

Leadership Recklessness and Resource Wastefulness: Reflections on Two Decades of Democracy in Nigeria

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Abstract

Over the past two decades, Nigeria has undergone significant political transitions, marking its evolution into a democratic state. However, amidst these advancements, the nation grapples with a recurring dilemma: leadership recklessness and resource wastefulness. This paper examines the nexus between democratic governance and the persistent challenges of Nigeria's mismanagement and squandering of resources. Drawing on an extensive literature review and empirical evidence, this paper explores the historical context and contemporary manifestations of leadership recklessness, characterised by corruption, inefficiency, and lack of accountability among public officials. Additionally, it investigates the systemic flaws and structural deficiencies within Nigeria's governance framework that perpetuate resource wastefulness, hindering the nation's socio-economic progress and development. Through critical analysis and comparative perspectives, this paper offers insights into the underlying factors fuelling leadership recklessness and resource misallocation, including political patronage, institutional weaknesses, and weak regulatory mechanisms. Furthermore, it assesses the implications of these challenges on Nigeria's democracy, governance effectiveness, and prospects for sustainable development. Finally, the paper proposes policy recommendations and interventions to foster transparency, accountability, and responsible leadership to mitigate the adverse effects of recklessness and wastefulness, thus steering Nigeria towards inclusive growth and prosperity.

Keywords: Democracy; Leadership; wastefulness, resources, development

Introduction

Democracy as a system of government emphasizes accountability, probity and the opportunity for the masses to prevent the excessiveness of leaders. These attributes make democracy a superior system above other forms of system. Nigeria is a country blessed with both natural and human resources, yet it is struggling to find its footing in the comity of nations. This is because of her economic stagnation (or reversions), which could be linked to recklessness and resource wastefulness by the political leaders. It may be difficult to exonerate the political leadership of Nigeria from its predicament of economic underdevelopment. It has become an unchallengeable fact that corruption and corrupt practices have been the bane of growth and development in Nigeria. The national value system has been destroyed, while crash greed and unregulated materialism have been elevated as the norm rather than the exception, especially under military rule. Thus, when Nigeria returned to democracy in 1999, many believed that the country would witness development given the inherent principles of accountability and probity in democracy.

This hope must have been hinged on the belief that the country's resources would be well managed for national rebirth and development. Unfortunately, the last two decades of democratic practice have been a combination of a mixed bag. On the one hand, Nigeria has made some progress in entrenching democracy, however, fledgling. The country is the biggest economy in Africa. But, what does this mean for the wellbeing of the ordinary man on the road? While Nigeria could be said to have made some progress in the last two decades, this may not have been translated into good governance and/or a better life for ordinary Nigerians. Quoting World Bank data, B.J. Rewane in a presentation at the Lagos State stated that 7 million Nigerians fell into extreme poverty in 2020. Nigeria has recently been declared as the world's poverty headquarters. The findings of research conducted by Ogbeidi showed that 70 per cent of the Nigerian population are living below the poverty line.

Ogbeidi (2012) noted, pathetically, that the logic of the Nigerian political leadership class has been that of self-service as some of the leaders are mired in the pursuit of selfish and personal goals at the expense of broader national interest. He argued further that the leader's emphasis has been on personal aggrandizement and self-glorification with the result that corruption is now an euphemism for explaining political leadership in Nigeria concerning the management of national wealth (Ogbeidi, 2012). For example, it is difficult to reconcile the poor revenue situation of the country with the flamboyant lifestyle of political leaders. Huge revenue that would have been saved for development is spent on political appointees who draw hefty salaries and allowances. Allocation for security votes takes a huge chunk of the nation's budget, while there are also huge extra-budgetary expenses in the form of donations that do not add value to the business of governance.

