and retreat to the background when necessary; (3) authenticity to one's self, and adherence to a moral code; (4) interpersonal acceptance of the perspectives and feelings of others; (5) providing direction to ensure that followers know what their roles and responsibilities are; and (6) stewardship to act as role models and caretakers of followers.

Larry Larry Spears, Executive Director of the Robert K. Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership, succinctly defines servant-leadership as:

A new kind of leadership model – a model which puts serving others as the number one priority. Servant-leadership emphasizes increased service to others; a holistic approach to work; promoting a sense of

community; and the sharing of power in decision-making (Spears 33).

Each of these central tenets is explored individually below, to present a fuller picture of the servant-leadership framework.

1. **Service to Others:** Servant-leadership begins when a leader assumes the position of servant in their interactions with followers. Authentic, legitimate leadership arises not from the exercise of power or self-interested actions, but from a fundamental desire to first help others. Greenleaf wrote that this “simple fact is the key to (a leader’s) greatness” (*The Servant as Leader*²). A servant-leader’s primary motivation and purpose is to encourage greatness in others, while organizational success is the indirect, derived outcome of servant-leadership.

2. **Holistic Approach to Work:** Servant-leadership holds that “The work exists for the person as much as the person exists for the work” (Greenleaf I: *The Servant as Leader*⁸). It challenges organizations to rethink the relationships that exist between people, organizations and society as a whole. The theory promotes a view that individuals should be encouraged to be who they are, in their professional as well as personal lives. This more personal, integrated valuation of individuals, it is theorized, ultimately benefits the long-term interests and performance of the organization.

3. **Promoting a Sense of community:** Greenleaf lamented the loss of community in modern society, calling it “the lost knowledge of these times” (28). Servant-leadership questions the institution’s ability to provide human services, and argues that only community, defined as groups of individuals that are jointly liable for each other both individually and as a unit, can perform this function. Only by establishing this sense of community among followers can an organization succeed in its objectives. Further, the theory posits that this sense of community can arise only from the actions of individual servant-leaders (Greenleaf 30).

4. **Sharing of Power in Decision-Making:** Effective servant-leadership is best evidenced by the cultivation of servant-leadership in others. By nurturing participatory, empowering environments, and encouraging the talents of followers, the servant-leader creates a more effective, motivated workforce and

ultimately amore successful organization. As phrased by Russell (80), "Leaders enable others to act not by hoarding the power they have but by giving it away."

The organizational structure resulting from servant-leadership has sometimes been referred to as an "inverted pyramid", with employees, clients and other stakeholders at the top, and leader(s) at the bottom (Sarkus 28). Exemplary followers, a product of delegated decision-making, are a further example of servant-leadership's inverse nature, "another type of leader turned inside out" (Sarkus 28). Because servant-leadership breaks away from the classic organizational pyramid and promotes flexible, delegated organizational structures, many behavioral scientists see it as a forward-looking, post-industrial paradigm for leadership (Biberman and Whitty 19).

Following from the above explained four tenets of servant-leadership, Udofia (15) maintains that the servant-leader philosophy, therefore, constitutes the singular necessary condition and principle for leadership, hence, Jesus told his appellant that the influential position they desire is not within his capacity to offer but that it is prepared for anyone who internalizes and practicalizes the philosophy of servanthood.

Features of a Servant Leader

Larry Spears, the executive director of the Robert K . Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership, outline ten key elements of servant leadership described by Greenleaf (Greenleaf: *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*¹⁰). These are:

1. **Listening:** Everyone desires to be heard. Being heard will allow people to become freer, wiser and more autonomous (Koch 18). Therefore, a servant-leader must listen attentively to the needs and concerns of their subjects. According to Greenleaf, "only a true natural servant automatically responds to any problem by listening first" (Greenleaf 10).

2. **Empathy:** This is the ability to mentally project one's own consciousness into that of another individual. Greenleaf wrote, "The servant always accepts and empathizes, never rejects" (*Servant Leadership: A Journey*¹²), and "Men grow taller when those who lead them empathize, and when they are accepted for who they are" (14).

