

## Leadership Recruitment Process and the Travails of Development in Nigeria

Odisu TA\*

School of Marine Technology, Burutu, Delta State, Nigeria

\*Corresponding author: Odisu TA, School of Marine Technology, Burutu, Delta State, Nigeria, Tel: +0194 227 2096; E-mail: [lonesuraiya100@gmail.com](mailto:lonesuraiya100@gmail.com)

Received date: August 04, 2017; Accepted date: October 04, 2017; Published date: October 10, 2017

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### Abstract

Nigeria has failed in uplifting the standard of living of its citizens despite the enormous natural resources because the recruitment process is in favour of unreliable politicians. From the analysis of data gathered through the descriptive method, the paper reveals that rather than enthroning people who have the zeal and interest to serve, morally bankrupt politicians who are bereft of ideas are those winning elections. It is recommended that the electorate should always be vigilant to interrogate the process leading to the emergence of candidates such that dubious politicians who cannot be trusted are foreclosed from getting into public offices.

**Keywords:** Monetization; God-fatherism; Predatory; Underdevelopment; Stoooges

### Introduction

Politics is supposed to be used in advancing the wellbeing of the citizens by ensuring the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people. This is the theory of utilitarianism idealized by J.S Mill. Politics can only be used in creating an egalitarian society if the right people are in power. The wrong people are always in power in Nigeria because the political process is skewed in favour of renegades with questionable source of wealth with which they seamlessly bulldoze their way to power. Some are sponsored into office by predatory godfathers and, in recouping their investments; they call the shots from outside. This has been impeding development in Nigeria. The kitchen cabinet is made up of godfathers and greedy party leaders who helped in installing their stooges into power and thereafter teleguide them from outside. A large chunk of funds meant for services goes to these power brokers or king makers at the detriment of the masses. Human Rights Watch [1] shared this view in its report.

In most cases, these political stooges are cajoled or coerced by their monstrous godfathers into joining and taking oaths of allegiance to satanic cults which harden them to be unperturbed by the excruciating poverty ravaging the masses. What happened in some south east states some years ago jocularly referred to as Okija politics were pathetic instances that cannot be forgotten so soon. Stephen Ellis [2] referred to the politics of the region as that of life and death, due to the cult activities involving the political gladiators.

Poor leadership recruitment process has therefore created social stratification in Nigeria as the masses have been alienated from the powers that be – those who superintend over the allocation of resources. According to Professor Pat Utomi [3], very few people have been taking decisions over the resources of Nigeria because there had never been good elections. He referred to them as pimps who had formed the club of capture and inflicted an anti-intellectual culture on Nigeria. The then federal government wasted huge amount of money to rig the elections in Ekiti and Rivers states in 2014 and 2015 respectively to ensure the emergence of its candidates. It also wasted

hefty amount of money to solicit for votes in the 2015 presidential election but it lost the election [4]. Bad election can never enthrone credible candidates, only those with questionable character would emerge to pursue anti-people agenda.

The inevitable consequence of bad leadership recruitment process is bad governance because the bad guys in office never bothered about touching the lives of the masses but only on how to enrich themselves and their lunatic godfathers as well as some light-fingered party members. Hence, you see some governors embarking on projects that would never impact on the electorate because they use such projects as means of stealing public funds. For instance, of what use is the building of a new government house or secretariat at a time when workers' salaries are being owed? What is wrong with the old government house? Some other projects are poorly executed because the contractors have been asked to part with some percentage of the usually inflated project costs. This is why some newly built roads and bridges are failing. Nigeria would have taken a new shape if the brightest minds with unblemished antecedents have been presiding over its affairs. Zoning, quota system, federal character had enthroned less qualified people into public offices and this had negatively affected service delivery. Mediocrity is anathemic to development; therefore, the most qualified persons should be elected or appointed irrespective of their ethnic background.

Decent people are foreclosed from participating in politics because they would not like to waste their hard-earned money for incredible elections as they would not steal a dime. Why wasting money for an opportunity to render selfless service? The political parties are to blame here. They make the expression of interest and nomination forms so expensive. To run for the office of president, the form costs over N20 million, governorship and senatorial forms cost huge amount of money [5]. Only politicians with ulterior motive and hidden agenda would commit their ill-gotten resources into an expensive venture like Nigerian politics and this is the reason why the bad guys are always in power at the detriment of the masses that cannot unite to demystify their common enemies. The political parties are fond of imposing candidates on the voters rather than allowing them to make their choice in primary and general elections [6]. This is also an impediment to the recruitment process in Nigeria. Most of the people occupying

elective positions in Nigeria are selectively elected due to the roles played by political parties and political godfathers.

