

DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATION AND LEADERSHIP IN AFRICA

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THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP IN NIGERIA: A LOOK AT THE MOVEMENT FOR THE  
ACTUALIZATION OF THE SOVEREIGN STATE OF BIAFRA

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## **Abstract**

This work on “the role of leadership in Nigeria: A look at the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra” aimed at finding the missing link in Nigerian leadership right from the Nigerian civil war to the current state of the country. After the civil war in Nigeria, in order to keep the fragile peace of the nation then, General Yakubu Gowon, the Nigerian Head of State (President), instituted the 3Rs—Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Reintegration; and also pronounced to the world’s acclaim that the war has ended with a: “No Victor No Vanquished” stand. All these were done so that the wounds of the war will heal fast, the horrors of war forgotten fast, and reintegration rapidly achieved. The un-implementation of the 3Rs: Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Reintegration and the no victor, no vanquish has thrown more light to other laws, policies and verdicts that are left unimplemented. Most of our Leaders, do not know the implication of words they make public, that’s why they are not bothered on seeing and enforcing its strict implementation. Flowing from this understanding, it cannot be rightly posited that the un-implemented 3Rs promised by the Federal Government of Nigeria under Jack Gowon at the end of the civil war in 1970, to obtain peace from the (defeated) Biafrans (who had an option of going into prolonged Gorilla/Bush/Fluid warfare after the combats from 1967-1970, till the world comes-in to negotiate and embrace peace) is an evidence of failed leadership.

This has been repeating itself in Nigerian leadership, currently almost every tribe in Nigeria is seeking for their own independence due to the anomaly happening in Nigerian leadership and the hope of citizens are gradually diminishing on the Nigerian government. Nigerian leadership has so many made laws that are not implemented, most sects suffer more

than the other and are being neglected, used and fooled. There should be a change in Nigerian leadership style so as to subsidize the increase in division among different sects seeking to be independent.

Some relevant topics related to this topic were reviewed to help paint a clearer picture of what we mean. These topics reviewed include: Leadership as a concept, Democracy, Leadership and Service Delivery in Nigeria, leadership in Nigeria, Leadership and Political Recycling in Nigeria, understanding the role of Leadership in Nigeria, the history of Biafra & MASSOB. Elite theory was used to portray leadership and democracy.

In summary, this study holds the word of Nigeria former Head of State Late General Sani Abacha in October, 1995 that: *...we cannot achieve a stable democratic polity in the midst of dishonesty and corruption. These vices, have crippled our various institutions which otherwise could be viable assets to our economy recovery.* Before democracy can bring about development political elite must be people of vision, ready to render selfless service and do away with corruption.

**Keyword:** Role, Leadership, Nigeria and MASSOB

This study on the role of leadership in Nigeria: A look at the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra, would have to look at some review on related topics on how it concerns Nigerian leadership.

## **Leadership**

The concept of leadership has generated a harlot of arguments since the idea of organised society came into existence. Ologbenla, (2007) noted that Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau, Locke, Marx, Engel, Heidegger, etc have written on the importance of leadership in nation building and development project. Although they differ in approach, their basic concern however, centres on who governs, who should govern and what should constitute political authority in a community, ditto the role and influence of political actors. While Plato and Aristotle subscribe to idealist orientation in their analysis on leadership, Locke and Rousseau analysis are weaved within the matrix of prescriptive method for generalising on the nature of man, society and authority. Marx and Engels work is crafted in historical materialist theory

Leadership simply means “the quality of being good at leading a team, organization, a country, etc” (Ologbenla, 2007:100). Leadership is the process of providing direction, energising others, and obtaining their voluntary commitment to the leader’s vision. Thus, a leader creates a vision and goals and influences others to share that vision and work towards the goal (Wendy, Cook and Hunsaker, 2003). Okadigbo (1987) sees leadership as the process through which an individual consistently exerts more influence than others in pursuing group behaviour. According to Seteolu (2004) leadership theories include trait, behavioural, attribution, characteristic, transformational and visionary. He went further to describe leadership as a combination of strategy and character. To Yakub, leadership can be categorised as “weak, competent, foolish, stupid, corrupt and hedonistic, such that many be frolicking while “Rome is burning” (Audu, 2010:3). Within the context of politics, political leadership is seen as the decision on social policy and allocation of resources by partisan representatives. Thus, political Leadership is a ruler that

guides the people to achieve development vision or goals. It is critical to a country's development (Eneh, 2007). The interdependence of leadership and development is illustrated by societies that have risen above the natural limitations of their environment to achieve sustainable development under transformative and visionary leadership of which Japan is a good example. Conversely, are societies greatly endowed with natural resources but have failed to achieve development that commensurate the level of endowment because of poor leadership characterised by self-centeredness, corruption and short-sightedness (Bammeke, 2005). Thus, leadership is a catalyst of development.

## **Democracy**

The concept of Democracy is a problematic one. In fact, it has been subjected to all forms of abuse. Almost all governments lay claim to being democratic. However, from the Athenian to contemporary definition, the nucleus has been political pluralism which allows for several parties to contest in a free, fair and periodic election. In a sense, democracy is characterised by political practices that guarantee representation, accountability and participation under the condition of liberty provided by the rule of law (Robert, 2001). Some analysts have aptly drawn attention to certain probable misconceptions of democracy. Firstly, although periodic election is a requirement, it is not enough yardsticks to define democracy. Little wonder that Jega, (2003) asserts that civil rule, contrary to popular thinking, is not necessarily democratic rule. Some scholars have therefore attempted a distinction between "electoral democracy" and "popular democracy" (Olufemi, 2000:32).

Democracy has become a normatively relative concept. In short, what constitutes democracy in one society may not necessarily be in another. This has led to measuring democracy along a continuum. That is, country A is "more democratic" than B and so on. The problem has to do with establishing a definite threshold and standard for measurement (Aremu, 2004).