3. **Healing:** Greenleaf defined healing as “to make whole” (Greenleaf 27). The servant leader recognizes the shared human desire to find wholeness in one’s self, and supports it in others.

4. **Awareness:** Awareness, especially self awareness, is a strong characteristic of a servant leader. Being aware of self and others aids in understanding ethics and value issues. It also enables the servant leader to view most situations from a more integrated, holistic position (Spears 198). The cultivation of awareness gives one the basis for detachment, the ability to stand aside and see oneself in perspective in the context of one's own experience, amid the ever-present dangers, threats, and alarms” (Greenleaf 41). Being aware opens your mind to creative insight. Without awareness, “we miss leadership opportunities” (Greenleaf 19).

5. **Persuasion:** The ability to persuade and create consensus in a group is a key for servant leaders. Greenleaf points to an American Quaker, John Woolman, as a person of great persuasion who lived in the middle of the eighteenth century. Woolman was the man who rid the Religious Society of Friends, also known as Quakers, of slaves. He was not a big man in stature. His method of persuasion was unique, clear and persistent. Woolman traveled by horse and by foot to slave holders along the east coast one by one, without vindicating their actions, rather raising moral questions as to why they felt the need to be a slave owner and what their actions were teaching their children. In this way he used non judgmental arguing about a wrong that needed to be made right. Greenleaf concludes that, “leadership by persuasion has the virtue of change by convincement rather than coercion, its advantages are obvious” (Greenleaf: *Servant Leadership: A Journey* 44).

The effective servant-leader builds group consensus through “gentle but clear and persistent persuasion, and does not exert group compliance through position power. Greenleaf notes that “A fresh look is being taken at the issues of power and authority, and people are beginning to learn, however haltingly, to relate to one another in less coercive and more creatively supporting ways (Greenleaf 3-4). Servant leadership utilizes personal, rather than position power, to influence followers and achieve organizational objectives.

6. **Foresight:** Foresight is similar to conceptualization but not the same. Spears (198), suggests that the difference is that foresight allows a servant leader to use the lessons of the past, the realities of the present and the likely consequences of the future. He also acknowledges that foresight is a large unexplored area of leadership. Foresight is more about the when in the future something will occur rather than the what. Servant leaders can foresee the future by watching trends. According to Greenleaf, "Prescience, or foresight, is a better than average guess about what is going to happen when in the future" (Greenleaf 16). There are two levels of foresight. The first level is when a leader is concerned about the present, being responsible and reasonable about decisions. The second level of foresight is being detached in an attempt to get abroad view of the past, the current events and looking into the infinite future (Greenleaf 17).

7. **Stewardship:** A servant leadership possesses the characteristic of stewardship. Peter Block says this about stewardship: "Stewardship is... the willingness to be accountable for the well-being of the larger organization by operating in service, rather than in control, of those around us. Stated simply, it is accountability without control or compliance...Stewardship is the choice for service...We serve best through partnership, rather than patriarchy" (Block cited in Koch 19). Being a good steward of the money, time and resources is something servant leaders are held accountable for. For Greenleaf, organizational stewards, or 'trustees' are concerned not only for the individual followers within the organization, but also the organization as a whole, and its impact on and relationship with all of society (Greenleaf 31).

8. **Commitment to the growth of people:** Servant leaders are committed to the growth of others. They see others as more than workers, and more as individuals with different needs and wants. They also recognize their responsibility to lead those people to places of growth and new understanding.

9. **Building community:** Servant leaders recognize the shift from local communities to large institutions therefore they seek to create a community within the institutions they work in. Greenleaf makes an astonishing point about the shift towards community and how all people need to be in a community. Orphanages are necessary. but all people would agree that a child needs to be

in the community of a family. Hospitals are great for medical care, but the vast amount of healing happens out of the hospital and out in a community. As a society, we are moving away from an institutionalized care to communities like homes for persons with developmental and physical disabilities. The rise of large institutions has eroded community, the social pact that unites individuals in society. According to Greenleaf, "All that is needed to rebuild community as a viable life form is for enough servant leaders to show the way" (30). For him, therefore, there is a great opportunity in the world of work to recreate a sense of community. It is the role of the servant leader to show the way through subtle changes and by leading the way to forming a community, a place for people to belong.

