

Followership Imperative of Good Governance: Reflections on Nigeria's 'Second Chance' at Democratization

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Abstract

This paper examines the role of followership in democratization vis-à-vis good governance in Nigeria. The Nigerian Fourth Republic is burdened by followership deficit. The near under-emphasis of the role of followership in the democratization process in both formal and informal discourses with regards to Nigeria is disturbing. Democracy is a game of number and the only system of government that allows the masses to contract government. In fact, the followers in any democratic society remain the largest bloc. And on the basis of this numerical supremacy to leaders, they wield (or are supposed, in the Nigeria's example, to wield) a lot of power in determining/constituting leadership, molding and shaping leadership, checkmating leadership and thereby stemming the tide of bad governance. The paper discovered that a whole lot of challenges, though surmountable, exist in the way of critical exercise of followership. However, the paper attempts a paradigm shift from seemingly unending scholastic debates on leadership as though such would bring good governance that has eluded the largest black nation in the world to solution-specific examination of curious, active, critical, interrogative and participatory followership as the harbinger of good governance.

Key words: Followership, democratization, Nigeria, good governance and development

1. Introduction

"Politics is too important to be left to politicians.... Government is prone to crime and a government devoid of citizen control is a potential criminal" (Ayoade 2010:56, 55).

The Nigerian 'second chance' at democratization, popularly (though debatably) referred to as the Fourth Republic has displayed little or no progress in consolidating democracy as well as ensuring good governance. The situation in the country has made different scholars to conclude that "This House has Fallen" (Maier 2000), describe the entity as "Crippled Giant" (Osaghae 1998) while others articulated their observation by referring to the entity as being in "Perpetual Flux" (West 2005). For Aina (2012) the body

polity (Nigeria) is not structured to work and no surprise is not working. Politicking in the entity had been seen as both ‘prebandalist’ and as well as ‘politics of the belly’ (Richard Joseph 1991).

Nigeria’s *cripple*, fall and failure remain a monumental burden on not only Africa, but the entire black race and the world at large. Worthy of note is an African philosophy that a sleep beyond the ‘four market days’ is unacceptable, because it could easily be equated with death. Better put, a handshake beyond the elbow is a wrestling bout. It is on this note that every arena should be seized to expand the democratic space and deepen democracy. If political democracy implies equality of all citizens in decision-making as against prerogative of few privileged members of the society (oligarchy), the result will be the classical position of democracy which upholds ‘popular power’. The concept of popular power is really popular in so far as politics involves the active participation of the masses in the exercise of power. No wonder Thomas Paine advanced the slogan “put the issue to the people” in his “Rights of Man” (Aremu 1997: 170).

Given the fact that leadership has failed and has sustained a very complex chain of political *dedevelopment* that can only replicate itself if left unchallenged, the followers should step-up their game by actively involving in politics – be available in and for politics, curious, concerned, critical about the way they are governed. Knowing that the Nigerian government will never ‘put the issue to the people’, the people should grab the issue, it is theirs.

The hub of this inquisitiveness lies on the fact that followership unavailability/crisis is a paramount factor explaining leadership deficit in Nigeria. In fact the solutions to leadership problems in Nigeria can only come through followership. No wonder Rick Ungar (2011) posited that citizens should not “expect good leadership without good followership”. Invariably, followership capital is the only needed resource for political transformation and taming the elite menace perpetuated through *godfatherism*. Suffice to posit that the nexus between critical exercise of citizenship especially with regards to active followership is as follows:

- Political participation gives government direction.
- Participation is the hub of robust and transformative political reforms
- Participation transmutes political representatives and institutions as citizens’ political proxies
- Participation offers government and governmental programmes/decisions legitimacy
- Political participation is a human right permissible by law
- All affected by the decisions of a government should be able to influence and contribute to those decisions, especially in proportionate to their stake in the outcome (Warren 2009).
- More significantly, “Politics is too important to be left to politicians.... Government is prone to crime and a government devoid of citizen control is a potential criminal” (Ayoade 2010).

