

The Rational Approach of Obafemi Awolowo's Principles in Enhancing Efficient Leadership and Good Governance through Intellectual Enormity

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Abstract

This paper gaudily examines Chief Obafemi Awolowo's philosophies, activities and his legacies. He was a nationalist and an African hero who has contributed to knowledge, made constitutions and developer of democracy in Nigeria and Africa at large. Chief Obafemi Jeremiah Oyeniya AWOLowo, GCFR was an aristocrat, statesman, Yoruba political leader, Nigerian and African nationalist. The paper further explores his rationales and approaches in enhancing a resourceful leadership and strengthening good governance in Nigeria through intellectual enormity among political office holders which result into an overall growth and development. He ensured that good governance encompasses the following; transparency, accountability, social justice, fairness, equity, selflessness, critical observation of the rule of law, purposeful leadership, effective institutions, and legitimacy of political economic and administrative authority, security and order. Finally, Awolowo believed that intellectual enormity of the people is most important because when a person is educated, his mind and body would be developed and transformed; hence such a person would approach issues correctly, rightly and timely. This paper recommends the sustainability and the adoption of this hero's perspective, ensuring political and policy education for all Nigerian political leaders, and encouraging competition in form of public debate among contestants in various political parties across all governmental level.

Keywords: Awolowo, intellectual enormity, leadership, good governance, development.

1. Introduction

The severe crisis of confidence that afflicts Nigerian governance and leadership style in their comparison with the developed countries is embedded in the crisis situation of intellectual enormity among Nigerian political leaders. This level seems to be crawling instead of being side-by-side the developed countries. About thirty years ago, Awolowo who was a African hero and a nationalist attracted the attention of leaders through his writings, quotations, seminars and publications which portrayed his real identity on the need to embrace high intellect which enhance critical thinking. This should be a criterion for anyone who wants to participate and become responsible in leadership. Awolowo's idea cannot be boxed within the confines of Nigerian phenomena. Rather, he shares that special quality of all great thinkers and writers from their peculiar historical locations, the local, they are able to apprehend the universal, the global and by so doing leave us a legacy of ideas that can truly illuminate the specific problems they deal with wherever in the world those problems might be confronted (Olufemi Taiwo, U.S.A: 12th – 13th July, 2013).

Nigeria as a country has suffered and is presently suffering from the wide spread disease engulfing the entire sectors. This chronic disease is referred to as corruption which can be attributed to lack of intellectual enormity. The greatest challenge that faces her today is the lack of good governance which collaborated with bad leadership and gives birth to corruption. This challenge seems unique in Africa, despite the abundance of both material and human resources. Nigeria remain among the poorest countries in the world, this is best illustrated by its institutional and structural decay and represented by high level of poverty, diseases, and ignorance.

Nigeria is presently ranked as second in the UNDP Low Human Development index (2007/2008) in spite of the fact that it is currently occupying the 8th position among the countries producing oil in the world (UNDP, 2007). Thus, is a typical example of a country with this problem of poverty, ignorance, and disease and the poverty has virtually become a culture, while a handful of elites are living in affluence. Those that were positioned to manage the resources of their countries prefer to enrich themselves using political means, thereby increase their wealth (Trask, Scott H. A., 2004). There was a concluding aspect of an author that bad government is not generally interested in eradicating poverty (Nyerere, J., 2006).

Governance is broadly referred to as the exercise of power through a country's economic, social, and political institutions in which institutions represent the organizational rules and routines, formal laws, and informal norms that together shape the incentives of public policy-makers, overseers, and providers of public services (Nwabueze, B.O., 2005). Good governance became the reducible criteria for assessment of government under the 1999 Constitution, due to the negative effect of military rule, the activities of civil society and the pressures of international financial institutions such as the World Bank, IMF and UNDP. Good governance is, among other things, participatory, transparent and accountable, effective and equitable, and it promotes the rule of law (Olu-Adeyemi, O., 2012). It ensures that political, social and economic priorities are based on broad

consensus in society and that the voices of the poorest and the most vulnerable are heard in decision-making over the allocation of resources.

It should be critically noted that majority of the Nigerian public policy makers or law makers does not have sound knowledge about policy formulation and implementation process. National policy is an attempt by government to address issue by instituting laws, regulations, decisions, or actions pertinent to the problems at hand. However, in respect of these definitions, national policy is the process of formulating and implementation of government developmental policies or activities and programs for the benefits of its citizenry. This means, policy formulation is a decision making process as put down by a political scientist (David E., 1957). He interpreted political dynamics in terms of a continuous process, a system of interaction. To him, a political system is an interrelated set of activities, roles, and institutions that operates within an environment which provides inputs to the political system and then translates these inputs into policy outputs. Government policy makers decide what should be done in order to respond to people's demand for economic, social, political and developmental progress of the nation. A policy should be an outcome of political process which must satisfy the following criteria;

1. It must be analytically based,
2. It must be politically acceptable,
3. It must be socially credible,
4. It must be economically viable,
5. It must be environmentally suitable, and
6. It must be sustainable.

