Education and Good Leadership: Catalyst for Sustainable Development in Nigeria

Abbas Anas Muhammad

Abstract
Nigeria is facing many developmental challenges that call for re-constructing, re-structure and reformation. For any meaningful development to take place there is need to appreciate the nation’s economic and social problems, which are of paramount importance. This paper intended to discuss the root causes of the current negative trends in leadership. No doubt, education remains a catalyst for all round development, desired leadership as argued in the paper is also required. In doing this, the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial education and leadership were discussed. It located the problem in the nature of education bequeathed by the British colonialists that our elites did not transform to reflect the local cultural realities. Bad leadership as it affects every sector in Nigeria is not limited to physical components of educational sector only, but also affects ethics as enshrined in all professions on grand scale. The paper outlines, in argumentative manner, that the access to educational opportunities is the ultimate reality to good leadership in Nigeria.

Keywords: Education, Good Leadership, Sustainable Development, Poverty

Introduction
Over five decades after the independence of Nigeria, the country is still bedeviled with the challenges of leadership, education and development. The manifestations of development challenges lies in Nigerians’ nonchalant attitudes with the economic backwardness, poverty, corruption, impunity, decaying infrastructure, brain drain, extremism, political and religious instability among others. Numerous approaches have been attempted to underpin and address these problems but abortive. The role of good leadership in addressing Nigeria’s development seems to have been relatively looked down or neglected. Thus, Nigeria still have features of corrupt state dominated by violence, inequalities of wealth and power, disorderly ambition, disunity, lawlessness, dishonesty etc. Put simply, Nigerians are painfully aware of the numerous “integration-destroying”, “stability-destroying” and “poverty-promoting” evils of our nation, the most outstanding of which are the domination and manipulations of the country’s political sphere by powerful Nigerians comprised politicians and collusion of indigenous capitalist class. It is intended in this paper to present the concepts of leadership, education and sustainable development; Nigeria’s pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial leadership and education among other things.
Leadership is necessary part of social process of any social organization; it has been given different definitions from different scholars: Robbins (2001) in Ekuafeh, Ofie & Evelyn, 2005, p. 55) defined leadership as “the ability to influence a group towards the achievement of goals”. He further argued that the source of this influence may be formal i.e. emanating from the powers or authority of an exalted office occupied by the one who exercised the influence, but the possession of this power or authority is not a guarantee to effective leadership. Aromolaran (2000) in Ekuafeh et-al (2005: 55) viewed leadership as, “an act of directing and controlling the activities of a group of people who are willing to be led”. Therefore leadership is an integral part of work and social life, which is considered as the ability to influence a group of people toward the achievement of goals.

In the same vein, Farrant (1982) in Ekuafeh, Collins, Janguza & Asiya (2015:2) defines education as, “the total process of human learning by which knowledge is imparted, faculties trained and skills developed.” Also Adeyemo (1985) in Ekuafeh, et-al (2015, p.2) sees education as “anything that is done consciously and unconsciously to influence the thoughts, behaviors and attitudes of others”. In this light according to Farrant in Ekuafeh, et-al (ibid, p.3) “Education could be formal, informal and non-formal and it can have desired effects or influence on the persons acquiring it.” Education here does not connotes western education only, it can the type spell in the culture of people, that has to do with skills and values which majority of our ancestors used in moving their communities forward. Education produces a good leader who develops the competence and commitment of his people, and in equal measure, expands the capacity of individual to perform in leadership roles, through which a leader may identifies his subordinates needed change, and creates a vision to guide them.

Sustainable development according to Shaker (2015) “is the organizing principle for sustaining finite resources necessary to provide for the needs of future generations of life on the planet.” Shaker (ibid) further described it as “a process that envisions a desirable future state for human societies in which living conditions and resources-use, continue to meet human needs without undermining the integrity, stability and beauty of natural biotic system.”