A Review of Leadership Crisis in Nigeria

The Nigerian society has never been well governed because of leadership crisis and corruption since it gained its political independence in 1960 (Oluwasanmi, 207; Ebegbulem, 29). Oluwasanmi, (207); Imhonopi and Ugochukwu, (213) are of the opinion that: from the first democratic experiment in 1960 to military regimes and back to democracy as practiced in the country today, Nigeria has unfortunately been managed by leaders who are visionless, weak, parochial, morally bankrupt, narcissistic, egoistic, greedy and corrupt. The leadership from 1960 has criminally managed the country's affairs, accumulate wealth at the expense of national development and throwing the people over the precipice where they now wallow in absolute poverty, illiteracy, hunger, rising unemployment, avoidable health crisis and insecurity (Ebegbulem cited in Imhonopi and Ugochukwu, 213).

Historically, the origin of unethical practices and corruption in Nigeria predates the colonial era. According to a Colonial Government Report (CGR) of 1947, "The African's background and outlook on public morality is very different from that of the present day Briton, as the African in the public service seeks to further his own financial interest" (Okonkwo, cited in Ogbeidi 212). It is axiom that cases of official misuse of resources for personal enrichment existed before independence (Storey 195). Over the years, Nigeria has seen its wealth withered with little or nothing to show in living conditions of the citizens.

In analyzing the plethora of leaders that have governed Nigeria since independence in 1960, Imhonopi and Ugochukwu (213) are of the opinion that selfish, mediocre, tribal leaders and opportunistic small money-minded people masquerading as leaders have continued to regenerate over time (Ijewereme and Dunmade27-28).

Leadership Crisis in Military Regime

Jega (27) asserts that the Nigerian military began its involvement with governance on January 15, 1966, when junior workers made a bid for power, which terminated the Tafawa Balewa's government and inadvertently brought General Aguiyi- Ironsi to power. For him, it is generally recognized that the involvement of the Nigerian military in governance has done more harm than good. Nigerian politicians who have assumed leadership positions in current democratic experiment seem to possess a disturbing inclination for squandering opportunities of democratic rebirth and regeneration.

Ifediba (200) identifies military leadership in Nigeria with military dictatorship. For him, one of the basic features of military dictatorship is coup d'etat and suspension of the constitution which is often replaced with military decrees. For instance, after the annulment of June 12 elections in 1993 and in November the same year, when the interim government of Ernest Shonekan was overthrown by General Sani Abacha, Babangida's Minister of Defence, seized control of the government in a bloodless coup. The Abacha junta quickly imposed military administration on the entire country, dissolving all elected governments and legislatures at the state and local levels and clamping down on dissent.

Describing the period of the regime of Abacha and making comparison, with Odey (207) Sani Abacha ruled Nigeria from November 17, 1993 to June 8, 1998. For him, while Babangida was relatively more intelligent and quite interesting as a dictator who had the vicious capacity to make his victim believe that he had his best interest at heart even when he was strangling him, Abacha was crude and vicious. In the words of Odey (207), Abacha was a "functional illiterate" but had a superlative degree of the type of debased military mind that was needed to plan and carry out the atrocities he committed against his country. Odey further stresses that in an effort by Abacha to make legitimate his

rule, his regime announced plans to convene a National Constitution Conference to decide Nigeria's future form of government. Elections for the Constitutional Conference were hastily held in May 1994.

In the same month, the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO) was formed to coordinate and focus the efforts of pre-democracy groups. On the anniversary of the annulled election, Abiola reasserted his claim to the presidency. Continuing his view, Odey (208) stated that Abiola was arrested and imprisoned but in less than two weeks, on late June of 1993, the Constitutional Conference convened in Abuja, triggering off new protests, more arrests, and a debilitating strike by oil workers. The strike, which seriously reduced oil exports and paralyzed the domestic economy, was joined by university and bank employees. In early September, the strike was finally broken by the government. No wonder, Ifedibia (23) considers the military incursion into administration of Nigeria as a deviation as well as a tragedy. In this, one can say that the military is the problem. The military took up a job they are most unqualified to do, a job which negates their role as a professional defense unit.