Significantly, leadership/followership interaction is a cardinal element of citizenship vis-a-vis the social contract in a democratic setting. The citizens are entitled to rights and therefore obliged to the state. There is therefore a nodal nexus between critical citizenry exercised through active followership and ‘democratic balance’. Forming a government by the people, from the people will definitely offer the common political good (good governance) for the people.

2. Towards Theoretical Construction of Democracy

Political theorists are of the agreement that ‘democracy’ is a set of ideal and a practice. The conception of democracy ranges from a social perspective to political democracy. Social democratic theorists favour that democracy is extended to all spheres – economic, social, and international (Samarasinghe 1994); while this perspective is significant considering its inclusion of the informal sector in the development of democratic culture; in the family, work place and any social gathering; however, this broad view of democracy raises more questions than it could answer and has been abandoned as an ideal that is burdened by fact-versus-value tension. Invariably, most practicable theories of democracy are those whose point of departure is predicated upon the realities of the individual state’s political ecology.

In this regard, political democracy has graduated to currency. This theory is blown up by the writings of Joseph Schumpeter, Robert Dahl, Larry Diamond, Andreas Schedler, Linz and Stepan, David Beetham, O’Donnell etc. Schumpeterian perspective of political democracy is that “the democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the peoples’ vote.” (Schumpeter 1947:269). Stretched out by Dahl (1989:221), a democracy is a “polyarchy” characterized by the following seven elements: (1) elected officials; (2) free and fair elections; (3) inclusive suffrage; (4) the right to run for office; (5) freedom of expression; (6) alternative information; and (7) associational autonomy.

In agreement with Dahl’s perspective, Larry Diamond (1990:2-3) defines democracy as a “system of government that meets three essential conditions as follows; meaningful and extensive ‘competition’ among individuals and groups (especially political parties) for all effective positions of government power, at regular intervals and excluding the use of force; a highly inclusive level of ‘political participation’ in the selection of leaders and policies, at least through regular and fair elections, such that no major (adult) social group is excluded; and a level of ‘civil and political liberties’ - freedom of expression, freedom of the press, freedom to form and join organizations - sufficient to ensure the integrity of political competition and participation.”

At variant with exclusive elite theorists’ perception of governance, political democracy from the foregoing is the only system of government that allows the masses to determine their political destiny. In as much as everybody cannot be in the government, everybody is entitled to the right to participate in the democratic process. In fact political democracy draws heavily from the social contract theory; where a body polity is ideally demarcated in two flanks – the citizens and the state. The citizens are entitled to certain rights, whence in turn they are obliged to the state. The bundle of rights carried by the concept of citizenship is one that not only protects the citizen, but allows the citizen’s participatory and contributive role in the development of his/her body polity. Therefore a state is democratic in so far as the citizens are the primary determinant of the formation and system of governance on one hand and on the other the prime repository of government policies/decisions and actions. As such the critical exercise of citizenship manifested through robust followership defines the nature and quality of governance in a state.

3. The Nigeria Polity and Politics: From Brief Historicism and to Problems Arising

Nigeria was bequeathed a democratic state by the British government in 1960. Sooner than later Nigeria lost the system it inherited at independence. By 1979 Nigeria made efforts to bounce back into the

democratic cycles. Such efforts were shortlived with the military interruptive incursion in governance and holding sway till 1999 when Nigeria returned to the democratic cycle. From 1960 to 1999 Nigeria has existed as an independent polity for 39 years with only nearly 10 years of civil government. The First Republic lasted 6 years and the military took over power in 1966, ruled for 13 years before the initiation of the Second Republic which lasted for only 4 years. The Third Republic which was to take-off by 1993 was disappointingly annulled by the Military Government of General Ibrahim Babangida. The military bounced back again in 1983 and held sway for another 16 years and finally gave way in 1999 (Igbuzor 2004: 1). However, from 1999 till date, Nigeria has sustained an uninterrupted transition through 'four electoral cycles' – the 1999 elections, the 2003 elections, 2007 elections and 2011 elections. To this extent, post 1999 Nigeria can be put as extensive and sustainable effort to democratization - till date 13 years of an uninterrupted democratic effort.