**Nigeria’s Pre-Colonial Leadership and Education**

Although, the pre-colonial administration varies from one community to another but the most important is that, the leadership then was almost monarchical in nature and base on the principle of inheritance, with established organs and institutions of governments. Traditional education which had its based in culture and tradition was also in place. People then were sub due to the teaching and learning of the ideals and values of their cultural lifestyle. Rodney (1972) in Usman (1999) explicitly brought this out when he says:

> The following features of Indigenous African education can be considered outstanding; its choose links with social life, both in the material and spiritual sense; its collective nature; it’s may sidedness, and its progressive development in conformity with the successive stages of physical, emotional and mental development of the child.

Pre-colonial northern Nigeria was also pre-capitalist, through a highly stratified society at the top of which stood the Jihadist aristocracy and at the bottom was the Talakawas or commoners who work and sustained the highly developed state structure through a series of taxes and other exactions. This system has been described as absolute monarchy, as opposed
to the limited monarchy of the Yoruba, among whom lineage chiefs played a moderating political role.

Islam reached Nigeria through the Hausa states during 11th century; Kano and Katsina with their famous mosques and school come to participate fully in the cultural and intellectual life of the Islamic world. There exist constituted religious, educated elites who made themselves indispensable to the Hausa kings as government advisers, Islamic judges and teachers. The Sokoto caliphate and Borno inherits a well developed universal Islamic system of education, in which Arabic script was used as the medium of writing. Islamic education was going hand in hand with traditional education; the reason why religion and Northern culture remained inseparable.

Sokoto Jihad was another milestone in the history of leadership and education in Northern Nigeria. In Hausa land prior to the jihad of 1804, there were 14 independent Kingdoms which were ruled by the Hausa states. Jonson (2003, p. 123) states that, “the defeat of the Hausas in the holy war by the Fulanis’ under the leadership of a great Muslim leader Usman Dan Fodio led to the abolition of the Hausa Kingdoms and the establishment of the Fulani Emirates.” Similarly, Dibie (2012, p. 136) states that, “each of the Fulani emirates was headed by an Emir who was assisted in the administration of his emirate by a number of advisers surrounding him. All the Emirs owed allegiance to Usman Dan Fodio and his two representatives at Gwandu and Sokoto.”

By the 16th century the Fulani Jihadist conquered Hausa nations and incorporated into the Hausa/Fulani Sokoto Caliphate, which established with outstanding centralized political system of government. “Sokoto Caliphate, which was founded and led by Shehu Usman Dan Fodio, became the largest and the most prosperous polity in pre-colonial Sub-Saharan Africa because it was built on the solid foundation of literacy and efficient autonomous local government.” as noted by Crowder (1978) as cited in Naniya (2004, p. 10). Therefore, education is an important moving forces for good leadership in the contemporary civilizations that make-up the present day Nigeria to the fore.

In support of this, President Buhari (2015) has this to say, “we as Nigerians must to remind ourselves that we are heirs to great civilizations: Shehu Usman Dan Fodio’s Caliphate, the Kanem Borno Empire, the Oyo Empire, the Benin Empire and King Jaja’s formidable domain.” People saw these rulers as of divine and should be respected. Therefore there was mutual loyalty and obedience to the constituted authorities and government institutions, and the result then was stability in the system. These ancestors left for us a surviving legacy characterized in exemplary leadership that has people at heart, with mutual relationship, discipline, orderliness, peace, and they served as the symbol of defense and unity of their communities.

Colonial Leadership and Education in Nigeria

Britain, like other European intruders sent its official to Nigeria and established its political influence. Johnson (2003, p 128) states that, “Colonies were regarded as extensions of Great Britain, so they were administered directly by the White British officials.” This is seen as dictatorial leadership that today most of the Europeans are accusing Africa of using it. One funny thing described in Johnson (2003, p. 128) is that: “the laws made in Britain were applied to the Colonies, traditional rulers were not recognized. Put succinctly Britain used military threats to silence all the opposition and resentments against its take-over of the
administration of these Colonies.” The question here is where was the Human Rights groups or pro democracy agitators then?