No wonder then Ofuebe (25) laments the absence of good governance in the country after the many years of military intervention. In his view, civilian leaders have also perceived political leadership as an ample opportunity to accumulate money, thus the intense struggle to capture state power which they see as the most pliable strategy of becoming rich. Like Ifediba (23), Ofuebe (25) is critical of military leaders who get more corrupt and looted the national treasury much more than their predecessors whom they overthrew on the ground of corruption. He singles out Ibrahim Babaginda and Sani Abacha as the worst examples of corrupt leaders of military regimes in the country.

In his critique of military leadership in the country, Amaucheazi (198) is not as damning as others mentioned above. In his view, even while in power, the army in Nigeria has not been as autocratic as in many other countries, but had rather from the start involved the civilians in decision-making and policy implementation. Jega (199) however opines that the impact of prolonged military rule on Nigeria has not been consequential to the present crisis in the country. We must however acknowledge the difference in events and time between the 1980 of Amaucheazi's and the 1996 of Attahiru's here.

Amaucheazi's 1980 was not only a time when civilians were in power but just after what appeared to be a humane military regime handed over power in strict compliance with the 1979 timetable it set by 1976 when it came into power after the overthrow of Murtala Mohammed.

The military by suspending the fundamental rights provision of the Constitution and by its various decrees containing ouster clauses emasculated the courts and turned them into toothless bulldogs. During military dictatorship, the courts found it difficult to perform their statutory function of upholding the fundamental human rights of the citizens. Executive lawlessness and disregard for the rule of law became the order of the day. For Eregha (67) one important feature of the leadership during the military regime is flagrant violation of human rights and judicial orders. They have no respect of law and the constitution which is the supreme authority of a state.

Leadership Crisis in Civilian Regimes

Chinua Achebe argues that the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership (1). The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to their responsibility, to the challenge of personal example which is the hallmarks of true leadership. Okolo (194) agrees with Achebe that Nigeria has a problem with leadership and insists that there can be no serious change in the country unless it occurs in the leadership. For him, if people see their political leaders as little more than robbers of the state, what prevents them from developing the same instinct in their lives? The burden of translating dreams of true progress and independence to reality lies on the Nigerian leaders. This is development, he holds.

For Achunike (204) development is about people and steady improvement of their lives. In the opinion of Ekwunife (27), to develop is to grow. Nigeria cannot be said to be growing in spite of the democratic governance in practice. Similarly, Dike (203) traces the problems in the country to political leadership. He opines that the forbearers of Nigeria were entangled in tribal and ethnic issues and therefore could not lay a solid socio-political and economic foundation for the nation. Their successors did not fare any better. He believes that Nigerian political leaders are not working for the welfare of the country. Nigeria needs effective, self-critical, visionary and dynamic leaders who

can put in place structures and reforms that will strengthen the rule of law, support true democracy, promote greater accountability and transparency.

Onuigbo (23) opines that a democratic nation vouches for economic stability and most importantly cares for the security of the workers. Nigeria is not here either. For him, it would seem that Nigerian leaders do not know precisely what it entails to be a democratic nation. He holds that democracy has neither double meaning nor alternative. Once it is democracy it remains so and anything outside government of the people under the regime of universal suffrage should be given another title but not democracy. He regrets that Nigerian's own democratic tenets are different due to a myriad of problems she created for herself.

Wilmot (26) in one of his critical essays takes a look at the political leadership of Nigeria in the first republic, the military and the post-military civilian leadership alike. He maintains that the country's political leadership is collectively responsible for the widespread poverty and the growing gap between the rich and the poor among the citizenry. He gives the hardest knock to the military and their civilian successors and paints a gloomy picture of the future. He is of the opinion that the greatest condemnation of the military is the comparison of Nigerian leaders before and after 1966. Izukanne (203) corroborates the view that the problems facing Nigeria can be traced essentially to the problem of leadership. He believes that Nigeria's underdevelopment is basically due to the criminal dishonesty of its leadership.