3.1 Problems Arising

1. Preponderance of academic effort at salvaging the Nigerian political problems has been domiciled at leadership studies. The underlying assumption of such effort is that leadership deficit is central to Nigerian developmental backflip. In fact a whole lot of works have been replicated to arrive at the same conclusion that leadership has perpetually failed Nigerians. Leadership in Nigeria is attributed for being corrupt, self-serving, politically personalizing, policy illiterate, and mostly clueless about how to provide political good. Correspondingly, the general citizenry, who are shut-out of the power corridor are disenchanted and presents a strong feeling for political resentment demonstrated through political docility and apathy, on the long run robber-stamping the consolidation of 'illiberal democracy'. This perpetual flux sees the country sinking in every measurable height, and affects every fiber of the existence of the state – from sports, religion, education, and every other social space, etc.
2. The total abandon of the Nigerian state to the ruling class has made it a mere venture for concerned interest with little or no commitment to nation-building and political strengthening. The agents of socialization have allocated new roles to themselves. The religious organisations have gone into trading of education as well as prosperity hawking. This indubitably swells the booth of the religious proprietors and dangerously land faithfuls in a new psychological dilemma in the same proportion to knowledge poverty and 'apathy chain'. The curriculum of the Nigerian schools is an alien material, at best catalogue of non-related issues to the realities of the country industrially, politically and economically – at best, theory laden and practice porous. Most families in Nigeria are at best confused as an agent of socialization; the drive to 'survive' has made the Nigerian families to abandon their primary role of social nurturing to the schools, television, churches or mosques, etc.
3. The integrity of political participation and competition in Nigeria is in doubt (Aina 2002:7). Political parties in Nigeria can at best be described as assemblage of strange bedfellows when the

- bed is cozy (Ayoade 2010: 41). They have become a vehicle of political utility and convenience, bereft of ideology, and deficit in both ideas and principle. Political parties that brands themselves ‘opposition’ are merely seeking a regional control of power or mere replacement of the ruling political party without deepening the ingredients of quality policy debate and checkmate vital to democratization. The so-called opposition parties are further deepening an already protracted pluralistic burden on the country; most fan the embers of ethnicity, romancing an antithetical stance of the ‘ought to be’ role of political parties as agent of unification and nation-building.
4. The alienation of the indigenous political institutions in Nigeria and replacement with an incompatible structure further distances the people from politics as well as makes political institutions to be weak.
 5. Nigeria is burdened by structural defects in the nature and system of government. Worst still, Nigeria is plagued by diversity burden, which incubates ethnocentric considerations and other socio-cultural leanings as against critical citizenry.
 6. Military incursion and ‘over-stay’ in Nigerian politics cannot be spared as it created a conqueror entity of the Nigerian state that must either be feared or avoided by the citizens. The result of this is indoctrination of deficit democratic political culture in the country in which ‘autocratic elite versus suppressed followers’ relationship is sustained. While the retired ‘military generals’ now constitute a strong political bloc (in fact if ethnicity and religion play important roles in political considerations, the retired generals constitute the third in rank, if not second in this respect); military over-stay in politics contributed a culture of militancy in Nigerian political culture pressed down from family relationship (fathers, mothers and elder relatives arrogating to themselves ‘command role’) to gender relationship (masculine ego that should be massaged by the female gender without questioning) – adults beating children and men beating women; market levies, house rents, and other collectibles in the formal and informal arenas being collected with ‘armed men’. Ironically, the military rulers retired into an active ‘democratic role’ – occupying an enormous political space in post 1999 Nigeria. Those who were fought to relinquish power are now the benefactors of the democratic struggle at the perils of the fertilization of democratic values (*see* Adekanye 1999).
 7. In all, Nigeria is plagued by crippling corruption, leadership deficit, political excesses, insecurity, religion in the service of sin and ‘irresponsible followership’ all leading to an overall sliding of the state into a pariah.