Another Kernel of controversy has to do with the critical distinction in the understanding of democracy from two worlds. The advanced Capitalist societies see the significance of democracy

derivable from the avalanche of freedom and inalienable rights it guarantees, while developing countries see it as a panacea to all societal ills (Saliu, 1999).

This misconception is germane for background understanding of the high hope reposed on democracy to provide solutions to socio-economic problems bedeviling countries that subscribe to democratic rule.

*The failure of imported western models of leadership to solve the socio-economic and sociopolitical problems of developing countries like Nigeria is increasingly raising questions in the minds of concerned individuals and organizations all over the world about the efficacy and relevance of these models (Muhammad, 2005:19).*

Muhammad underscores the imperative for good leadership in every human organization. Thus, leadership remains the cornerstone for the accomplishment of desired goals in every human organization. Such leadership must not only be people-oriented, but also, the leader(s) must administer the affairs of the organization implicit in the history, cultures, norms, values, yearnings and aspirations of the organization. Why most organizations or countries fail in the attainment of predetermined goals is sometimes traceable to the adherence and application of models of leadership alien to the environment in which leaders operate. Thus, available evidence has shown that no organization or country can grow bigger than the vision of its leadership. This implies that leadership is very important in development-oriented organization (Dogo, 2005: 340). In Nigeria, several leadership styles have been experimented such as parliamentary, military dictatorship, democratic system, rotational system, among others. The euro-centric models of leadership seem not to have provided desired answers to leadership problems confronting Nigeria. Mohammed (2005: 20) poses the following questions:

*...people have began to ask; are those systems being practiced suitable for our societies? Are they inherently good or bad? Are they being applied cognizant of environmental differences between our society and the societies from which these ideas originated? Do they accommodate our cultural and ideological diversities? How can these western models be modified to suit our environments? How can we solve the leadership problem of our societies?*

The Nigerian state has passed through various stages of development, yet, the country has not recorded desired achievements. All have not been well with Nigeria in her past 50 years of nation building. This situation partly explains why Bill Clinton queried: *...can a great country that is home to one in six African succeed in building a democracy amidst so much trouble? Can a developing country, blessed with enormous human and natural resources thrive in a global economy and lift all its people? Can a nation so blessed by the nerve and vigour of countless traditions and many faiths be enriched by it...* (Otohogua, 2007: 324).

It is pertinent to note that what Nigeria is currently experiencing is leadership problem. The western countries that we copy in almost everything we do including governance, now understand that the style of leadership and political systems bequeathed to Nigeria has continued to cascade the country's developmental efforts. It is even disheartening to note that most past corrupt leaders in Nigeria are currently anticipating and scheming to occupy the Number One seat in Nigeria "Presidency". Some of these corrupt and dictatorial leaders were unable to administer the affairs of Nigeria to the admiration of the people in spite of huge resources at their disposals. Thus, the above view has been articulated by Nanaghan (2010:14) that:

*...the fight against corruption in Nigeria will be incomplete if people like Gen. Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida and his cohorts are left off the hook to enjoy the national wealth that belongs to the entire nation...*

This, therefore, suggests that what Nigeria needs at this critical period is quality and visionary leadership. Thus, Nigeria needs truthful, trusted, honest and patriotic leaders. The country needs only those that can define properly the goals the country is expected to pursue particularly in this 21st century globalization – dominated era.

### ***Leadership and Service Delivery in Nigeria***

Leadership, by its nature, involves the exercise of social power. Thus, by exerting a profound effect on personal behaviour, individual and organization productivity, adjustment to working situations, and morale in organizations, leadership should not be viewed separately from social

power. Thus, leadership is the ability to influence the behaviour of others in a group or organization, set goals, for the group, formulate paths to the goal and create some social norms in the group (Uveges, 2003:214). In very society such as Nigeria, the followers always look on to their leaders to provide certain services to them.

Hence, there is a correlation between leadership and service delivery. The primary responsibility of the leader is to deliver services considered to be crucial to the citizenry. In Nigeria, the ability of the government to legitimately tax and govern people is premised on its capacity to deliver range of services required by its population which no other player will provide (Adamolekun, 2002:123).

Thus, poor leadership is, therefore, responsible for poor service delivery to Nigerians. In Nigeria, we must begin to judge the success and failure of our leaders from their ability and vision in delivering their campaign promises to the people. The current crop of leaders in Nigeria are only interested in their pockets. Hence, they seem to have redefined what constitute leadership. Leadership must not only be selfless but also, the leader must be able to utilize judiciously the resources of the state in providing people-oriented and quality services in the state. By this, leadership must be viewed as service to the people.

For the past 11 years of democratic governance, Nigerians still refer or describe the country's democracy as "nascent". The reason is largely due to poor leadership and its attendant consequences on service delivery to the people. In some states of the federation like Abia, the delivery of dividend of democracy to the people has been elusive. Yet the campaign and intrigues for second term agenda the State Governor are on top gear. Other states in Nigeria where leadership has failed the people is evidenced from the governors' bill boards with all manner of inscriptions, strategically positioned to give the visitors to the states the impression that their administrations have delivered the dividend of democracy to the people. Thus, this anti-people political strategy of electioneering campaign is capped with the institutionalization of, praise singer's at every segments of the state – state capital, local government and ward levels, to propagate the ideals, evil deeds and political ambitions of their patrons or masters (State Governor) to return for the second term to the government house at the expense of the masses.

### ***Leadership and Political Recycling in Nigeria***



*... official corruption is primarily the outcome of exposure to direct budgetary implementation involving large volume of funds given to the public enterprises. Government contracts, subsidies, grants and dubious (Ghost workers syndrome) employments in public enterprises are the chief feeders of official corruption... (Dinneya, 2006:253).*

Every system has ways of generating its anti-thesis. Thus, the systemic challenges and institutional decay in every social system has means of reproducing other social pathologies within the system. Hence, corrupt and poor leadership in Nigeria as well as in most African states have continued to reproduced another social ill which most scholars, researchers and observers are yet to understand its dynamics, dimensions and rationale behind it. Thus, political recycling is the selfish behaviour of parading or appointing particular candidates into public offices as if other competent citizens do not exist within the system. This system does not create room for „new hands“ and fresh ideas“. This ugly trend characterized Nigeria"s political system.