Awolowo has proven his originality, depth and audacity of thinking in many areas, which denote much riches and complexity of his expostulations, the sophistication and thoroughness of his policy formulations. He reaches a conclusion in his analysis of leadership and good governance in Nigeria that one of the evils of political life is the material greed of politicians which is resulted from lack of intellectual enormity.

1.1. Limitation and Implication

This paper explores the rationales and approaches of Awolowo in enhancing a resourceful leadership and strengthening good governance in Africa through intellectual enormity which result into an overall growth and development. He ensured that good governance encompasses the following; transparency, accountability, social justice, fairness, equity, selflessness, critical observation of the rule of law, purposeful leadership, effective institutions, and legitimacy of political economic and administrative authority, security and order.

In the case of sourcing literatures to review, it was discovered that few researchers recognized and studied the life of this great hero. With the little literatures written so far about his approaches, Awolowo was also a researcher who had made various researches during his lifetime and we can make reference to his works. It should be noted that great leaders should consider taking the work of research as they move ahead in life and making sure they made some writings which can be made referenced to in future even after they might have departed.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Awolowo's Approaches on Corruption, Intellectual Enormity and the Human Desire

Awolowo identified corruption and selfishness as the major factors that have drawl back or brought a decline to Nigerians' living condition; incidentally, this condition has recently brought about political instability in the country (Akinjide Aboluwodi, 2012). Awolowo seeks to establish an uncensored society, the People's Republic, where in each case, good governance becomes a desirable value. Awolowo's society consists of different social classes whereby each represents different value interests. According to Akinjide Aboluwodi (2012), the three classes in Awolowo's Nigerian society are;

1. The educated class, which consists of professional people, teachers and clerks,
2. The enlightened class, which also consists of traders and artisans and
3. The ignorant masses

Awolowo believes that government is meant to ensure the well-being of these various groups in the society; hence, the reason for the notion that Nigeria deserves the best political order that will promote social justice and engender equity. In Awolowo's view, the approaches of intellectual enormity rests on the philosophical belief that the intellect which is involve in critical reasoning is superior to the physical element of a person, a belief that places reflective thinking at the heart of human actions. Given this basic belief, therefore, commonsense holds that human desires and actions can only be defended reasonably when they follow the dictate of reason. This approach originates from Awolowo's attempt to understand the nature of man.

Awolowo postulates two different conceptions of the nature of man, namely;

1. The Grecian dualist descriptions of mind and body,
2. The Judaic tripartite description of mind, body and spirit.

Awolowo seems to be using it for political strategy. In his contention, Awolowo uses the Grecian model among the freethinkers while he uses the tripartite model among the Christians. It is obvious that Awolowo's main objective, in either case, is to show that man has a complex nature (Ogunmodede, F.I., 1986). Plato acknowledges the existence of the mind and body, but goes further to divide the mind into two, namely;

1. Conscious phase and
2. Subconscious phase.

The conscious phase is sub-divided into two sectors;

- a. The objective mind and
- b. The subjective minds.

The subconscious phase is also sub-divided into;

- a. Unconscious and
- b. Super-conscious minds.

Akinjide Aboluwodi (2012) examined that Awolowo sees the subjective mind as the seat of thinking and reasoning while the objective mind is connected to the faculties of seeing, smelling, feeling, tasting and hearing. He thinks the objective mind needs an object to be able to function, while the subjective mind does not require any object since it is purely mental. Its functions include observation, imagination, inference and others. The most active phases of the mind are the subjective and subconscious minds. The subconscious mind is physical (a network of automatic nerve), intellectual and spiritual; at least it is the essence of God. As Awolowo has posited "the subconscious mind, being as we have described it, is not and cannot be object of instruction or education. It is the projection of the GOD ESSENCE into man, and therefore, the same as that ESSENCE in the kind and quality, and only differs from it in degree (Awolowo, O., 1968). Awolowo's reason for saying that the subconscious mind is not educable must be due to its spiritual nature.