4. Good Governance and the Democracy/Development Nexus

Good governance is problematic to define. However, it could be pinned down to certain country specific indices and indicators. Governance politically is concerned with the authoritative allocation of values within a state. It implies the authoritative articulation and structuring towards the achievement of the

objectives for which government is put in place by the people. Good governance involves the structuring of the state with regards to institutions: the executive, legislature and judiciary in such a way that good life is ensured. The Board of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation (2011) is of the opinion that governance is inclusive from the view point of the citizens, encompassing what a citizen has the right to demand from his/her government, captured in four over-arching dimensions: safety and rule of law, participation and human rights, sustainable economic opportunity and human development. Invariably, there is no better way of perceiving good governance rather than the articulate and systematic committing of the resources available to a particular government to addressing the problems of the society, given the authority of the state meaning in policy, process and outcome. “Thus, governance includes institutional and structural arrangements, decision making processes, policy formulation and implementation capacity, development of personnel, information flows and the nature and style of leadership within a political system. Hence, governance is largely about problem identification and solving” (Ogundiya 2010:203). For instance a catalogue of the challenges in Nigeria includes:

- High poverty rate compared to Nigerian human and natural resources
- Human security deficit including food shortfalls; eco challenges like erosion, oil spillages, flooding, etc.
- Poor infrastructure,
- Inadequate health services,
- Collapse of the manufacturing sector,
- epileptic electricity for meaningful use,
- High rate of unemployment,
- Human capital depreciation syndrome,
- Crippling and non-problem solving educational sector,
- Bureaucracy crippled by corruption

The subsisting nature of these challenges despite the enormous resources at the disposal of successive government to solve them is the opposite of good governance. Any government commitment to fixing these problems which may be expressed through aggressive policy, resource mobilization, transparent and accountable use of public space and resources passes for good governance in Nigeria.

The place of democracy in good governance is that ‘real democracy’ is predicated on ‘supremacy’ of the choices of the masses. It allows for the decisions of the greater number of the population to be absolved into government policy option. On the other hand, the democracy/development nexus is an exploration of the economic *canons* of democracy – whether viewed from consumer behaviour or political behaviour, the assumption is that in a market the consumer is the king and makes his/her own best choice, and as such responsible for outcome. Political democracy is at once people-centered. This on the long run accounts for the materialization of the good of the greater number of the masses either in terms of safety and rule of law, participation and human rights, sustainable economic opportunity, all leading to human development. An extension of this umbilical cord (between democracy and development) is that democracy is charged by active followership as a means to an end. The end being human peace, security, welfare and happiness: “the

point is that there are political preconditions for economic growth and development and these hinge...on the form of government” (Nwolise 2006: 10); in this case democracy is most preferred as a system which allows every member of the society a natural right to contract government (Wollheim in Nwolise 2006).

5. Followership in the Democratization Process: Nigeria in perspective

The justification as well as imperative for critical followership is both a matter of moral question vis-à-vis constitutional and fundamental human right. Taken Nigeria’s case as an instance, it is logical to argue that if leadership is really as deficient as enunciated by many scholars, it cannot be abandoned to correct itself, as this will remain unrealistic. Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. As such critical citizenry is the answer. There is no better evidence to this than how the ‘ancient regime’ in France recovered through a historic revolution as well as the recent ‘Arab spring’ sweeping across the entire Arab nations and upturning practices that has long been absolved as the Arab inherent and peculiar political culture in political discourse, all dove-tailing into the holding of elections and the emergence of a democratically elected head of states in both Egypt and Libya.