It further paints a picture to the outside world that Nigeria seems not to have moved away from primordialism to the modern era. One imagines a situation where politicians that occupied public offices, during the military era and Second Republic are still being recycled up till today. One also wanders why people like Chief Ojo Maduekwe of Abia State, Chief Tony Anenih of Edo State, Chief Olabode George from the South West, Dr. Rilwan Larkman from the North, among others, still occupy public offices in the present era. This goes to confirm that the Nigeria"s political system does not give room for „fresh hands“ to be tested in the administration of the affairs of the country.

Consequently, Nigerians must not lose sight on the fact why these old people are recycled is to enable them continue to „service“ those that nominated them into such positions. This makes the elimination of godfatherism into Nigeria"s politics difficult if not impossible. Thus, the recycled politicians are also appointed to protect the interests of their patrons who may have stolen public funds at one time or the other. Therefore, the continuous appointment of such people into public offices in Nigeria is purely against public interest. Thus, their leadership style while in office is not only anti-people, but also characterized by corruption in order to satisfy the interest of those who recycled them.

Adebayo (2004:19) shades more light into this politico-economic cankerworm that hitherto cascade development in Nigeria: *...in Nigeria, during four years of civilian rule, 1979 to 1983, quite a number of government functionaries each amassed millions of naira, and a few were known to have hit the billion mark. Some of them owned private jets, and palatial mansions in the Western World's capitals...*

Hence, corruption and its attendant consequences resulting in the recycling of old men and women in the public offices seem to be part and parcel of Nigeria's political system. The ugly manner in which old men and women are recycled in Nigeria is currently discouraging those that would excel in public offices if granted the opportunity to serve. It also discourages educated citizens from venturing into politics as a career.

### **Leadership in Nigeria**

Reflecting on ethical vs. unethical leadership from studies conducted in western countries indicating that ethical leaders who exhibit empathy, trustworthiness, selfless attitude, and focus on collective mission tend to maintain optimal leader-follower relationships, one wonders whether similar results will be obtained in a country like Nigeria. Considering the attributes of the ethical leader (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; O'Connor, Mumford, Clifton, Gessner & Connelly, 1995). it is expected that followers of such leader will be more likely to imbibe the vision of the organization as interpreted by the leader and achieve the group goals as a result of intrinsic motivation. Having worked in a Nigerian educational organization for the past three years, I am challenged to believe that the cultural milieu or mindset of the average Nigerian in the workforce seems to be primarily centered on personal rather than group goals. It almost feels as though many followers perceive an empathetic, selfless and considerate attitude as weakness.

### **Understanding the Role of Leadership in Nigeria**

Geographically, Nigeria is a country located in the Western African region, bordering the Gulf of Guinea, between Benin and Cameroon. It is made of three major ethnic tribes, the Hausas (occupying the north), the Yoruba (occupying the west), and the Ibos (occupying the east). It has a total area of approximately 923,768 sq. km as well as 4,047 km in land boundaries (Udogu, 2001). Culturally, Nigeria is the most populated country in Africa; its population has risen above

160 million. The population is extremely diverse with well over 250 ethnic groups, some numbering fewer than 20,000 people. Most of its population is concentrated in the southern part of the country, as well as in the area of dense settlement around Kano in the north. Between the two areas is a sparsely populated middle belt (Olaniyan, 1984).

Historically, the Republic of Nigeria came under colonial rule of the British (United Kingdom) during the second half of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th century, making English its common language. The British dependencies of Northern and Southern Nigeria were merged into a single territory in 1914, commonly known as the amalgamation of northern and southern Nigeria. On October 1, 1960, Nigeria gained its independence from the British rule. Today, Nigeria is a democratic nation with freedom of religion. While 50% of the population is associated with Islamic worship, Christianity and African Traditional practice comprise 40% and 10%, respectively (Olaniyan, 1984).

Culturally, Nigeria is a multi-tribal system in which every tribe wants to excel or suppress the other, so they are not on the same level playgrounds. Every person in politics is regionalized and people are capitalizing on that. Once leadership is zoned in the country, one cannot expect to get the best, but Nigerians are trying to live with what they presently have. There are more than 300 different tribal groups in Nigeria, all of which belong to the political definition "Nigerian" but are distinct from one another in terms of cultural practices. Added to this are economic disparities among the various groups, as well as potential for conflict on religious grounds, especially between the long-established Muslim population and the rapidly growing Christian sector.

Since Nigeria's independence in 1960, civil war, military *coup d'état*, and consequent military governments have created a Nigerian political environment that is not always seen as stable. These circumstances have constantly destabilized and jeopardized Nigeria's democracy as well as the political states that border Nigeria. There has been a constant and utter lack of rule of law on the part of the government and the governed. The most urgent issues in Nigeria today are the lack of management of the public trust, corruption, government instability, and the maintenance of decaying simple amenities and infrastructures in the nation. The issue of the upsurge of corruption is endemic and troubling. Transparency International consistently rates the levels of corruption in Nigeria among the highest in the world. Pervasive corruption appears to permeate many levels of the Nigerian society (Eti, Ogaji, & Probert, 2006).