The principle behind Awolowo's intellectual enormity is that it is necessary to allow reasoning which reflects critical thinking to control human instincts and emotions that make us behave like animals. Thus, the approach of intellectual enormity is about a person's ability to subvert the human desires that crave selfish interest and ridiculous materialism. The approach of intellectual enormity is borne out of Awolowo's observation that most leaders lack the basic ingredients of leadership, namely: self-discipline. He shares this view with Plato who has earlier observed that the interests of the politicians are sometimes in conflict with the interest of the people, especially when the politicians' desire is simply to satisfy their needs. Plato sees the link between this desire and the politicians' instincts and emotions, hence his belief that reason should be allowed to control those instincts and emotions which push them to desire material things (Akinjide Aboluwodi, 2012).

Generally, the notion held by Awolowo concerning the conduct of the leaders in the State points to the fact that, at times, leaders are ruled by instincts. Gen. Buhari (rtd), a Nigerian, who won in the Presidential election conducted in year 2015, seems to represent this view. President Buhari is a Muslim whom has lost elections severally and his faithful have gone out to incite the street urchins in Northern Nigeria against the Christians claiming 'stole of mandate' for their Christian brother from the South, leading to the maiming and killing of those perceived to have voted for Dr. Jonathan in 2011. Now that he presides, can such a statement be reversed that the mandate was later given to him or those that were killed be brought back to life? According to Akinjide Aboluwodi, (2012), Awolowo's instincts like this predispose these leaders to emotionalism and impulsiveness. Here Awolowo groups emotion into two;

1. Positive emotion and
2. Negative emotion.

He identifies positive emotions with inquisitiveness, originality, and competitiveness and so on while negative emotions are classified as annoyance, temper, rage, pugnacity, belligerence and others. Indeed, Awolowo's argument is that sometimes negative emotions may have serious impact on the life of individuals and this may result to injuries against oneself and others (Awolowo, O., 1968). Also, Awolowo tries to link human nature and human actions which may sometimes work at variance. To ensure a disciplined personality and transparent conduct in governance, leaders are supposed to be free from negative emotions such as fear, anxiety, hate, anger, envy and selfishness. Although, they are to avoid indulging in wrong food, drink and immoral craving for sex. A negative emotion is a real danger to health and physical well-being, and an affront to the principle behind good governance. It is clearly obvious to point out the fact that love is a strong force in Awolowo's political arrangement. This is the height of Obafemi Awolowo's dialectic speculation which harps on love as the key player of good governance. Love, for Awolowo, epitomizes justice, fairness and good governance, therefore, is a translation of the dictum: "love your neighbor as yourself" to a practical action (Akinjide Aboluwodi, 2012).

There is a wide definition that corruption is the abuse of power or resources for personal profit and at the expense of others. It is not just about a specific act(s), but it is about our very mindsets and deep-seated behaviors. Corruption is an act of requesting, offering, giving or accepting directly or indirectly a bribe or any other undue advantage or the prospect thereof, which distorts the proper performance of any duty or behavior

required of the recipient of the bribe, the undue advantage of the prospect thereof (Kofele-Kale, 2006). Corruption is a system on its own existed from the combination of several sub-systems such as dishonesty, excessive love for money, ostentatious living, drug abuse, drug trafficking, disregard for time, examination malpractice, cultism, human trafficking, prostitution, kidnapping, robbery, and many other forms of negativity.

Most of these leaders involved in corrupt practices are those that Awolowo in his view pointed not to have developed their mind, intellect and brain. Awolowo would probably conclude that their mind is underdeveloped, though they have catered to their body in terms of wealth they acquired. For Awolowo, people like this are not fit to lead in Nigeria.

3. Awolowo's View on Education, Leadership and Good Governance

The word "education" was derived from the Latin word "educat or educare" which means to bring up, to develop, to educate to lead out to lead out fully all the potentialities of an individual. To educate means; to give intellectual, moral, and social instruction (Oxford dictionary, 2011). Education can be defined according to different authors in their various perspectives. Education comprises of training and acquisition of special skills, knowledge, attitudes and values needed by an individual to be responsible in life.

Leadership is the "ability to influence a group toward the achievement of a vision or a set of goals." In its political application, leadership suggests the ability to influence a people towards the achievement of their desired goals (Robbins, S.F. and Judge, T.A., 2007). It seems to illustrate a leader's ability to match his objectives with the situation in his environment. In Awolowo's quotation on Self-Discipline "I will more than ever before subject myself to severe self-discipline. Only men who are masters of themselves become easily masters of others (Awolowo, 1985). Therefore, my thoughts, my tongue, and my actions shall be brought under strict control always." Awolowo clearly point out the fact that a leader must be able to subject him-self under self discipline.