Okwueze (200) believes strongly that leadership is a sacrifice and for service but it is not so in the Nigerian society today. For him, Nigerian leaders of today are those who expect the led to serve them and make sacrifices to enable them remain comfortable. He continues to see Nigeria as a society where the President would rather pay millions of Naira to procure a new presidential jet than repair dilapidated roads that have become death traps for the led. For him, it is a society where the legislature prefers to be paid N5million as furniture allowance rather than insist on the provision of shelter of any kind for the led. The led are told to be patient and make sacrifices to enable the leader travel in the comfort of the world's latest presidential jets. He opines that this is a society where a Governor refuses to give his people drinkable water only because he is

amassing wealth for his campaign for a second tenure in office. The legislatures like to be settled rather than have certain social amenities located amongst the people he represents.

Prospects of Servant-Leadership as a Panacea to Nigeria Political Crisis

The prospects of servant leadership are huge for Nigeria at large and for political institutions and organizations in particular. The bane of development in Nigeria at all levels is the obsession with self at the expense of the others. If leaders are impassioned by a sense of service, they would appreciate the need to advance their followers' interests, not exploit them. Apart from generally allowing increased service to others, promoting a sense of community, sharing of power in decision-making as advanced by Chandaruba (219), servant leaders prioritize the well-being and development of their team members and followers as they create a positive work environment where people feel valued, respected and supported. This makes followers happy and motivated, an antithesis of the reality of most Nigerians.

Servant leaders build trusting relationships with their team members and followers through open communication, empathy and integrity. This trust fosters loyalty and commitment among people, leading to stronger team cohesion, collaboration, and loyalty. If Nigerian leaders truly serve the people, people will in turn trust them. There is often a gulf between the leaders and the followers in the Nigerian public service. Servant leadership has the potential of promoting a culture of teamwork, mutual support and collaboration. By focusing on the needs of others and fostering a sense of community, servant leaders motivate people to work together towards common goals and objectives.

Servant leaders inspire creativity, innovation, and engaged in problem-solving among their team members. By empowering individuals, providing autonomy, and acknowledging diverse perspectives, servant leaders create an environment that stimulates new ideas, experimentation and continuous improvement. Again, they prioritize the growth and development of their team members, providing opportunities for learning, skill-building, and career advancement. Nigeria will be a better place for all if people know that leaders are genuinely interested in their growth and development and if leaders are

committed to empowering individuals to live a fulfilled life by showing care and sympathy to their well-being.

More so, as servant leadership is associated with improved organizational performance, including higher productivity, profitability and customer satisfaction, the notion of civil service connotes the need to serve. By putting the needs of others first, servant leaders create a culture of excellence, service, and continuous improvement that drives overall success for different layers of the society. Servant leaders demonstrate ethical behaviour, integrity and a commitment to social responsibility. By leading by example and upholding ethical standards, servant leaders inspire trust, respect and admiration among their team members and stakeholders. Aligning with the need for exemplary leadership, Akinniyi holds that Nigerian leaders should lead by example. They must change their orientation and be ready to give more to the people rather than serving their own parochial interests (Akinniyi 5).

Nigeria's leadership demagogic challenges over times can be alluded to successive leaders' refusal to address correctly the brain-drain phenomenon in all sector of leadership. In fact, the political system has neglected the right attitude towards handling of corruption issues morally. In view of this, Sklar alludes that there is political precondition for economic growth and development that hinges on leadership and the form of government being practiced (23). The implication is that there is a nexus between political office holders and the political system. For there can be no pattern of state economic development without explicit turning on of the people's development within the political system.

Political class and leadership ascension in Nigeria attracts mediocrity and that is why successive regimes since independence have been indicted of corruption and maladministration. This makes government often times to be described as precarious and pariah (Okunade 208). The extent of systemic corruption levied against political leaders with its accompanied underdevelopment indeed has been the effect of leadership strain ever noticed in our democracy. This neither reviews the fact that the Nigerian leadership misfortune is endemic nor is artificial character. Rather, the unwillingness and inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility of personal examples has made

leadership failed, ipso facto. Accordingly, the development failure experienced in Nigeria has an immitigable correlation with the failure of leadership (Udofia: Leadership Philosophy 128). A distorted leadership and a disoriented society where decisions are made by the government against the wishes and interest of the electorate, are the foundations of a dysfunctional democracy (Ignatius, Ating and Udoeka 76).