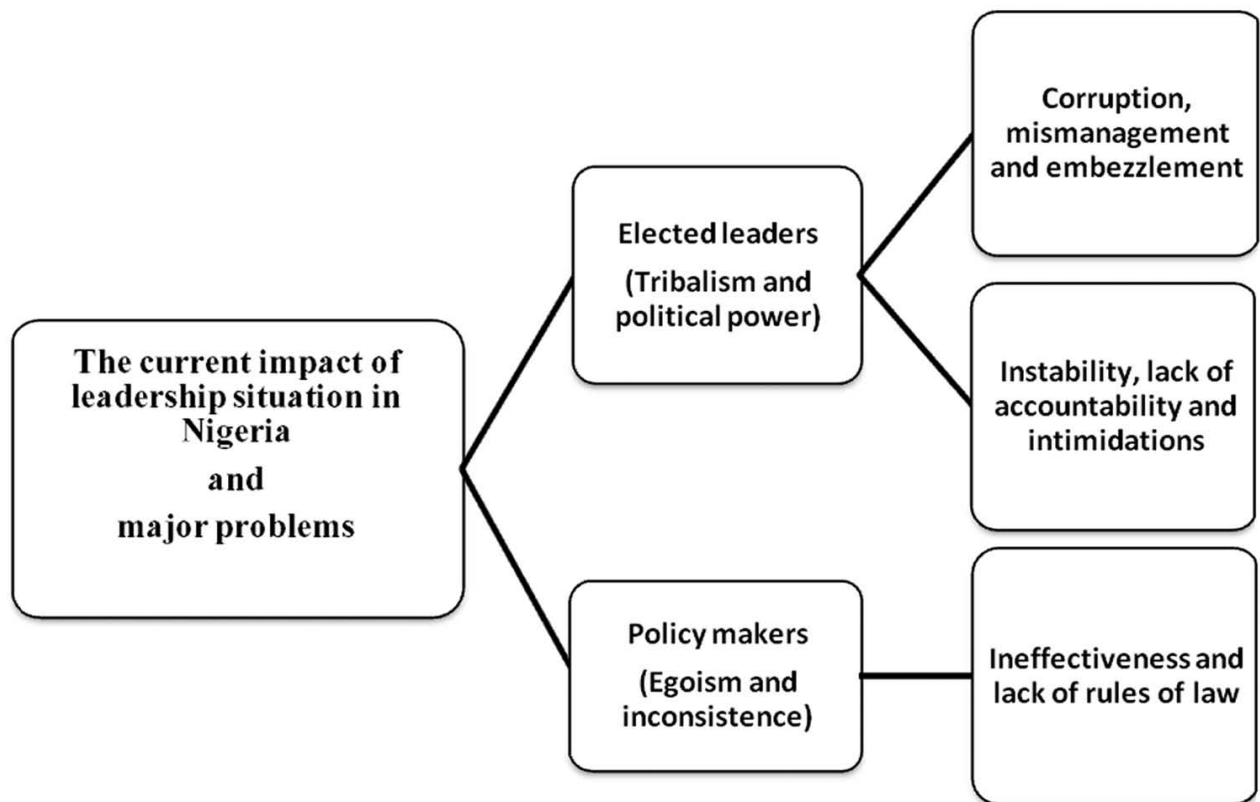
Hargreaves (2002) in discussing about the ways of improving basic health care in Nigeria claimed that Nigeria, once heralded as the beacon of Africa, has fallen somewhat short of this potential. Years of plutocratic repressive dictators and military rule, coupled with widespread corruption, have resulted in large-scale neglect and deterioration of public services.

According to Kew (2006), the giant was brought to its knees by 20 years of brutal and corrupt military rule, which left a legacy of executive dominance and a political corruption in the hands of Nigeria's so-called "godfathers"—powerful political bosses sitting atop vast patronage networks who view the government primarily through the lens of their own personal enrichment. (p. 73)

According to Eicher and Liedholm (1970), the pressing problems of everyday survival remain the highest immediate priority. Since the oil boom of the 1970s, the nation's economy has been in crisis despite continued expansion in oil production. Inefficiency in governance has further deteriorated the Nigerian economy. Political instability and lack of proper accountability in the country have severely impeded the ability of successive governments to implement economic policies for the common good of the people, thus creating a lack of basic amenities for the people in the country.

For Kirk-Greene and Rimmer (1981), the solution for addressing Nigeria's problems and consolidating democratic governance in the federal republic lies in having a government or leadership that works on the principles of good governance and is, most importantly, accountable to the Nigerian people. Good governance in Nigeria is essential to its stability and growth and that of the economies of West African countries in the Sub-region. While corruption and abuse of power long have been features of Nigeria's economic and political landscapes, they do not have to remain in the country's future. Studies designed to examine the positive challenges of good leadership as an ongoing leadership process (Northouse, 2004) may have application to Nigeria's future. In addition, more scientific studies as well as understanding from the experience of past and present Eastern Nigerian leaders will help highlight more specifically the problems of Nigeria's leadership.

Figure 1 shows some of the major problems that are associated with the current situation in the country.



These identified problems are affecting the common people as well as increasing the wave of corruptions and mismanagement in most regions of the country. The current leadership situation in Nigeria is associated with chaos and conflicts.

Many Nigerian leaders are faced with the dilemma of meeting the needs of its poor millions, who have to eke out their living from primary productive activities and maintain the integrity of natural resource and the environment. These leaders have misrepresented and ignored the voice of the people, the common good, peace, and stability of the country, and have equally hindered most people from economic growth and opportunities due to their race, lack of skill, greed, and power. They sometimes create obstacles to future growth and vision of the country. Lipset and Linz (2000) stated that cultures that stress economic successes as an important goal but, nevertheless, strongly restrict access to opportunities will have higher levels of corruption.

In assessing the leadership situation in Nigeria, Adejimi (2005) indicated that in Nigeria, most of the policy makers, as well as those involved in decision making are engaged in bribery,

egoism, power, and trade liberalization. They are distracted to an extent that they forget the nation's policies aimed at improving the lives of people in the society. Although people in a normal society are expected to be honest, law-abiding and hardworking, instead, in the Eastern Region of Nigeria, the lukewarm and unethical attitude of some of their leaders (and those who are supposed to maintain and enforce law and order) are leading the people to engage in corrupt behaviors.

Kirk-Greene and Rimmer (1981), argued that the solution for addressing problems and consolidating democratic governance in the federal republic of Nigeria lies in having government or leadership that works on the principles of good governance and, especially, is accountable to the Nigerian people. Many Nigerians who are highly achievement oriented have been relatively reduced to low access economic opportunities in the current leadership situation in the country. Good governance in Nigeria is thus essential to its stability and growth and that of the economies of West African countries in the Sub-region. The apparent lack of confidence in the bureaucratic and political processes is a reflection of the poor governance that has characterized the system for decades.