There is no doubt that leadership is at the epicenter of initiating strategic vision, making such a mission, and driving such to a reasonable conclusion to better the state. In a political democracy, leadership can simply be identified with the following attributes as observed by Nwolise (2006);

- a) Leadership is not just a person occupying an office.
- b) The leader must actively perform the role of his office.
- c) The leader must identify, show, and lead the way.
- d) The leader must mobilize and carry his followers along, and this implies that they must participate in arriving at public decisions and policies.
- e) The leader must lead in such a way that his followers voluntarily (not by force of coercion) and collectively (not divide and rule), make efforts to achieve shared goals.
- f) Public policies and programmes must be arrived at collectively.
- g) The leader must be humane, for without humanity, leadership is but an empty function.

Concomitantly, the concept of political democracy is on one hand a social contract, which gives the people the option of governing themselves by choosing their leaders, and taking responsibility therefrom, constituting a court for leadership by watching, suggesting to, compelling, checkmating and even confronting; and on the other hand, gives the leadership its legitimacy by determining and agreeing that it is rightfully constituted and therefore worthy of obedience. To this end in tandem with Nwolise’s conceptualization of leadership, followership could also be appraised to lend credence to the following hypothesis;

- a) Democracy is not offered in a platter of gold it is usually struggled for and when gotten, the price is eternal vigilance. Democratization is usually an unfinished business.
- b) If the leader shall adequately perform his role, such role should be pressed upon them by the general citizenry.

- c) 'The way' in a democratic setting is simply the aggregate of the yearnings of the general citizenry and should constantly be expressed through critical involvement of the citizens.
- d) If the leader must carry his followers along, the followers should as a matter of right be concerned and ready to participate in the political process.
- e) Exemplary leadership informs enthusiastic followership. In Nigeria given the 'political irresponsibility' of the followers, the leaders rely on their social backers for class servicing in the absence of non-shared goals pressed upon them by the followers.
- f) Public policies must be arrived at collectively; this informs leadership/followership nexus, which implies a constant greasing of the social contract.
- g) The leader must be checked into humaneness.

However, in Nigeria these attributes of leadership has been inexistent. Nigeria has sunk into "fallacy of *electoralism*" (Mottiar 2002: 3), having held four successive general elections without fair representation – a practice described by Schedler (2002) as "elections without democracy: menu of manipulation". While leadership in Nigeria has for sure been irresponsible, corrupt, self-serving, personalizing, clueless, etc, it is only critical followership that can reverse the trend.

If democracy is a social contract between the governed (followers) and the leaders, then, if by any chance, any member of the state decides to be apolitical, such a person lacks the *locus standi* to either complain about inefficiency of government or expect that government should keep its own side of the social contract. History has it that peoples that are now brought under a single political entity called Nigeria were critically involved in their various governments before the interruptions of colonialism. Within the acephalous Igbo communities decisions were vigorously debated through the age grade meetings (constituted by the youths), Adult Male Councils (*Otu Umunna*) as well as the Women Council (*Ogbako Umunwanyi*). In all, the concept of "*Oha na Eze*" meaning "the people and the King" influenced decision making to be people-centered. In the Oyo Empire, if '*Alaafin*' (the political and traditional head of state) went excessive or committed impeachable offences, he was compelled to commit suicide with the keen watch of the *Oyo Mesi*. Invariably, these stands to suggest that critical citizenry has a rich history in the pre-colonial political administration of the peoples of Nigeria; and that also without the check by the followers, leadership would always devise its own channel. If good leadership is a product of patriotism for one's country, critical followership is also a product of loyalty for one's country and commitment towards involving in the expansion of the frontiers of development of the state.

6. Major Impediments to Critical followership in Nigerian Democratization Process

6.1 Illiteracy and Poverty

Up to 35% of Nigerians estimated 160 million population are not literate. Illiteracy is a major impediment to effective involvement of the followers in the democratization process. The 'relevant education' exposes citizens to the knowledge requisite in political participation as well as in assessing, evaluating and contributing to the political process. In the words of Mckenna (1999: 337), "no amount of charters, direct primaries, or short ballots will make a democracy out of an illiterate people". More so, majority of Nigerians fall within the category of the poor. Figures in this respect ranges from above 65%. While

analysis in this regard has usually been predicated on resource capability of the masses, it is imperative to stretch poverty to accommodate the following dimensions which has preponderance of implications on political culture.