Chinua Achebe (1983), the novelist, said that for a country to experience steady economic and political development, selfless political leaders must be on the ground. After long years of military rule that was characterized by unrestrained usage of power for personal use, recklessness and lack of accountability, Nigeria returned to democracy in 1999. However, after two decades of democratic order, the principle of accountability and probity seems not to be part of leadership in Nigeria. Hence, political actors are known for the arbitrary use of power for personal enjoyment. There is also a high level of wastefulness of the country's resources. This raises some pertinent questions: why are political leaders so wasteful and reckless despite constraints imposed by democratic principles? Why is it difficult for citizens to checkmate the reckless behaviour of political leaders? What can be done? Thus, the major crux of the paper is the examination of the Nigerian democratic experience since 1999 and why it has not been able to deliver the promised Eldorado.

Methodology and Study Area

The paper adopts a qualitative research design to gain insight into the nature and character of Nigerian political leaders. It espouses both primary and secondary data to source for information, Data collection instruments used were interview schedules and documentary reviews. The study used the in-depth interview as the survey instrument and primary source of data collection, the population for the study consists of a few elites from Ado-Ekiti, which was randomly selected to ensure that the objective was achieved. in-depth interviews were conducted within Ado Ekiti

which is an open-ended question without predetermined responses, the interview was cut across different categories within the age range of 35 years and above, while the secondary information was equally sourced from journals, articles, newspapers, magazines, government publications and internet-based materials. For the data analysis technique, the data generated from the field survey for the qualitative was analysed using content analysis.

Conceptual Discourse

Democracy can be viewed from two major perspectives; as ideology or as politics. As an ideology, democracy is the philosophy of governance, which sets a high premium on the basic freedom or fundamental human rights of the citizen, the rule of law, the property right, the free flow of information and the right of choice between alternative political positions. On the other hand, democracy as politics is concerned with the institutions and process of governance. Democracy involves both the provision of means to pursue the representation of diverse interests in government and the institutionalization of mechanisms to hold rulers accountable to the public will, including mechanisms that allow for the peaceful removal of government from power. This is called the democratic process. Democracy anchors the articulation and aggregation of interests in political parties, logically it implies that the survival of democracy will depend much on functional and virile political parties. For democracy to survive, political parties must be alive to their responsibilities as custodians and guardians of democracy.

Democracy allows citizens to participate in government, which in turn promotes development. Democracy has been defined as the form of political life in which the ruling power of the state is constitutionally vested not in any particular class or class but in the members of the state as a whole and the people exercise the power through their representations. In modern times, democracy suggests the rule of all the people themselves. Osakwe (2011) and Idike (2014) highlight that democracy is a political system in which the people in a country are ruled through any form of government they choose to establish and that in modern democracies, supreme authority is exercised, for the most part, by the representatives elected by popular suffrage.

However, Nigeria's democracy has failed to deliver to Nigerians. Three features have characterized Nigerian democracy: it's a democracy that spends so much to accomplish so little; In a documentary review by F.C. Babanawa on 4th November 2013, on "Movement for Restoration of Democracy and Development" he indicates that Nigeria's democracy is probably the most expensive all over the world, though the welfare of the common man occupies the bottom rung of the ladder of its priorities; and lastly it is plagued by pathological corruption that ensures that the impact of any seeming good policy is either extremely negligible or almost exactly nil. Nigerian democracy failed to invest in human and material resources for political stability, economic viability, scientific advancement, technological breakthrough, and educational development. Also, it should be noted that the safety, protection, happiness and general well-being of the people should normally and continually take the central stage in democratic governance, but this has been a hypothetical situation that is rarely experienced in practical terms in Nigeria due to the recklessness of the political office holders.

Theoretical Underpinning

This paper adopts Prebendal theory. The word originates from the Catholic society, It is a system where church officials or members have control or share over the income or property that comes from the church office or position in the cathedral, from this, prebedalism implies a political system where elected officials and government workers feel they have a right to a share of government revenue and use them to benefit their supporters, this theory expressly describes the sense of entitlement that many political office holders feel they have to the state revenues. Elected officials, government workers and members of the ethnic and religious groups to which they belong feel they have a right to a share of government revenues, Richard Joseph wrote in 1996 “According to the theory of prebendalism, state offices are regarded as prebends that can be appropriated by office holders, who use them to generate material benefits for themselves and their constituents and kin groups.”