In today's society, organizational leadership, decision making, growth, effective management, and organizational success are based on the quality of the decisions policy makers or leaders make. In any country where legal systems fail to protect the rights of groups and individuals, the risk of violence and conflict are bound to increase. For Nigerians, effective leadership and good governance must be for the Nigerian leaders and decision makers the direct result of knowing their criteria for success, the scope of their choices and the inherent risk of each alternative (Nelson & Quick, 2003).

There is a great need for the development and establishment of proper decision, rule of law and leadership styles among the country's leaders and decision makers that will include a review of the existing policies, strategies and standards to ensure that managers and government officials will continue to achieve efficient and effective management roles in the country. According to Kotter (1990), leaders must know how to lead as well as manage. Otherwise, without leading as well as managing effectively, today's organizations face the threat of extinction. While leadership involves change, inspiration, motivation, and influence,

management and effective leadership must focus on the process of setting and achieving the goals of the nation through the functions of management, with reference to strategic planning, organizing, directing, and controlling.

Nigerian leaders and decision makers should be influenced by collaborators while working together to achieve the common goal of the nation. Nahavandi (2004) claimed that a leader is anyone who influences individuals or groups within an organization, helps them in the establishment of goals, and guides them toward achievement of those goals, thereby enabling them to be effective.

Leaders and policy makers need to make positive laws and rules as well as implement them to the letter. Laws are not respecters of persons. Adherence to ethical standards both in leadership and decision making must be a foundation of the country's policies. According to Lewis (1991), ethics codes fulfill the following three purposes: (a) encourage high standards of behavior, (b) increase public confidence, and (c) assist in decision making.

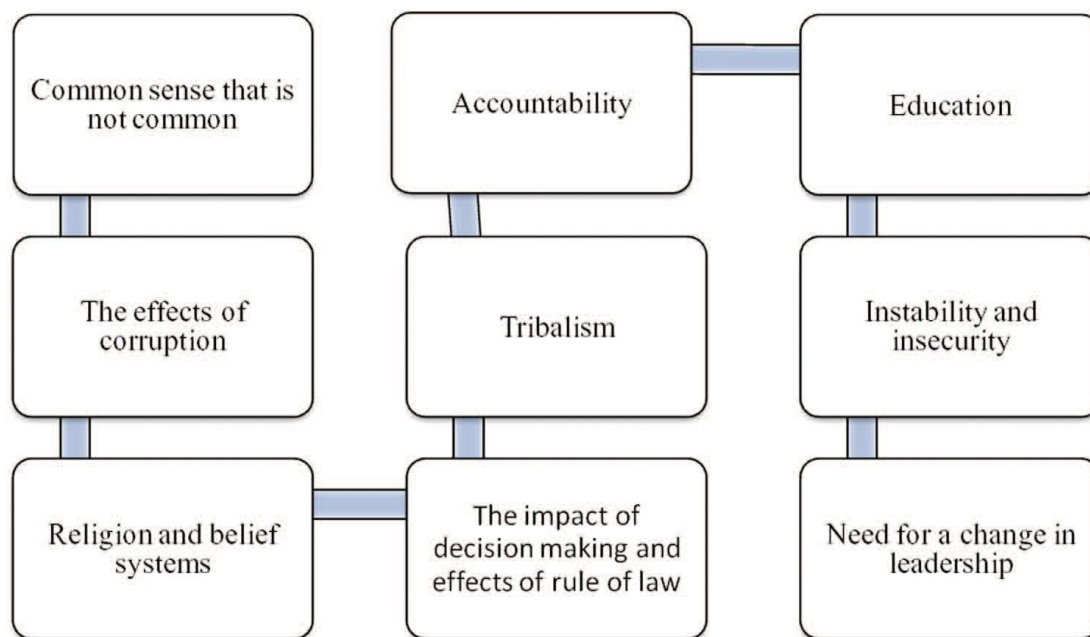
A true leader must be virtuous and a person to be trusted by the governed. This study was concerned with helping the leaders to exercise leadership in a respectful and selfless manner for the common good of the people in the region. Macintyre (1981) affirmed that virtue is an acquired human quality, the possession and exercise of which enables us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices, and the lack of which prevents us from achieving any such goods. Virtuous leaders either in government or business are persons of honesty, integrity, and trust (Dike, 2001; Frankena, 1963). According to Bowman, ethics is action, the way we practice our values; it is a guidance system to be used in making decisions. The issue of ethics in the public sector as well as in the private life encompasses a broad range of concerns, including a stress on obedience to authorities, on the necessity of logic in moral reasoning and on the necessity of putting moral judgment into practice (Bowman, 1991). Ethics codes are a tool for clarifying acceptable behavior and provide guidance to managers when dealing with ethical dilemmas (Lewis, 1991).

Leadership can change followers' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors to improve performance (Northouse 2004). They should encourage their followers to see with a new perspective and stimulate them to face challenges and solve problems (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Leaders should

help arouse their followers' uniqueness and potential innovation perspective for more effective problem solving without direct intervention from their leader (Bass & Avolio, 1990). It is of great value and importance that leaders have good moral conduct and ethical responsibility to enable them to attend to the demands, concerns, needs, and problems of the citizens in the country. In the views of Burns (1978), discussions of leadership sometimes are viewed as elitist because of the implied power and importance often ascribed to leaders in the leader–followers relationship. Leaders are not above followers or better than followers. Leaders and followers must be understood in relation to each other and collectively (Burns, 1978).

Hargreaves (2002) summarized that Nigeria, once heralded as the beacon of Africa, has fallen somewhat short of this potential. Years of plutocratic repressive dictators and military rule, coupled with widespread corruption, have resulted in large-scale neglect and deterioration of public services. The upsurge of corruption in Nigeria is endemic and troubling. Transparency International consistently rates the levels of corruption in Nigeria among the highest in the world. Pervasive corruption appears to permeate many levels of the Nigerian society (Eti et al., 2006).

