

**THE CHALLENGES OF LEADERSHIP TO GOOD GOVERNANCE  
IN NIGERIA UNDER A DEMOCRATIC REGIME.**

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**Abstract**

*Leadership is a very important variable in the nature, state and character of any nation. Leadership and the form of leadership that they provide shape the way in which state policies are made and the impact on the generality of the people. State on its own cannot make policies; it depends on the political elite to do this. Thus, it is the political elites or the decision makers of a state who determine the purpose and course of actions at both the domestic and international levels. Ironically, the conditions of Nigeria and Nigerians over the years have remained pathetic. This has been attributed to a number of factors among which is leadership failure. The leadership has been described as not focused, sincere, honest and corrupt. All these vices, it is said lead to bad government. The resultant effect is the general level of poverty, insecurity, unemployment and deprivation. The paper finally submits that to redress the situation, there is the urgent need to reform the country through honest, transparent, dedicated, committed e.g, detribalized, national leader who could transform the country to a truly federal state with every citizen feeling a genuine sense of belonging<sup>m</sup> every part of the country.*



## **Introduction**

The leadership question has become a recurring issue in the discourse on the Nigeria project. The political elite or decision makers (Leaders) have been object of vilification, condemnation and disdain in view pervasive and persistent political crisis. Nigerian leaders have been accused of being responsible for the present state of Nigeria which Seteoulu (2004) aptly described as been characterized by:

*Huge external debt overhang, net capital flight, disinvestment collapse of social infrastructures, food crisis and insecurity, over devalued national currency, pervasive poverty, homelessness and under development, unpopular, repressive and alienating economic policies.*

The descriptions above negate the estimation of most observers of Nigeria state who see the country has having the potential to be dynamic economy. This optimism is premised on the available and abundant human and material resources which the country is endowed with by nature.

It is of course true that the economic fortunes of a country are determined by a variety of factors. In the case of Nigeria, the collapse of the international oil market in the 1980s is obviously one of the major causes. It led to a drastic fall in national earnings, concomitantly in the capacity to import needed consumer goods and industrial raw materials and spare parts. Besides, the structural adjustment programmed (SAP) which was adopted by the Babangida administration in 1986 as panacea, has proven in-capable of solving the economic and political problems of the country. The removal of subsidy, trade liberalization, currency devaluation, privatization and other policy instruments of SAP yielded only few benefits. "Their overall impact was to worsen inflation, unemployment infrastructure decay, poverty, ethic militia, insecurity etc. however, in the view of Enamor ( 1997).

*The most critical variable in the explanation of acute economic, social and political crisis in which Nigeria is currently mired is failure of leadership).*

One will but agree with the above submission because, as earlier pointed out, it is the political elites or decision makers (Leaders) who determine the nature and structure of a state, therefore the idiosyncrasies of leaders go a long way to



determining policies that are formulated and implemented.

There is no doubt that Nigeria is highly endowed with natural and human resources. The country has oil and Gas, numerous mineral resources like coal, bauxite, iron and steel columbite etc. in abundance. Similarly, with a population about one and hundred and seventy million men and women (NPC: 2011) who are highly productive there can be divorce from poor handling or harnessing these resources in appropriate qualities order than leadership.

The failure of Nigerian state is therefore blamed mostly oil leadership failure. The focus of this paper therefore is to examine the problem of leadership in Nigeria over the years. Some manifestation of these failures would be examined.

Effort will be made to recommend some solutions to these problems, so that, if applied; the problems can be resolved and Nigeria can arrive at the Eldorado envisaged by her founding fathers.

### **Conceptual Clarification**

Theories of leadership assume that there are shared goals and objectives and that a leader established the goals, purpose and objectives of the collective will. In addition, the leader creates structures through which the goals and objectives can be achieved (Pogeson 1994). The truth is that it is only a strong and effective leadership that can provide purposeful goals and objectives and Vice Versa. With good focused and purposeful leadership, a country is likely to be a place for all to live. Thus, among all factors that determine the condition of a country, leadership occupies a vital position. Leadership has several definitions. Just like other concepts in the social science family. According to Penguin dictionary of politics;

*Leadership is a quality which in theory signifies the ability of a person or a group of persons that persuade others to act by inspiring them and making them believe that action proposed course of action is the correct one.*

According to James Stoner cited in Mimi & (1997) leadership is viewed as "a behavior which induces energetic, emotionally, committed cooperative followers and influencing the task related activities of group member".

From the two samples of various definitions of leadership given above, it can be noted that leadership is not specific abilities. In recent times the quality of