The theory discusses the widespread use of state resources for patronage client list practices and systematic political corruption. Nigeria's federalism has involved the systematic use of official state resources for the private benefits of the officeholders and their political clientele. In my opinion, this theory interprets the recklessness of leaders as well as the resource wastefulness as a result of their devotion to their in-group homogeneity bias (their ethnic, social, religious group) using national resources for parochial servitude of their caucus rather than the greater good of the majority within their jurisdiction. The relevance of this theory is that the inability of Nigeria as a nation to achieve meaningful national development over these years could be largely attributed to prebendalism. The theory explicitly describes how our political actors see themselves as having the right to public funds and therefore expressly abuse it for their selfish interest.

The Nigerian Political Leaders

Leadership issues in Nigeria have been attributed to the failure of political leaders to imbibe democratic principles and provide necessary infrastructures for the betterment of the people. While political power has alternated between civilian and military leaders, neither of them has ruled the nation better due to greed and selfishness. Both the civilian and the military leaders have institutionalized corrupt practices in all facets of governmental institutions. Chinua Achebe, (1983) in his book “The Trouble with Nigeria,” said that the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. Failure of political leadership is the main trouble in Nigeria. Political leaders are the head of the society and once the head fails the body rots away and that body is the mess called Nigeria. Since independence, the Nigerian nation has remained commodities consuming state and those who took over the political headship of Nigeria followed the corruption and recklessness of earlier leaders, political elites in the nation shared the balance from crude oil sales instead of using the revenue to develop and sustain other sectors of the Nigeria economy.

Nigeria’s poor political leadership manifests in the inability to manage the pervasive abuse of ethnicity and corruption. Looking at the intellectual capability of Nigeria’s political leaders, the presidency for instance (Azikwe, Yar’Adua and Jonathan) had a sound university educational for intellectuality, Nigeria leaders did not have moral standards and integrity Also, Obasanjo failed the integrity test for not coming out formally to defend himself in the court of law on the alleged disappearance of 2.8 billion Naira during his military leadership and \$16 billion for NIPP project.

Shagari equally failed the integrity test due to the alleged large-scale corruption that took place during his leadership of Nigeria. Babangida refused to explain what happened to the Gulf oil windfall of \$12 billion during his reign. Sani Abacha's loots. Jonathan failed because he said stealing is not corruption and the massive stealing under the oil subsidy scam and SUREP program failed to reduce the sufferings of the people. Buhari's poor handling of security and the covert stealing going on under his watch demonstrate that his government is far from the integrity slogan that brought him to power.

Thus, Nigerian political leaders have consistently been showing more interest in private gain than in the general well-being of the Nigerian state. Before the independence, there were cases of official misuse of resources for personal enrichment (Storey, 1953). Over the years, Nigeria has seen its wealth wither with little to show in the living conditions of the citizens. Considering the First Republic, the administration was characterized and marked by widespread corruption. Government officials looted public funds with impunity. Federal Representatives and Ministers flaunted their wealth with reckless abandon. Their thinking was based on politics for material gain; making money and living well while leaving the citizens in abject poverty (Ogbeidi, 2012). This recklessness informed the Military to jettison their civic role to cease power from the first civilian administration.

During the rule of Yakubu Gowon, the country experienced unprecedented wealth from the oil boom of the 1970s, but it was squandered and mismanaged with nothing really to show for it other than the prosecution of the so-called 'unity civil war'. The Second Republic was not different from the First Republic and the military interregnum that preceded it in terms of profligacy and widespread corruption. For example, the Shagari government could not account for over 16 billion dollars in oil revenue between 1979 and 1983. During the Babangida and Abacha administrations, corruption became deepened and almost became official. In the current Fourth Republic, corruption has been institutionalized as the essence of governance. Seeking to occupy political offices has become a do-or-die matter. There is no clear difference between leadership corruption, wastefulness and recklessness during all the regimes either the military or the civilian. It is even safe to argue that they all came to power with the aim and purpose of enriching themselves rather than offering selfless services to the nation and the people. Little wonder that Nigeria and Nigerians remain trapped in the pond of excruciating poverty despite the abundance of both human and material resources the country is endowed with.