Figure 2 shows other common problems of Nigeria





### *Situating the Northouse Leadership Process*

Most definitions and descriptions of leadership by different people imply that there should be a good understanding between leaders and their followers to achieve their desired goals and objectives. Leadership is all about getting people to work together to make things happen that might not otherwise occur or prevent that which ordinarily would take place. Northouse (2004) defined leadership as a process consisting of transactions between the leader and the followers: a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. The paradigm of Northouse suggests that leadership is a process that is ongoing and dynamic in understanding leaders and followers as it affects the situation in Nigerian structure. Leadership involves influence; it occurs in a group context and involves some form of goal attainment. The author used the Northouse leadership approach to guide the study. The Northouse approach to leadership clearly explained the nature of leadership as well as what is expected of an effective leader. The paradigm of Northouse, which states that leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2004) clearly focused on the leadership style needed in Nigeria. It conceptualizes and identifies the five basic elements common to the phenomenon of leadership. These five components include the following elements and themes that form the core “consensus” components of how leadership is currently conceptualized in the views of Northouse:

- (a) Leadership is a process,
- (b) Leadership emerges out of a reciprocal relationship of influence,
- (c) Leadership occurs in a community or group context,
- (d) Leadership involves goal attainment around shared visions, purposes, and values,
- (e) Leadership is intentional about making real or concrete change.

The aforementioned components of leadership as explained in the Northouse paradigm suggest that leadership is a process that is ongoing and dynamic in understanding leaders and followers in an organization or institution. When applied to Nigeria, this conceptualization rightly suits the situation. Northouse (2004) claimed that Although leaders and followers are closely linked, it is the leader who often initiates the relationship, creates the communication linkages, and carries the burden for maintaining the relationship. (p. 3)

The leadership style in Nigeria is not working effectively and could be addressed through the guidelines of the Northouse concept of leadership. Leaders and followers are involved in

effective leadership processes. Leaders need followers and followers need leaders to accomplish desired goals and outcomes (Burns, 1978).

### **History of Biafra**

Little is known about the literal meaning of the word Biafra. The word Biafra most likely derives from the subgroup Biafar or Biafada [7] of the Tenda ethnic group who reside primarily in Guinea-Bissau . [8] Manuel Álvares (1526–1583), a Portuguese Jesuit educator, in his work Ethiopia Minor and a geographical account of the Province of Sierra Leone, [9] writes about the "Biafar heathen" in chapter 13 of the same book. [10] The word Biafar thus appears to have been a common word in the Portuguese language back in the 16th century.

### **History of MASSOB**

In 1960, Nigeria became independent of the United Kingdom. As with many other new African states, the borders of the country did not reflect earlier ethnic, cultural or religious boundaries. Thus, the northern region of the country has a Muslim majority, while the southern population is predominantly Christian. Following independence, Nigeria was divided primarily along ethnic lines with a Hausa and Fulani majority in the north, and Yoruba and Igbo majorities in the south-west and south-east respectively. In January 1966, a military coup occurred during which a group of predominantly Igbo junior army officers assassinated 30 political leaders including Nigeria's Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, and the Northern premier, Sir Ahmadu Bello . The four most senior officers of Northern origin were also killed. Nnamdi Azikiwe , the President, of Igbo extraction, and the premier of the southeastern part of the country were not killed and the commander of the army, General Aguiyi Ironsi seized power to maintain order.

In July 1966 northern officers and army units staged a counter-coup. Muslim officers named a General from a small ethnic group (the Angas) in central Nigeria, General Yakubu "Jack" Gowon, as the head of the Federal Military Government (FMG). The two coups deepened Nigeria's ethnic tensions. In September 1966, approximately 30,000 Igbo were killed in the north, and some Northerners were killed in backlashes in eastern cities.

Due to the killing of the igbos, . In January, 1967 Lieutenant-Colonel Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, the then Military Governor of Eastern Nigeria, by virtue of his authority, in pursuance to principles, solemnly proclaimed that the territory and region known as and called Eastern Nigeria together with her continental shelf and territorial waters shall henceforth be an independent sovereign state of the name and title of "The Republic of Biafra".

Lieut. Ojukwu proposed a confederated Nigeria, the military leaders and senior police officials of each region met in Aburi, Ghana and agreed on a loose confederation of regions. The Northerners were at odds with the Aburi Accord; Obafemi Awolowo, the leader of the Western Region warned that if the Eastern Region seceded, the Western Region would also, which persuaded the northerners. After the federal and eastern governments failed to reconcile, on 26 May the Eastern region voted to secede from Nigeria. On 30 May, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, the South Eastern Region's military governor, announced the Republic of Biafra, citing the Easterners killed in the post-coup violence. [Barnaby, P. A.B., 2000; Armed Conflict Events Database, 2000; Library of Congress Africa Pamphlet Collection, 2014). The large amount of oil in the region created conflict, as oil was already becoming a major component of the Nigerian economy (ICE Case Studies, 1997).

The Eastern region was very ill-equipped for war, out-manned and out-gunned by the military of the remainder of Nigeria. Their advantages included fighting in their homeland and support of most South Easterners. This gave rise to the Nigerian Civil War and the FMG launched "police measures" to annex the Eastern Region on 6 July 1967. The FMG's initial efforts were unsuccessful; the Biafrans successfully launched their own offensive, occupying areas in the mid-Western Region in August 1967. By October 1967, the FMG had regained the land after intense fighting. In September 1968, the federal army planned what Gowon described as the "final offensive". Initially the final offensive was neutralised by Biafran troops. In the latter stages, a Southern FMG offensive managed to break through the fierce resistance. It is

believed that one of the major factors that sparked the war was the unilateral declaration of independence for Biafra made by Col. Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu in 1967. He eventually died 41 years after the end of the civil war on 26th November 2011 (aged 78) after a brief illness, many years after the internal conflict, secession and war (Omoigui, N., 2007).