The issue of leadership and good governance is paramount to Awolowo's political thought. Awolowo sees the test of good governance in terms of the preservation of a peaceful and just social order with a wide range of opportunities such as liberty, fairness, good education and legal equality among others (Akinjide Aboluwodi, 2012). The quest for good governance is not peculiar to Nigeria; it is now a global issue. Awolowo stated in his quotation that "Those of us placed in a position of leadership must be prepared to grasp the nettle if we unite in doing so, and if so, in addition we set a worthy example and a marathon pace in probity, unselfishness and self-sacrifice, the people will follow, all too readily in our footsteps" (Awolowo, 1961).

Awolowo believes that corruption arises when a leader's mind is not developed. In his analysis, he also gives us a picture of a corrupt mind that craves earthly desires, who is unable to control his/her desire and impulse. Those individuals who possess this mindset find it difficult to control their appetite. Hence, they are swept by the tides of their desire and impulse. Awolowo alludes to this point in his efforts to explain how some individuals are sometimes enslaved by their instincts and emotions. He stated in his quotation "Any system of education which does not help a man to have a healthy and sound body and alert brain and balanced and disciplined instinctive urges is both misconceived and dangerous" (Awolowo, 1968).

Awolowo does not hesitate to link the structural decay in Nigeria to the economic system in place, namely, capitalism while he holds the leaders responsible for the country's underdevelopment. Awolowo believes that leaders who lack genuine insight into what is good for Nigeria are those ruling. The problem arises from lack of education, which Awolowo accepts; he still thinks that the leaders' refusal to allow reason (that is, critical thinking) to permeate their actions is the bane behind Nigeria's problems. Awolowo links good governance to rational actions.

Awolowo approaches Nigeria's political development from the standpoint of social transformation, namely;

1. The removal of ignorance and illiteracy among the citizens, and
2. The education of the leaders.

Awolowo sees ignorance and illiteracy as the major impediment to the achievement of good governance, a problem that often manifests in two basic areas. These are in the areas of illiterate electorate who aid rigging and incompetent leaders who aid corrupt individuals in the society. Awolowo contends that education is required to create an educated electorate in the society; and as he aptly puts it, "I have insisted, again and again, an educated citizenry is indispensable to the satisfactory practice of democracy."

Awolowo submits that good leadership is a necessary condition for administrative competence, though may not be sufficient for good governance. He also states that leadership involves the ability to translate values (love, justice and fairness) into reality which are benefits of good governance. At this point, he decides to conclude that any leader that is desirous of leading his/her country must be educated and highly disciplined. Also, true education is the development of the mind, body and brain. He also distinguishes between education that focuses on acquisition of certificates and laurels, and education that involves the development of the 'whole person'. Education in the former sense does not involve the education of the body, mind and brain while in the latter sense education is holistic. It is a form of education which injects into an individual the ability to reflect on

his/her actions, thought and deeds.

Good governance is defined in terms of adherence to accountability, transparency, the rule of law and human rights policies. It is also traced with love, social justice, equity and fairness. Awolowo contends that if a man's body is developed and his intellect and mind are not developed he stands to be exploited. On the other hand, if a man's mind is developed and the intellect and body are not developed he becomes a religious fanatic, pessimistic and fatalistic. Those who engage in terrorism for religious purpose (Boko Haram) fall within this category. He stated in his quote that "A greedy, corrupt, and evil administration is bound to wither, sooner or later in the face of obsessive desire and mounting clamor on the part of the masses of the people for a welfare regime will benefit all equally" (Awolowo, 1968). In the course of time, there will be a clash of desires and wills between the exploiters and the exploited. These clash of desires will then stir the universal mind into action, and a situation will then arise which will bring about the termination of or a radical change in the greedy and evil regime (Awolowo, 1968).

Awolowo does not see in Nigeria alone but in Africa indeed. Leaders who have acquired the right education must have developed their mind, body and intellect to be reflective and reason logically enough to understand the effects of their actions on others. Awolowo seems to be referring to Laurent Gbagbo of Ivory Coast a Professor of History who loses election but insists staying in office and Gen, Muhammadu Buhari (rtd) of Nigeria when he loses election in year 2011 but allows his supporters to provoke his Muslim co-patriots against the same citizens he pledges to serve. Individuals like this do not fall within the precinct of Awolowo's leadership pattern. Thus, Awolowo's argument is that for the purpose of effective governance in Africa those who aspire to leadership must be those who are ruled by reason rather than by negative emotion. It is only in this respect that leaders can understand that the central concern of any government is how to meet the needs of the entire citizens.