Reflection on The Wastefulness and Recklessness of Nigeria's Political Leaders

Nigeria's democracy is the best in the world for elaborate investment in the comfort of political leaders rather than national development. Despite the fact the country is blessed with human and material resources, an average Nigerian lacks access to power supply, health care, employment, formal education, potable water, good roads and other necessities of life that ordinarily should come from the government. Nigeria's democracy. Every year, a high percentage of budgetary estimates are allocated to Aso Rock, and the State Houses in the various states. Indeed, Nigeria probably has the largest Presidential Air fleet in the world. For example, while neighbouring countries have one aircraft each, Nigeria has ten and the cost spent annually on running the aircraft is about \$58.5 million (*The Punch*, October 23, 2013). Related to this is foreign travel. In

2012 alone, about \$1.7 million was budgeted for President Jonathan's foreign travels, while over \$3 million was earmarked for the same purpose in 2013 (*The Punch*, 3 November 3, 2013).

In Nigeria, there has been political vampirism (extortion). Members of the Nigerian parliament are probably the highest-paid in the world. There are 109 and 360 members in the country's Senate and House of Representatives respectively. While a Senator in the United Kingdom earns about \$64,000 per annum, a Senator in Nigeria earns \$80,555 per month translating into well over \$8.4 million per annum (*Vanguard*, August 25, 2013; *Mail Online*, August 9, 2013). In the US, President earns \$400,000 per annum, the Vice-President earns \$231,000; Members of Congress \$174,000, Governors between \$70,000 and \$190,000; State legislators \$81,078 (full-time) and \$19,197 (part-time) (*Thought Co*, 25 March 2017). Before the February 2014 marginal wage increment, the Canadian Prime Minister earned \$327,400, Senators earned \$135,200 per annum while other members of parliament earned \$160,200 annually (*HuffPost*, 4 February 2014). In Sweden, the monthly pay of lawmakers is \$7,707, this implies that a Swede lawmaker will have to work for over 12 years to earn what a Nigerian Senator earns per month (See *Premium Times*, 30 May 2015). Itse Sagay pointed out that in addition to the basic salary, Nigerian Senators receive 15 categories of allowance (Sagay, 2017:4).

In his lecture, Robert Dahl observes that "one common thread that runs through the attitude of Nigerian politicians borders on greed, avarice, self-service and accumulation of wealth at the expense of the country" (Dahl, 1989). The same culture of waste applies to state and local political officeholders. One implication of the above is that well over 40% of Nigeria's annual budget is allocated to the payment of public officers' salaries yet, the country probably has the largest number of people who live on less than \$1 a day. While the minimum wage in the USA and UK is \$1,257 and \$1,883 respectively; that of Nigeria is diminutive \$50. Thus, as Denrele has pointed out, no one deserves that much money, while ordinary people are scavenging to make ends meet. Nigeria has a magnitude of deprivation high infant mortality rate, maternal mortality rate, malnutrition, inadequate healthcare and transportation and lack of electricity, high crime rates, high number of young people not in education, employment or training, Nigerians have been severely short-changed, cheated and insulted (*Vanguard*, 25 August 2013).

Another aspect of wastefulness is in the vein of 'godfatherism'. A godfather is a billionaire sponsoring anointed candidates for elections at all levels in return for political favours and advantages. The godfather intends to rule by proxy. Sometimes, godfathers are not qualified to hold political office as prescribed by the law, therefore, they install a godson. The relationship between godfather and godson is sometimes written and often sealed spiritually with an oath. It is a patron-client relationship because of the symbiosis between them (Ayoade, 2008: 89-90). The godfather gives final support to install godson, sometimes by paying the campaign bill only, sometimes by bribing party structures, election officials and police units and sometimes by financing and mobilizing violent militants. S/he will protect the interests of the godfather in many ways; he will provide government services, appointments, policy decisions and grants contracts for the godfather's companies. The initial support given by the godfather is an investment that will have substantial returns.