In almost all the Colonies, Britain adopted the same pattern of administration known as “indirect rule” which Dibie (2012, p. 141) describes as: “a system of administration in which the British government adopted as its colonial policy in dealing with the people through traditional rulers, the traditional political institutions, administrative, cultural and judicial structures as intermediaries, while the British mainly advised and where necessary, enforced colonial regulations.” Evidently, the system was first applied in Northern Nigeria and later to the Southern part. For example, Dibie (2012, p. 144) states that, “the protectorate of Northern Nigeria was divided into six provinces and each province was then sub-divided into districts and placed under district commissioners.” While indirect system succeeded in the North, the system suffered in the South especially the East, where traditional rulers cannot be easily identified. Dibie (2012, p. 147) also states that, “as Obiship institution was not clearly defined, so the colonialists select some people whom they made Chiefs, and given certificate of recognition, which were called Warrants. They were constituted into an all-purpose body which was at once a court, as well as an executive and legislative body for the area.”

The education introduced the people into understanding themselves, their environment, and how they related to it. The Colonialists introduced education that was aimed at satisfying their interest in Nigeria which was tailored to the needs of the British Industrial society, with high demand for middle level jobs. The main purpose then was to train Nigerians to help man local administration at the lowest rank, and to staff the private capitalist firm owned by Europeans. This was emphatically states out by Usman (1999) when he stressed that British:

…….wanted cheap and secure raw material for their industries; a market for their manufactured goods; a source for generating capital resources for investing in Britain and strengthening the Sterling against other currencies; a manpower reserve for economic and military purposes: water, ways, roads, railways, airports, and airspaces for their transport and impartial communication system.

Hubbard has also suggested that; “the most tenable desire of British policy in northern Nigeria between 1900 and 1940 had to do with desire to prolong British rule in the territory (Ozigi and Ocho (1981) in Naniya (2004, p. 12). Similarly, a confirmation of similar observations by Yahaya (1993) as cited in Naniya (2004, p. 12) states that, “the educational system was designed to produce citizens who will subscribe to Western worldview and remain subservient to the West even after independence”.

Western education and development of a modern leadership proceeded more rapidly in the South than in the North giving the fact that in northern Nigeria, western type of education, culture and civilization were seen as a threat to Islam. Besides, racism did not decline in the world politics throughout the 20th century, decolonization notwithstanding. As the traditional rulers become a willing instrument of the colonial administration; the Colonialist denied the natives all the rights to take full part in the governance of the nation during colonialism, and even in electing public officials, and also in having a share in the power of legislation nor in the administration of justice. Finally, they put together different cultures, ethnics, religion, and tribe; they said this is Nigeria, under Fredrick Lugard. Against this background Mustapha (1984, p. 11) added:
When the world situation in the 1940s changed towards the increasing importance of anti-colonialist sentiment, it was not surprising that the agitation for reforms started in the Northern Nigeria, within the ranks of the small northern educated elite, with even “moderates” like Tafawa Balewa calling for reforms. In 1950 Abubakar Tafawa Baléwa, sounding a “note of warning” to the autocracy, declared: “Our natural rulers should realize that Western education and world conditions are fast creating a new class of people in the North. That this new class must exist is certain, and the natural rulers whom the North must retain at all cost, should, instead of suspecting it, try to found it proper accommodation. The populist tendency in this agitation was however crystallized in the political thoughts of people like Sa’adu Zungur and Aminu Kano.

Various factors have led to independence agitation; one of them was the sidelined of educated elites in the leadership, especially in the Southern part of Nigeria, and these Elites opposed the introduction of indirect rule, as British used uneducated traditional rulers to govern them. While they perceived education as a catalyst towards improving the development of any human society from time immemorial

**Post-independence Leadership in Nigeria: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly**
The first post-independence leadership was formed by nationalist through a conservative alliance. These were leaders who were not polluted by the intellectual domination of the Western civilization, and they remained the custodian of the traditional intellectual heritage. They did a lot with their little western education, and their dedication and patriotism earned them much respect and recognition. In other words, their leadership style remained an exemplary; they established first hand educational institutions and developmental projects and programs across the country. The role of education in the attainment of Nigeria’s independence cannot be overemphasized on the basis that education was also the catalyst for the good government and sustainable development; it is also a great tool for colonial emancipation.