The former Republic of Biafra comprised over 29,848 square miles (77,310 km<sup>2</sup>) of land, [23] with terrestrial borders shared with Nigeria to the north and west, and with Cameroon to the east. Its coast was on the Gulf of Guinea of the South Atlantic Ocean in the south. Biafran's geographical location started from the former country's northeast, bordered the Benue Hills and mountains that lead to Cameroon. Three major rivers flow from Biafra into the Gulf of Guinea: the Imo River, the Cross River and the Niger River [Britannica, 2008]. The territory of the former Republic of Biafra is covered nowadays by the reorganized Nigerian states of Cross River, Ebonyi, Enugu, Anambra, Imo, Bayelsa, Rivers, Abia, and Akwa Ibom. While the Igbo people of the current Nigerian state of Delta were not included in Biafra as per Ojukwu's decree founding Biafra, some Delta Igbo did fight on the Biafran secessionist side.

Biafrans speak Igbo as their predominant language. Along with Igbo, there were a variety of other languages including: Efik, Ogoni, Ijaw, Annang and Ibibio. However, English was used as the official language.

### **Nigerian Government Response to MASSOB**

MASSOB since its inception has continually had mass arrests and killings of its members by government forces. According to the group's sanitation grass root information spokesperson, Kelechi A Chukwu, the government forces allegedly carries out secret executions of MASSOB members in detention centers' and prisons nationwide. In May 2008, the group released a list of 2,020 members alleged to have been killed by security agents since 1999. MASSOB leader then: Ralph Uwazuruike, has been arrested on several occasions and charged with treason. In 2011, Uwazuruike and 280 MASSOB members were arrested in Enugu while attending a function in honour of Ojukwu. Few days later, President Goodluck Jonathan ordered Uwazuruike's release as well as all other MASSOB members in detention.

In June 2012, the Human Rights Writers' Association of Nigeria condemned the alleged killing of 16 members of MASSOB by security agencies in Anambra. In February 2013, MASSOB claimed that several corpses found floating in the Ezu River on the boundary of Enugu and Anambra States were those of its members previously arrested by the police. [10] The group claimed that the police routinely executed MASSOB members without proper trial. On May 31, 2013, President Goodluck Jonathan, a Niger Deltan Ijaw from Bayelsa State and from the South-South geopolitical zone, branded MASSOB to be one of three extremist groups threatening the security of Nigeria. Jonathan declared that "the Nigerian state faces three fundamental security challenges posed by extremist groups like Boko Haram in the North; the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra in the South-East; and the Oodua People's Congress in the South-West."

On September 13, 2015 police in Anambra state arrested no fewer than 25 MASSOB members who were marking their 16th anniversary; one MASSOB member was shot. At St Charles Lwanga Catholic Church Okpoko, 18 members were arrested and one shot and at Iba Pope Catholic Church, while at Awada, 11 members of MASSOB were arrested. At Awka, two MASSOB were arrested by the police according to the MASSOB former Deputy Director of Information, Mazi Chris Mocha (Wikipedia, 2018).

### **Leadership, Democracy, and Development: A Synergy.**

Democracy and development are inextricably linked with emphasis on leadership as the link between them. Osaghae, (2000) looked at some concrete ways in which democracy facilitates development. He summarized the essence of democracy in ensuring development as; (i) enhancement of the responsiveness and accountability of the state, and (ii) empowerment of the citizens to participate in, and claim ownership of the development that it superintends. According to (UNDP, 2000) the right-based approach to development focuses on participation, accountability, and other elements that are similar to the values that form the fulcrum around which democracy revolves. This is also in line with Linz and Stephen (1997) that democracy

guarantees development in any society. They argue that the basic elements of true democracy include the ability to regulate social conduct, the creation of strong political institutions, the presence of a strong civil society and pressure groups, a strong and rational bureaucracy and an economic regime with a strong private sector base, increased production and economic growth. It is this perspective of viewing democracy as instrument for development that probably led Zack-Williams to conclude that “no democracy, no development” (Aremu, 2004:26). It was noted that it is for this reason that democracy is associated with development, and the two are seen as inseparable for success.

Counterpoised to the above position is the argument that democracy hampers development, especially in the underdeveloped societies. According to this line of thought, authoritarian regimes are considered as better placed to enhance development. Some have equally argued that there is no relationship between democracy and development. Potter (2000) have given a lucid analysis on the aforementioned propositions.

However, the line of argument pursued in this paper is that there exists a correlation between democracy and development. This position is informed by the fact that, conceptually, these concepts are closely interconnected and interwoven. However, it is necessary to note that, although democracy is a veritable tool for development, yet political leadership is a major determinant factor.

Huntington (1994) averred that the two key factors affecting the future stability and expansion of democracy are economic development and political leadership. It is an incontestable fact that corruption and mismanagement on the part of Nigerian leaders have made the success of democracy and development an illusion. Adebayo (2000:49) asserted that:

*Nigeria's main problem is not its federalism, but rather its visionless and irresponsible political elite who have manipulated its politics, economy and religion to serve their own parochial interests, stashing away billions of dollars in foreign bank account while urging the masses to endure two decades of austerity and structural adjustment.*

Consequent upon mass corruption and mismanagement of the economy by the political elite, the government embarked on domestic and international borrowing in order to sustain the level of economic activities in the country.