Another aspect is using a 'war chest' to stay in power. In the Nigerian political system, there is what is called 'the power of incumbency', which is nothing but the primary source of financial strength. This has always made the political holders divert money meant for developmental projects to election rigging and vote buying. They buy supporters to win primaries, buy votes,

buy militants and buy election officials and public control bodies. An example of this is the most damaging and brazen cases of spending on campaigning. For example, Sambo Dasuki, a former Security adviser to President Jonathan, was investigated in 2015 for allegedly diverting around US \$2 billion to political campaigns of the ruling party as well as for private use. These funds were meant to prop up Goodluck Jonathan's campaign and rig the elections (Udeze and Olumhense, 2019).

Nigerian State spends a lot to rig elections. Attahiru Jega, the then chairman of Nigeria's electoral body, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) lamented that in Nigeria, political parties' budgets to bribe security and INEC officials during elections (cited in Onapajo, *et.al* 2015: 1). Election rigging assumed unprecedented proportions in 2007 because the ruling party, the PDP, then determined not to lose and relinquish power, invested heavily in their candidates across the nation. The European Union described Nigeria's 2007 elections as the worst they had ever seen anywhere in the world (*CNN*, 2011). The current issue is vote buying, which is offering rewards, especially money, to voters in exchange for voting for a particular candidate or party. Osun and Ekiti State governorship elections in July and September 2018 were indications of this shift to vote-buying. Newspapers' reports confirm this assertion: "INEC decries vote-buying in Ekiti governorship election" (Akinkuotu, 2018); Ekiti Election chieftaincy confesses to vote buying on national TV" (Egbas 2018); "Ekiti vote buying: Rewarding emerging electoral fraud with victory"

There were variations in the amount of cash paid for votes. All governorship elections conducted recently were won by the candidates of the ruling party. Security operatives provided cover, while agents of the ruling party publicly dispensed cash for votes at polling centres (*Daily Independent*, 2018). Vote-buying was widespread during the 2019 general elections. According to *The Economist* (2019), for instance, the EFCC arrested party agents with #1.5 million cash prepared for vote-buying at a polling unit in Maiduguri and one of the Ogun State House of Assembly candidates was arrested too with #1.7 million neatly arranged in white envelopes" (Akinrujumu, 2019; *Sahara Reporters*, 2019). It is pathetic that Nigeria practices a democracy of waste.

Looking at the contributions of State governors to support the Third Term Agenda during Obasanjo's regime, a lot was incurred to this unrealizable agenda. The natural logic of Obasanjo's third term aspiration was predicated on him spreading money around, positions were offered, financial rewards with the huge inducement of about #50 million for each member of the House of Representatives and #75 million for each Senator, who would vote for tenure extension (cited in Abidoye, 2018). The State governors who supported the third term project for self and power preservation purposes generously funded it with the resources of their respective states. Indeed, one of the governors admitted that he contributed well over US\$ 150 million to the third-term project (*Ibid*).

The Effect of Recklessness on Nigeria's Economy

The Nigerian nation sustained injury through the exceedingly wastefulness and mismanagement of its political leaders. Both the military and the civilian leaders have led the country to underdevelopment and stagnancy in growth. Looking at the Military, Babangida and Abacha regimes massively set the country back on the path of socio-economic advancement and other forms of development. The panel were set to look at the excessiveness of these leaders but, quite unfortunately, the report of such was kept under the carpet, which has encouraged more terrible

corrupt practices that virtually collapsed the economy of the nation. Thus, both military and civilian leaders engage in the looting of public treasury and amassing wealth illegally with arrogance and impunity. During the Obasanjo regime, Federal Ministers were accused of fraudulent acts from embezzlement, paying for jobs not done, over-invoicing, double-debiting, and inflation of contract figures to release of money they loot government funds with arrogance (Adekeye, 2003:31; Haruna, 2009). The effect of this is stunted growth and underdevelopment. For fifty years of independence, Nigeria's democracy is still crawling.