The first Nigerian parliamentary government under the president Chief Nnamdi Azikwe and prime minister Alh. Sir Abubakar Tafawa Baléwa lasted for six years but succumbed to military rule in 1966, “after a bloody coup d’état organized and carried out by a group of army officers mostly south-eastern Igbo’s. They assassinated the prime minister and the premiers of the northern and western regions” (Wikipedia, 2017). No doubt, President Buhari (2015) states that, “our founding fathers and their colleagues worked to establish certain standards of governance which could translate into good governance. Although, they have differed in their methods or tactics or details, but they were united in establishing a viable and progressive country. However, some of their successors behaved like spoilt children breaking everything and bringing disorder to the house.”

It is evident that, the first military government under General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsí comes into being on 24th May 1966; it raised mounting tension and led to another coup by largely northern officers in July 1966, which established the leadership of Major General Yakubu Gwón. The country plunged into civil war, which lasted from 1967–1970. On July 29, 1975 General Murtala Muhammad and a group of officers staged a bloodless coup accusing General Gwón of corruption. “General Murtala made reformist changes; he sacked a large number of prior government officials, many of whom had been criticized for the misuse of power they wielded under the largely uneducated military of Gwón” (Wikipedia, 2017). He was assassinated on 13th October, 1979 in an abortive coup and his Chief of staff Lt. Gen.
Olusegun Obasanjo became head of state. The ban on political parties was lifted in the year 1979, “in which Alhaji Shehu Shagari was elected president. In august 1983, Shagari returned to power in a landslide victory, but the elections were marred by violence and allegations of widespread vote rigging and electoral malfeasance, leading to legal battles over the result” (Wikipedia 2017). Corruption was deemed pervasive during Shagari’s administration. A few leading politicians had amassed large amount of money, which they transferred out of the country. Nigeria’s second republic was terminated on December 31, 1983 through military coup. Major General Muhammadu Buhari emerged as the head of state.

In 1985 a cross section of politicians were convicted of corrupt practices by Buhari regime. Unfortunately, his led administration was overthrown by third ranking member of his cabinet General Ibrahim Babangida in August 1985. “During the Babangida administration corruption became legalized and as policy of state, the discipline of the military force eroded, the term IBB boys emerged” (Wikipedia 2017). Following the annulment of June 12 election in which Chief Mashood Abiola won, and the tribulations that followed General Babangida handed over power in 1993 to Chief Ernest Shonekan a prominent nonpartisan businessman. Shonekan tenure was brief as the country sliding into chaos; General Sani Abacha assumed power and forced Shonekan’s resignation on 17th November, 1993.

General Abacha disbanded democratic institutions and replaced them with the military officers, on 23 June, 1994 Chief Mashood Abiola declared himself president and went into hiding until his arrest. Abacha died on 8th June, 1998 and was replaced by General Abdussalam Abubakar. In August, 1998 Abubakar appointed the electoral body to conduct election. The emergence of democratic government in Nigeria on May, 1999 ended 16 years of consecutive military rule. It is pertinent to note that military leadership with their cabals’ civilians are responsible for sowing the seed of ethnicity, corruption, nepotism, which pave way to “nuggets for noble”. Their nonchalant attitude produces a bad signpost for the survival of Nigeria, they are Godfathers, who occupy top level position, using their ill-gotten wealth, destabilized the country, institutionalized corruption that penetrated deeply into the fabric of Nigerians.

On its part, education played significant role in the emergence of democratic government in Nigeria in 1999, which heartless elites (most of the retired military and corrupt politicians) hijacked. Chief Olusegun Obasanjo a former military head of state took over a country, as the elected president, after his eight years (two terms) tenure Alhaji Umaru Yar’adua succeeded Obasanjo after winning election. The election was marred by electoral fraud and denounced by international observers. Yaradua’s presidency last briefly due to state of his health, he died in May, 2010. President Goodluck Jonathan his deputy succeeded him after a long battle; Jonathan called for new elections and stood for re-election in April 2011, which he won. However, his re-election bid in 2015 was truncated with the emergence of General Muhammadu Buhari, who took over the helm of affairs in May 2015 in what world described as the most acceptable free and fair election in the history of Nigeria.