Intellectual poverty – this implies the inexistence of relevant knowledge bloc and or consumption of knowledge that is neither useful to its possessor nor the society at large. On the long run this kind of knowledge hardly equips one to understand and solve the problems of his/her immediate environment.

Economic poverty – this kind of poverty is simply lacking the economic means of livelihood and its implications in politics are that it infiltrates into the political culture of the society. The question is “Is there a Political Culture of Poverty?”. Yes, there is, no doubt the most economically deprived people lack fundamental political knowledge due to inadequate education, coupled with other variables such as the notion that in Nigeria, government will never live up to its responsibilities of delivering good governance; the poor masses throw their voting capacity into the labour market for grasp by the highest bidder, and finally roost into apathy.

Religious poverty – the role of religion and cultural orientation on political socialization can hardly be divested from political culture of a developing country like Nigeria. The upsurge of charismatic movements and their emphasis on spiritual inanities with little or no preference to intellectual or polemical development has reduced a larger part of Nigerian populace to fatalistic beings. Nigerians now accept whatever befalls them as an act of God, and that it will only take providential intervention to turn the table. This quiescence has a very large extent made Nigerians unthinking political beings. Resultantly, the human mind is poisoned to the effect that every action should be reacted to by resigning to fate. “Na God”(it is God) “God dey” (There is God). Fundamentalism among the Muslim folks worsens the political situation by reducing politics to a spectator game, spiritually mediated and predetermined. In a well sold maxim, they argue, “power comes only from *Allah* and he gives it to whom He deems fit”.

In all, the logic is that the people must have capacity in order to be able to wrestle power from the ruling elite. While economic capacity measured in terms of resource possession is critical; having the right knowledge of the required action and process is necessary to turn such into political credibility.

6.2 Leaders’ perennial renegeing on the social contract vis-a-vis residue of military incursion and over stay in Nigerian Politics

Many decades of ‘development-bereft’ governance in Nigeria has created the problem of ‘tenure confidence’ and punctured the belief of the Nigerian citizens that government would ever be for the people. Leadership deficit has more than any other factor *defuelled* national cohesion, and demobilized the citizens at the detriment of the ‘national project’. The more than half a century of independence is a reference historicism of perennial under-achievement, disappointment and impairment of the Nigerian polity: declining in all known ‘scales of comparative development’. The immediate post-colonial Nigeria’s civil leadership was ousted by the military on the allegation of non-performance, abuse of office, corruption and being defective to the national mandate. Based on these allegations the military took over power.

Disappointingly, the military purported reformist intervention in politics left the country worst of. Typified in morbid personalization of power, abuse and manipulation of stewardship and the wanton desire to perpetuate self (the military) on the people against all odds, going against the national mood, voice, tune

and public outcry, and insulating self from the national agitations by the use or threat of use of coercive instruments. The resultant effect aside stagnation of development is more deep-rooted implication of strangulation of the masses civil assertion of control over their leaders. In the same vein participatory space depicted through civil society activities is eclipsed.

Without excess of language, the military excessive involvement in Nigerian politics militarized the system from civic to regimented social life where political apathy festers. Apathy graduated to a psychic political orientation of the majority of the citizens against dictatorial-prone civil leadership. To the peril of the system, the democratic space recovered by the pro-democracy movements - critical and highly mobilized civil society - became annexed in a change of baton system; where the military personnel and their civil cronies became civilian politicians wielding civil dictatorship and orchestrating a protracted and *snail-crawling* democratization process from 1999 till date, with an overwhelming inherent potentiality for democratic erosion (if not reversal) rather than deepening. One could not expect less when the greatest enemies of liberty became the benefactor of the movement against anti-liberal movement in Nigeria, occupying political offices and controlling the economy with enormous holdings in both private and public firms in a plethora of commercial ventures including; agriculture, banking, insurance, telecommunication, oil, construction, manufacturing etc.