The recklessness and wastefulness of Nigeria's political leaders have, to some extent, largely retarded social development, destabilized and weaken economic growth, downcast foreign investment and abridged the resources available for infrastructural development, public service and poverty reduction programs. The most important factor that is responsible for the failure of governance and democracy with the lack of sustainable socio-economic development in Nigeria is the wastefulness of political leaders. Nigerian people were denied access to economic prosperity and quality living conditions. Most pathetic is the fact that the volume of development assistance totalling about \$400 billion that flowed into the country for socio-economic development between independence and the collapse of military rule in 1999 was squandered by the political leaders of the period (Ribadu, 2007).

Nigerian government across all levels of administration spends relatively more on large and hard-to-manage projects, such projects make fraud easy and such funds earmarked for development will just disappear into private purses for personal and selfish ambition. (Dike, nd.: 5) Ill services in governmental institutions are traceable to embezzlement and misappropriation of public funds. The healthcare delivery system and the education sector, which are vital sectors of the economy that are supposed to be of high priority to the government, are nearing collapse. The product of the educational system is substandard compared to the Western world. There are imitation and contaminated drugs in the health sector. Indeed, maladministration in the Nigerian political system has led to the failure of the country to attain its economic potential despite the natural and human resources available at its disposal.

Summary of Findings

The findings collected from the views of different categories of people interviewed on the recklessness and resource wastefulness of our political leaders were summarized and described as follows:

why are political leaders so wasteful and reckless despite constraints imposed by democratic Principles?

Arising from the responses gotten from people through interviews on the above question, people noted that the road to political leadership is cost implicative in Nigeria apart from the various bureaucratic bottlenecks imposed by the inherited democratic system including cost of registration, nomination campaign and other exigencies, there are other poverty-imposed consequences of their political ambition. They have deluded the electorate's psyche to depend on whatever they get before the election so as not to be answerable to them after the election. Collaborating on the issues of the high rate of corruption in Nigeria, Igbokwe, Ibeto and Okoye (2014) argued that since independence, our leaders have not demonstrated genuineness in national development. Many people interviewed believed that unnecessary political competition among the political leaders is another reason for wastefulness, there is unfocused and

undetermined spending among the politicians, and our value system is wrong which leads to corruption, they said the mindset of our political leaders is bad having a fundamental problem. (Field source 2021)

Some respondents talked about the imposed economy infraction, that is, certain obligations and responsibilities are better performed in certain periods, however, undue economy constraints which include currency valuation often interfere. e.g. IMF, and World Bank regulation which will constrain and lead to certain excess spending. Some talked about abandoned projects and how contractors made upfront payments to approving officials, these findings collaborate with what Bassey Udo (2016) said in his paper on the Economic crisis of what Nigerian Governors fail to do to cut waste.

Respondents talked about undue recognition, greed and selfish interest among the politicians which make them to mismanage and syphoned public money for their own interest. (field source 2021)

Why is it difficult for citizens to checkmate the reckless behaviour of political leaders?

Findings from the respondents on the above question revealed that many times citizens fell into prodigal allusion, that is, they have been bought over before the electioneering, hence, their inability to question the political leaders when they erred. Some said many citizens were deprived of facts and accurate figures surrounding certain activities of their political leaders and as such they cannot confidently challenge the veracity of policy formulation and implementation of such.