The prospects of servant leadership are huge as this leadership approach aligns with the changing preferences and expectations of the new generation of Nigerians who prefer compassionate, ethical and value-driven leadership. By embodying the principles of servant leadership, there will be a culture of trust, engagement, collaboration and innovation that makes everyone have a sense of belonging in activities spearheaded by the leaders. A servant leader, as Greenleaf contends, is a person who is seriously committed and devoted to being a servant first with an inner feeling to serve others. However, this is the type of leadership that is becoming rare as an average leader in Nigeria and elsewhere considers leadership as an opportunity to feather his/her nest or lord it over others to project a sense of importance. The need for paradigm shifts in this regard is urgent and necessary.

Evaluation

In the words of Christopher Udofia, contemporary Nigeria is an unfortunate historical reality of the malignant ill of governance failure in which power is pursued, gained and wielded for everything short of the purpose of development (Udofia: Leadership and National Development 75). Political leadership in Nigeria, therefore, requires end-values substances as liberty, justice and equality on the part of all leaders by raising their followers up through stages of morality and need.

In his analysis on leadership, Lee Kuan Yew, the celebrated founding father of modern Singapore wrote in his book, *From Third World to First: The Singapore Story*, 1965 – 2000 says that “we need good people to have good government” (Cited in Ebegbulem 202). This implies that good political leaders will bring about good bureaucratic/civil service system. Lee Kuan Yen evolved a transparent bureaucratic system devoid of corruption. However good the system of government, bad leaders will bring harm and worsen the conditions of their

people. On the other hand, evidence abounds in literature on several societies well governed despite poor systems of government, because “good, strong leaders were in charge” (Ebegbulem 212).

Over the years, Nigerian leaders have demonstrated leader-first style or character of leadership. This is not far from too much priority given to self at the expense of the governed. Generally, the role of leadership is to promote adaptive but very useful changes in the society. Good leadership or servant leadership therefore should strive to focus on how to consult subordinates and seek their suggestions. Servant-leadership takes into account the peoples’ viewpoints before making decisions. In fact, their perception to issues at stake justifies the onus of being people centre as democracy emphasizes.

Despite the numerous advantages of servant leadership, however, the theory as propounded by Greenleaf is not devoid of criticisms. One of such critics is Thomas Camm who notes that servant-leadership puts the focus of leadership on those being led only. According to him, the focus for Greenleaf was the effect a leader had on those being led, but what happens to the leader on the process? To this, Camm poses the question, “How are we going to measure if someone has become wiser as a result of our leadership?” (108). For some scholars like Rhodes, many of the characteristics of servant leadership identified previously would generally be attributed to a feminine style of leadership as “the stereotypical image of a male worker in modern society does not allow for feelings or emotion” (Rhodes 2). Jaya and Sarros contend that the spiritual foundation (holism) which grounds servant leadership has been the greatest cause of confusion regarding its acceptance and application in western culture (cited in Boyum 4). Schaeffer’s comprehensive analysis of theology, history, sociology and arts argues the current trend in western culture is away from the biblical or eastern paradigms (its original roots) of thinking toward a self-generated individualistic ideal (96). Notwithstanding the criticisms, the relevance of servant leadership model cannot be underestimated.

Conclusion

The presence of a servant leader is the integral lifeline necessary for effective leadership on all levels (Jones 4). Without servant leadership, the “we” of the organization becomes extinct, ultimately eliminating the growth and

development of a strong sense of community within the organization (Jones 14). The concept of servant-leadership is not restricted to political governance. It extends to management activities in both profits making and non-profit-oriented organizations. Managers of such organizations are expected to exhibit the characteristics of a servant-leader. It is an irrefragable truism that leadership is everything and until the right leaderships emerge at various levels in Nigeria, there will not be a change and the situation will be getting worse. Leadership begins from each and every one as everyone is a shepherd with some flock in his or her care.

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