6.3 Diversity burden

Nigeria is seriously torn-apart by ever increasing polarity – religion, ethnicity/clan, language groups, ideology-lacking political class, which cripples social cohesion. The burden of diversity in Nigeria does not lie in its plurality rather it lies on its topical cum political complexities. The struggle for power and resources in Nigeria has always been '*ethnopolitically*' enmeshed rather than '*ideo-politically*' driven. This is pitched on the fact that Nigerians has not found a national hero in any of its founding fathers. More so, hardly has any of the leaders lead above his province, or that the followers have not looked beyond the leaders' *ethnopolitical* setting.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

This research work is in tandem to the fact that 'political democracy' is 'people-fuelled'. The dearth of followership capital has more often than not fertilized and excessively sustained the quagmire of 'clientele' politics in Nigeria. For sure Nigeria is replete with structural challenges. However, the structural challenges of Nigeria can only be worked on and corrected by those worst hit by such – the 'general citizenry' rather than political jobbers benefitting from the status-quo. Nigeria has spent so much in advancing democracy and all affected by the decision of government should see it as a matter of right to advance the democratic course in all its ramifications. On a general note, the four cardinal variables as observed by Albert (2011: 11, 12) that impacted on good governance in Botswana should not be overlooked. They are:

- a) The absence of civil and political strife,
- b) the readiness of the country's leadership to promote multiparty democracy and hold regular consultation with people at the grassroots,
- c) the pursuit of strikingly prudent economic policies, and
- d) the incorporation of indigenous knowledge in the running of the nation.

Specifically, it is imperative to recommend as follows:

- A. Leadership should equate itself as parenthood and parent the citizens they govern in the best possible way that a responsible parent will do to his/her child. In the words of Umez (2012);

Parenthood entails the responsibilities of being a parent. Parents nurture, support, and encourage their children to be triumphant in life. Undeniably, parental support and encouragement pave the way to producing successful children. Likewise, leadership entails the responsibilities of a leader, nurturing, supporting and promoting his/her country. Indeed, true leaders produce great, dynamic societies, capable of producing successful citizenry. Therefore, to grow, develop, and succeed in this realistic world, largely marked by zero-sum games, leaders must be real parents of their people, advancing, sustaining and encouraging their countrymen and women. If leaders failed to embark upon these parental/leadership responsibilities in their country, their country is bound to fail miserably, and their people will lag far behind, and suffer tremendous hardships.

For posterity sake, Nigerian leaders should strive to strike a deviation from cultural self-rule that has typified the system to a value driven leadership that will transform the country.

- B. Agents of socialization living up to its canons.

1. Education must be functional, proffering solutions to Nigerian problems. While basic education at the elementary and 'medium level' should be structured to equip the students with the basic knowledge of social studies and fundamental science and technology; leading to advanced education which must be structured in a way that the people will develop the capacity and knowledge to discover their challenges, have a mastery of their environment in pursuit of their needs, solving their problems, and advancing their society, government must ensure that it has the capacity to regulate their internal and external relations. This and only this should be the bedrock and primary logic of education in Nigeria.

2. The religious organisations – especially churches and mosques - should think more of themselves as operating within a society and therefore seek to channel their potentials towards being agent of social change rather than illusive drives. Rather than widening Nigerian diversity burden with dangerous fundamentalism and contestations,

they should engineer the building of the Nigerian nation. Nwolise (2009: xiii) captures the foregoing thus:

The mosques and churches must change gear and direction. It is good to preach being born again, returning to God or Allah, and prosperity, but there is no prosperity for the people in the hands of despots, greedy, corrupt and selfish rulers whose aim in power is using it as a tool to loot our commonwealth. Being born again, or returning to God can bring spiritual upliftment and salvation, but cannot give food to the hungry, or job to the unemployed born again youth. Because God has given this society (Nigeria) natural resources to develop and provide him with food, jobs, welfare and happiness. The problem is bad leadership resulting from undemocratic elections which impose anti-people rulers on all of us. Therefore, the church and mosque should include democratization and salvation of the people's power in their preaching.