Against this backdrop, leadership remained in serious crises in Nigeria, and one of the problems is that the incompetent persons can become the leaders and assign to hold one public office. This led to the decline in the Nigerian social life; which indeed calls for the immediate re-structuring, and remedying measures. Are the leadership qualities of our founding fathers comparable to the present leadership? Is there any evidence statistically that any part of this country has produce good leaders that can be role model of leadership like
Abbas, A. M. Awolowo, Azikwe and Sardauna or Tafawa Balewa? Certainly, the answer to these intriguing questions is no.

**The Wrong Turn of Nigeria’s Leadership and Education**

The political leadership has made to be a favor in Nigeria, through inheritance and is meant for enjoyment, comfort-ability and self enrichment; they denied *talakawa* all access to quality education, so that they can’t differentiate between good and bad. Education remains for self establishment, which help them to produce eccentric, extremist and orthodox young educators across the nation, the beginning of hatred, injustice, nepotism, favoritism that’s endangering Nigeria’s sustainable development. And other ugly circumstance is that, many floors hatred flows in their blood and transfer it to their children. This is the evidence in what Nigerians say and do, a character of many decent looking people who appear to be normal, but are not better than urchins. It has been observed that some unwary Nigerians erroneously consider these heartless leaders as good with all their insensitivity towards the masses. They are using the entire avenue to perpetuate mayhem. Kundila (2016) states that, “the near total eclipse on visionary leadership in Nigeria over the years has contributed greatly to the thorns and facelessness of the education sector. No one can tell you now where education is taking Nigeria to or what education is really contributing to development let alone its sustainability.” They also use religious and traditional institution to canvass support for them and preach ill-hated among Nigerians.

Nigerian exemplary leadership were strained and battered by the present so-called elites, who replaced our founding fathers; they did not transform the education neither the leadership to reflect the local cultural realities, relegating traditional rulers outside the realms of popular processes and control. One typical thing is that, weather in military or civilian governments these heatless leaders do only what pleases them, they stole trillions and share some hundred with *talakawa* who doesn’t want their thieves touched simply because of tribal sentiment (pressed depending on the oppressors). It is consequent upon the above that terrorist infiltrated the country’s peace and constituting threat to national security, total disregards to the laws and order, lawlessness have been unleashed in the society. The era of the “New Nigerian Autocracy” had arrived; the impact of impunity at the level of political superstructure is established. No matter how good leadership is, it will suffer in the prevailing socio-economic conditions of the country for which it is made, which characterized by cronism, ingenuity to develop good things that will benefit the citizen, and ability to bomb those good things that others have labored to build. Some Nigerians are even docile to the detriment wrongly anything good for the nation’s well being and when they decide to protest, they do it for a wrongly due to lack of proper awareness and orientation.

**Education for Good Leadership**

Education remained an indispensable tool for good leadership in every generation. Though, the crises in Nigerian leadership lies in the form of education inherited from the Colonialism, education for material being, for self sustenance, or as pre qualification for leadership for self enrichment. This maintains the hatred between ordinary Nigerians and educated folks, whereby ordinary folks accuse the educated elites of mistrust, in sincerity, and unpatriotic behavior. It is imperative to note that, education is a central nerve of a community’s existence and invariably the ladder to attain the top leadership position. Therefore, education must be given its rightful priority or position as the primary key to development and progress, and also a cardinal to the spiritual and material development of any society, which remained the most significant determinant of its survival. For preservation of people lives and maintenance
of social structure, education is very important means in any type of society and the greatest investment that a society can utilize for any meaningful sustainable development. Philosophically according to Kundila (2016) “the Nigerian education sector has a sound foundation. The blueprint for education in Nigeria as contained in the National Policy on Education (NPE) is lucid and visionary. The aims and objectives of education in Nigeria are clearly spelt out. These educational goals are very important because education is key to the development of people and nations”. Even the prime national goals that serve as the bedrock for the National Policy in Education are sometimes tempered during the political decision making in Nigeria, this affect the type of ill-prepared graduates that Nigeria produce, those lacking focus and vision. The argument here is how these students can contribute to the nation sustainable development.