Awolowo's strong support for the theory of moral leadership has been expressed explicitly in his different works. From the various discussions he has had about leadership, he has tried to link leadership with individuals' ability to exercise self-discipline and self-control in their actions particularly in establishing good governance. Awolowo has not rest his oar on self-discipline he has also insisted that love must mediate in the actions and deeds of such individuals since love is the epitome of leadership. Awolowo probably forgets that a disciplined leader may sometimes turn out to be inefficient administratively especially when he lacks what Robbins and Judge classify as "a highly analytical mind, a compelling vision and terrific ideas" (Robbins, S.F. and Judge, T.A., 2007). Though his moral leadership traits represent what Nigeria leaders require today to be able to change the face of the country, nevertheless, there is still the need for such leaders to have vision, foresight, dynamism, pro-activeness, emotional intelligence and empathy to turn things around. Awolowo acknowledges the essential nature of these attributes; nevertheless, his argument is that in spite of the high profiles of Nigerian leaders many of them have refused to understand that leadership entails service to the people. Awolowo introduces two forms of education:

1. Education for the masses and
2. Education for the leaders.

His major concern for the masses is to educate them so that they can overcome the problem of ignorance, illiteracy and superstition. The leaders are to receive a higher education that will free their mind from instinctual enslavement. It is this notion that Awolowo introduced Universal Primary Education in Western Nigeria (Akinjide Aboluwodi, 2012). He probably thinks that basic education is enough to liberate the people from ignorance and superstition while the leaders are exposed to rigorous education as a result of achieving critical reasoning which reflects in their intellects, mind and body. From this arrangement, Awolowo's Universal Education is designed to make the ordinary citizens literate not necessarily educated. Simpson spot this vacuum in Awolowo's thought, hence he does not hesitate to remind him of the fact that "the provision of universal education does not necessarily imply that people will be educated (Simpson, D.B., 2006).

4.0. Conclusion and Recommendation

The fact that Awolowo envisaged special education for the leaders shows the seriousness he attaches to their education. He thought leaders the need to avail themselves for opportunities such education offers as it will assist them to manage the affairs of their countries effectively. He is also passionate about his belief that he has to bring in God to strengthen his theory of leadership vis-à-vis governance.

Awolowo has made it clear that every citizen in a state deserves a good quality of life; and this is achievable through education and effective leadership. He equally shares the belief that for the human society to function properly it must have stable families, healthy workers, trustworthy government, honest police and law-abiding citizens.

However, trustworthy government can only be instituted by leaders who can cultivate intellectual enormity and spiritual deepness. These are leaders who have risen above corruption and selfishness, and have gone beyond instinctive urges to defeat what Awolowo called the 'tyranny of the flesh'. So, Awolowo believes

that government has the obligation to provide the conditions that will enable the individuals in the state to receive education, enjoy good health and be given employment.

His regime of intellectual enormity represents this principle. In this regard, “only men who are masters of themselves become easily masters of others.” Awolowo sets an example of good leadership while serving as the Premier of Western Nigeria. His emphasis on education and effective leadership are factors for human and national development. He advocates free and compulsory education, perhaps in response to the problem of illiteracy and ignorance which characterize the Nigerian society, hence constituted an impediment to sustainable democratic culture in the country. Awolowo examines that problems often manifests in two basic areas. These are in the following areas;

1. Illiterate electorate who aid rigging and
2. Incompetent leaders who aid corruption in the state.

He believes that education is required to create educated electorate within the state. Once an electorate is educated, that is, his mind, intellect and body are developed; he breaks the bonds of ignorance. His belief is that education should focus on the liberation of man from the restraint and limitations of ignorance and dependency. He stated that “a successful society will be a thinking society in which the capacities of lifelong learning of its citizens are most fully realized.” In this regard, intellectual enormity brings about effective critical thinking and becomes a quality in education which individuals need to cultivate.

This paper explores Awolowo’s rationales and approaches in enhancing a resourceful leadership and strengthening good governance in Africa through intellectual enormity which result into an overall growth and development. It further recommends that everyone willing to aspire for leadership position or role should have deeper understanding on political science, policy formulation and implementation, and management and decision making. Awolowo ensured that good governance encompasses the following; transparency, accountability, social justice, fairness, equity, selflessness, critical observation of the rule of law, purposeful leadership, effective institutions, and legitimacy of political economic and administrative authority, security and order. Intellectual enormity of the people is the most important because when a person is educated, his mind and his body would have been developed; hence such a person would approach issues correctly. It is encouraged that approaches and principles of this hero should be adopted in the present and in the future.

The affirmation of inefficient education of Nigerian leaders results to the confirmation of bad governance, corrupt leadership style and unsound policies which will be detriment unto the welfare of citizens.

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Biography

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