3. The families must think of themselves as a cell of Nigerian transformative effort and should channel formidable energy in this regard. In fact, it should be the splinter unit for the reorientation of all other agents of socialization. Democratic norms must be advanced by the family as a point of first contact in expanding democratic space.

4. The media must contribute to the political economy of nation-building rather than being a mercenary in the hands of politicians. Media practitioners must seek democratic deepening and advance civic culture through their activities. The media should arm itself with programmes, debates, reportage and broadcast fertile to democratic spirit.

C. Political (opposition) parties: while it is believed that the ruling and dominant party in Nigeria, the PDP, is at the moment swallowing the country up with what one can describe as 'unpatriotic and crafty dominion mandate', opposition parties must come up with progressive and developmental change to stem the tide. They must however be careful of rebranding of the old wine, having the same taste and savor in the name of opposition. Opposition parties must be accepted as such when they step-up the political game manifested through pressing policy options, alternative policy options, checkmating of the ruling party, evidence of intra-party democracy and superior commitment to democratic norms at all level. With regards to the role of opposition parties in nation-building, Professor Olusegun Adegbulugbe in a Television Programme on the Nigerian

Television Authority (NTA), raised the following question whose answers must inform the formation of any opposition party:

- i. What are the differences in the manifestoes of parties in Nigeria?
- ii. What is the mobilization role of opposition parties in Nigeria beyond competing for the occupation of political office?

Competing for political office alone does not deepen democracy. Opposition parties should be able to articulate alternative policy options. The ideological barrenness that characterizes party politics in Nigeria is for sure antithetical to development; therefore development and progress should henceforth be the main concern of political parties.

- D. The strengthening of political institutions will place the game of politics above actors. According to Kalu (2008: 211).

A fundamental prerequisite for the democratic process is that critical institutions should be in place, so as to enable the assimilation of the core values of democracy. While democracy creates value, institutions enable democratic values to be assimilated and sustained within the society.... Institutions help to maintain consistency, and perhaps, predictability in the behaviour of political actors, but even when performance fails to meet expectations, they provide a natural basis in the search for new solutions.

Institutional capital implies that if democracy is the only game in town, institutions which includes the executive (and its corollaries), the legislature, judiciary, as well as other coordinate bureaucratic institutions, should remain the only pitch where the game of democracy is played and 'replayed' if need be.

Significantly, institutions in this regard includes indigenous institutions with which the people have achieved one goal or the other; where these constitutes political capital, Nigerian democracy should be 'domesticated' to reflect traditional realities.

- E. Other frontiers in the expansion of democratic space – work place, formal and informal organisations.

In the words of Beckman (1997: 31);

The frontiers of democratic struggles are constituted within different arenas, from the place of work to national politics. Contestation at one level creates the preconditions for what happens at another.... Basic rights at the workplace, such as the rights of organisation and representation, have to be secured at the level of national legislation as well as in confronting local employers and authorities. Rights that are specific to one arena will overlap with and depend on more general rights.

Beckman (1997: 28) is of the position that a whole lot of informal arena has implications for the expansion of democratic space. Every member of a society must find himself/herself

struggling against the arbitrary exercise of authority whether “as managers, landlords, teachers, heads, of department, vice-chancellors, market supervisors, artisans, etc”. The import of this is establishing the culture of disciplining authority, regulating the exercise of authority by minimizing arbitrary and personal rule, and having a say in the way one is ruled. Rule of law must be employed from below as a way of enshrining constitutionalism given the fact that those who find themselves in position of authority in any arena whether self organizing, autonomous sectors or government parastatals should at all times be constantly and intensively reminded that their subordinates and followers are not at their wimps and caprices.

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