Rather than bringing about relief, the debt crisis impedes efforts to achieve rapid economic growth. Bad Leadership is the greatest problem that has confronted Nigeria. According to Achebe, (1983:1)

*The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian Character... the Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leader to rise to responsibility, to the personal example which are the hallmarks of true leadership.*

In the same vein, Nigeria former Head of State Late General Sani Abacha in October 1995 cited in Azeez, (2004:36) conceded that:

*...we cannot achieve a stable democratic polity in the midst of dishonesty and corruption. These vices, have crippled our various institutions which otherwise could be viable assets to our economy recovery.*

### **The Role of Leadership in Nigeria: A look at the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB)**

There seems to be a failed role of leadership in Nigeria, with regards to the cause of the Nigerian civil war: the Nigerian Civil War, commonly known as the Biafran War (from 6 July 1967 – 15 January 1970), was a war fought between the government of Nigeria and the secessionist state of Biafra. If there was a working role of leadership and there was no favoritism of one tribe over the other, this gave rise to Movement for the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), Biafra represented the nationalist aspirations of the Igbo people, whose leadership

felt they could no longer coexist with the Northern-dominated federal government. The conflict resulted from political, economic, ethnic, cultural and religious tensions which preceded Britain's formal decolonization of Nigeria from 1960 to 1963. Immediate causes of the war in 1966 included a military coup, a counter-coup and persecution of Igbo living in Northern Nigeria. Control over the lucrative oil production in the Niger Delta played a vital strategic role.

After the civil war in Nigeria, in order to keep the fragile peace of the nation then, General Yakubu Gowon, the Nigerian Head of State (President), instituted the 3Rs— Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Reintegration; and also pronounced to the world's acclaim that the war has ended with a: “No Victor No Vanquished” stand. All these were done so that the wounds of the war will heal fast, the horrors of war forgotten fast, and reintegration rapidly achieved.

Flowing from this understanding, it cannot be rightly posited that the un-implemented 3Rs promised by the Federal Government of Nigeria under Jack Gowon at the end of the civil war in 1970, to obtain peace from the (defeated) Biafrans (who had an option of going into prolonged Gorilla/Bush/Fluid warfare after the combats from 1967-1970, till the world comes-in to negotiate and embrace peace) is an evidence of failed leadership.

This has been repeating itself in Nigerian leadership, currently almost every tribe in Nigeria is seeking for their own independence due to the anomaly happening in Nigerian leadership and the hope of citizens are gradually diminishing on the Nigerian government. Nigerian leadership has so many made laws that are not implemented, most sects suffer more than the other and are being neglected, used and fooled. There should be a change in Nigerian leadership style so as to subsidize the increase in division among different sects seeking to be independent ([www.newworldencyclopedia.org](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org)).



## **Theoretical Framework**

There is hardly any valid research study that has no theoretical construct. It is on this note that this research work will be anchored on the elite theory. In general sense, the elite theory is based on the idea that “every society consists of two broad categories: (1) the selected few, who are able and, therefore, have the right to supreme leadership, and (2) the vast masses of people who are destined to be ruled” (Varma, 1999:143). In politics, the elite denote specifically those who exercise preponderant political influence in a community. They are differently designated as the power elite, the ruling class, political entrepreneurs, the establishment, the governing minority.

Politics is seen in terms of a small group dominating the whole society and taking the decisions which make the mark and history in politics. Even when there is a mass participatory democracy, consensus is generally brought about by a few or supported by few people who constitutes informal exclusive group (Mba, 2006).

The proponent of classical elite theory Pareto (1848-1923) believed that every society is ruled by a minority that possesses the essentials qualities needed for accession to full social and political power. Those who get to the top are always the best. They are christened the elite. The elites consist of those successful persons who rise to the top in every occupation and stratum of society. Thus, there are elite of lawyers, elite of mechanics, elite of thieves, and even elite of prostitutes (Varma, 1999). Pareto has a belief that elite in different occupation and strata of the society generally come from the same class: those who are wealthy also are intelligent. This is reflected in their aptitude for mathematics, musical talent, moral character etc. Pareto argues that

society is divided into two classes: a higher stratum, the elite, which are divided into governing elite, and a lower stratum, the non-elite.

Gaetano Mosca (1858-1941), who further developed the theory of political elites cum the concept of circulation of elites, was vehemently in opposition to the classification of governments into monarchy, aristocracy and democracy initiated by Aristotle. He asserted that there was only one kind of government named Oligarchy. He postulated that in all societies, there are two classes of people- a class that rules and a class that is ruled. The first class, less numerous, performs all political functions, monopolizes power and enjoys the advantages that power brings, whereas the second, the more numerous class, is directed and controlled by the first. To him, the distinguishing characteristics of the elite is ability to command and exercise political control. Once, the ruling class loses this aptitude and people outside the ruling class cultivate it in large numbers, the possibility of replacing the old ruling class by the new one will be very high (Northouse, P. G.,2004).

Roberto Michels (1876-1936) is associated with what is referred to as the “iron laws of oligarchy” which he argues as “one of the iron laws of history, from which the most democratic modern societies and within those societies, the most advanced parties, have been unable to escape”. No human collectivity can succeed without organisation and organisation is another way of spelling “oligarchy”. To him, leadership is a necessary phenomenon in every organisation. All civilization must exhibit aristocratic features. As a movement or party grows in size, more and more functions have to be delegated to an inner circle of leaders, and in course of time, the members of such an organisation are rendered less competent to direct and control then, as a

result of which the officers acquire the great freedom of action and a vested interest in their position (Mahammad, B. A. S.,2005).

Since majority of human beings are apathetic, indolent and slavish and are permanently incapable of self-government the leaders take advantages of that and become irremovable.

Ortega Y. Gasset(1883-1955) contends that a nation's greatness depends on the capacity of the "people", "the public", "the crowd", "the masses" to find their "symbol in certain chosen people, on whom it pours out the vast store of its vital enthusiasm". The "chosen people" are the ones that are outstanding, and it is they who lead the "masses" who are not so chosen.

In summary, people in the society fall into two divisions: those who have important or decisive political power and those who have none as a result cannot exercise any decisive power over government output functions.

## **Conclusion**

Before democracy can bring about development, political elite must be people of vision, ready to render selfless service and do away with corruption. This job is not just left for the leaders but it is a job for everybody, because the followers of today might turn out to be leaders of tomorrow. Through this study we look forward to a better Nigeria through its leaders and followers, remember that all hands must be on deck to make that a reality.



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