Others talked about stomach infrastructure, that is, see and buy, if you don't have anything in your pocket you can never be recognized in the scheme of things, and as such politician squander money for self-recognition among their colleagues. (Field source 2021)

Conclusion

The Nigerian nation is blessed with natural resources and manpower yet, the nation is swimming in abject poverty, high unemployment rate, looting and squandering of public funds. Nigeria's political leadership has been characterized by highly immoral values and, a lack of integrity. Nigerian leaders are not committed to the development of their society. There is also a complete absence of transparent and accountable leadership. A leader is accountable when they are responsive to the demand of the citizen which should be enforced by the judicial arm of government through the instrument of rule of law. In Nigeria, there has been corruption at all levels including the judiciary. Nigerian leaders abuse public office for private gain. Nigeria is a rich nation floating on oil wealth but none of the benefits flow to the people. There is no hope for good governance when the leaders are deeply entrenched in corrupt practices.

In conclusion, two decades of democracy in Nigeria have been marked by persistent challenges of leadership recklessness and resource wastefulness. Despite the transition from military rule to democratic governance, the nation continues to grapple with systemic corruption, inefficiency, and lack of accountability among public officials. The consequences of this phenomenon are far-reaching, affecting all facets of Nigerian society, from economic development to social cohesion and political stability. The endemic nature of leadership recklessness and resource

mismanagement underscores the urgent need for concerted efforts to address these issues comprehensively.

Recommendations:

The paper recommends as follows:

- i. **Strengthening Institutional Capacity:** Nigeria must invest in building robust institutional frameworks with effective checks and balances to prevent and deter instances of corruption and malfeasance. This includes enhancing the independence and autonomy of oversight bodies such as anti-corruption agencies, audit institutions, and the judiciary.
- ii. **Promoting Transparency and Accountability:** The government should prioritize transparency and accountability in public administration, including open budgeting processes, disclosure of public contracts, and regular audits of government expenditures. Civil society organizations and the media play a crucial role in holding public officials accountable and should be supported in their efforts to promote transparency.
- iii. **Enforcing the Rule of Law:** Upholding the rule of law is essential to combating leadership recklessness and resource wastefulness. Authorities must ensure that legal mechanisms are effectively utilized to prosecute and punish corrupt individuals, regardless of their status or political affiliations.
- iv. **Fostering Ethical Leadership:** Nigerian leaders must demonstrate integrity, ethical conduct, and a commitment to serving the public interest. Leadership development programs should emphasize values such as honesty, integrity, and accountability to cultivate a new generation of ethical leaders.
- v. **Engaging Civil Society and Citizens:** Civil society organizations, the private sector, and citizens must actively participate in promoting good governance and holding leaders accountable. Public awareness campaigns, civic education initiatives, and community engagement activities can empower citizens to demand transparency and accountability from their elected representatives.
- vi. **That there is the need for a political will, which is the compelling force for sound leadership quality, and ability to do what is right and attainable within the context of patriotic nationalism. Let there be sacrifice, implementation of good policies relevant and important to national development and never allow personal and selfish interest to detract from what should naturally be a national benefit.**
- vii. **Political offices should also be less attractive and leaders assuming political roles should be experienced and well-trained in the art and science of managing the affairs of a modern state (Kamuntu, 1993). Citizens also should desist from making unrealistic demands from their people who are holding political positions that can only be met by corrupt practices and abuse of office. -Dedicated leaders should be identified in the society and responsibilities aiming at improving the welfare of the people should be assigned to them. Nigerian government should shun selfishness and promote good governance.**
- viii. **The paper strongly recommends a shift of leadership power to women, because, since 1960, men have been the chief driver of underdevelopment, corrupt practices, economic backwardness etc, therefore, women should be given the opportunity to the**

seat of power so that the nation can be rebirth and produce a better Nigeria. In Liberia it was a woman Ellen Johnson Sir Leaf who rescued Liberia from the incessant crisis, she ruled for two terms, was the first democratically elected female head of state, she led her country through reconciliation and recovery following the nation's decade-long civil war, of course, good governance does not depend on gender but then, in Nigeria let us try women, they could make a change in Nigeria if given the opportunity.

By implementing these recommendations, Nigeria can address the root causes of leadership recklessness and resource wastefulness, thereby strengthening its democracy, promoting sustainable development, and improving the well-being of its citizens.

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