Good Leadership for Sustainable Development

Good leadership refers to the ability of a leader to improve the lives of his followers. The measurement of improvement may be material or social, with an emphasis on reducing poverty, affordable and available welfare packages and community oriented projects etc. Nigeria is a nation that considers the different races, ethnicities and otherness of its citizens as essential to its existence. In an effort to actualize the national development of such cultural mosaic, this requires all of those differences to meld together in assimilation which can only be achieve through a patriotic commitments to the nation.

The importance of good leadership for sustainable national development cannot be overstated given that education is the best legacy a country can give to her citizens. Critical issues of national development are multidisciplinary in nature. Therefore, understanding them and developing their resolution requires multidisciplinary approach, which have base in good leadership. If education can be used as a tool for attaining self rule from colonial subjugation, it is therefore be used as a similar tool for sustainable national development. More importantly, Nigeria’s sustainable development depends on a through and in-depth historical analysis and grasp of what has brought the country to its present predicament both in the long and immediate past. In this regard the nature of leadership must be understood in historical perspective, and the system of education which produce the leaders, and how the system was changed with its serious implication. The image of the of Nigeria’s leadership outside the shores of the country has been that of criminals, looters etc, this has smeared the good name of Nigeria. Credible report revealed that, what Nigeria needs is the exercise of strong leadership, a leadership that work to resolve crises of inadequate social amenities, poverty, unemployment, ignorance, pervasive corruption, fraud, tribalism, ethnicity, regionalism and religious sentiment; and that which preach peace and value human life irrespective of where one comes from or his believe. In order to correct this battered image of Nigeria, the present administration of President Muhammadu Buhari is striving hard to get rid of Nigeria’s mess and embarking on re-branding processes, but the atmosphere is exceedingly polarized by politicians.

Conclusion

Education and good leadership are the greatest obligations in every civilization; they deserve the highest priority because there is no way that people affairs will be perfectly impeccable without the two: Leadership and Education. Leadership is a trust use to sanitize, change and re-generate but unfortunately some sees leadership as a great opportunity to win people’s confidence to perpetrate whimsical caprices at the detriment of the society. These inept
leaders see power as an instrument of self-defense, self-serving, self-aggrandizement and self-enrichment. The unhealthy development of Nigerian situation is a case in focus, where some few individual (leaders) would subject millions to an untold hardship, while hundreds to great beyond, yet no one could react, the only way out is sycophancy and hypocrisy such are the prevailing norms or practices that deter Nigerians from moving forward.

**Recommendations**

As part of this presentation the followings suggestions are given below:

i. Educational institute remain the sources for producing Nigeria’s leadership, for any meaningful and open style leadership. In view of this there is urgent need for the nation educational reform.

ii. Re-integration of traditional norms and values into the curriculum became imperative, and ensure that those values will be live up to and be pursued and implemented in the way government decisions are made.

iii. Since that many incompetence persons are seeking for the post of leadership, the first degree educational qualification should be the requirement in addition to person reputation and sincerity for any political/appointed public office in Nigeria.

iv. Evidences indicate that, the lucrative attachments in Nigerian political leadership are the immediate means of attraction. Idiomatically, hands must be on deck to elevate them and make a leadership a commitment and selfless service to the nation.

v. Since government will no longer satisfy the job needs of the nation educational products. Government would make it possible that education for self reliant is given great priority and emphasis should be on entrepreneurship and professional courses for study.

**References**


About the Author
Abbas Anas Muhammad is a Lecturer in the Department of General Studies Education, School of Education, Federal College of Education, Kano State, Nigeria
Email: abbasfagge@ymail.com

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