Closely tied to the above is the monetization of politics in Nigeria. To win an election, you must spend money to canvass for votes. Some politicians share food items like bags of rice which they refer to as stomach infrastructure as well as cash directly to the voters. The costs of posters, billboards as well as radio and television jingles are above the reach of the unblemished, decent and morally upright politicians. Over one trillion naira was spent by political parties in 2015 election [7]. On the day of election, due to greed and poverty, the polling agents representing the various political parties are easily bought over by the candidates with deep pockets to allow the falsification of figures for them to emerge against the wish of the people. If money is brazenly used in an election, the winners may not necessarily be the right persons, and when politicians buy their mandate, they tend to be unaccountable to the electorate and remain insensitive to their yearnings.

Electoral violence is a serious negation to the recruitment process in Nigeria. Politics has become a do or die affair. Thugs are recruited and armed by politicians to unleash terror on perceived formidable opponents and to intimidate supporters of opponents in their strongholds [8]. This has removed morality from Nigerian politics, and politics without morality, according to Professor Peter Ekeh [9], is destructive. Which type of development would destructive politics engender? No gentleman who wants to serve the people would subscribe to violence. After the elections, the thugs would metamorphose into terrorists, kidnappers and armed robbers to give sleepless nights to innocent citizens as they cannot get at the blood sucking politicians. This is a serious issue in Nigeria presently, as guns are held by those unauthorized to do so. The lawmakers who are always fighting and throwing chairs in the hallowed chambers, even when they know that their wives as well as their children and siblings are seeing them on television, are products of electoral violence. Very recently, there was a show of shame at the Edo State House of Assembly where the lawmakers turned to lawbreakers as they fought and removed the speaker. The assembly had gotten four speakers within two years.

The judiciary has not played a good role in ensuring a sound recruitment process. Election cases drag for a long time before giving judgment. The wrong person would almost complete the tenure thereby inflicting monumental pain on the electorate before the final verdict. Such a delay becomes a denial if it is a parliamentary case. In some cases, the judges are compromised by the higher bidder leading to miscarriage of justice. If a rerun election is ordered by the court on grounds of rigging or violence, the court is supposed to bar the candidate who benefitted from such a malpractice from participating. This has not happened and it is very worrisome.

The most senior judge may not necessarily be the most grounded in law. He or she may also not be the most unblemished. Using seniority as a yardstick for a higher post is a bad recruitment process. Therefore, years of service should not be the only criterion for becoming chief justice of Nigeria or president of appeal court.

### Consequences of Poor Recruitment Process

The nation has not recorded any significant progress in any sector after sixteen years of civilian leadership. This is due to the kind of people that came to power. The electorate had never been represented very well since 1999. With due respect to a few of them, a large number

of legislators at the federal and state levels were preoccupied with primitive accumulation instead of making people-oriented laws. The situation is even worse with the lawmakers that came to power in 2015. In the midst of excruciating economic hardship occasioned by the recession, the national assembly, in trying to maintain the unsustainable lifestyle of its avaricious members, wasted a hefty amount of tax payers' fund on exotic cars and SUVs. Apart from the undisclosed jumbo salary, the law makers approved several allowances for themselves. This is probably why former president Obasanjo called them unarmed robbers [10].

The ongoing constitution amendment exercise has shown that the masses have no representatives. Despite the strident calls for restructuring or true practice of federalism in every part of the nation, the lawmakers voted against it. It is petrifying to note that a bill seeking for amnesty for politicians who looted the national treasury was read on the floor of the hallowed chamber [11]. This is nauseating and sickening. It shows that the wrong people were elected. A lot of comedians and dancers as well as thugs have been and are still in the national assembly. Some have not moved a motion for years, while some go there to sleep. Some don't even bother to attend plenary sessions hence seats are always empty, but they collect salaries and all the allowances. The type of scintillating debates in the British parliament and the American congress televised on CNN and BBC cannot be replicated in Nigerian national assembly. It is amazing to note that a senator moved a motion that the senate president should be sworn in as Nigeria acting president just because the acting president was out of the country for just two days and it was seconded by another legislator [12]. But unknown to them, the acting president flew into the country that very day. What could be more comedic than this? All these are a reflection of the quality of people in public office in Nigeria. The level of debauchery the national assembly has sunk into is unimaginable.

Some of the state governors were not the choice of the people. They were forced on the electorate by powerful power brokers who succeeded in buying the conscience of the poverty stricken voters and some greedy staff of the electoral body. In most of the states, nothing is happening. There is the problem of flooding, general hospitals are in terrible shape, and salaries of civil servants are owed. All these problems persist despite the internally generated revenue (IGR), the monthly allocation from the federation account, the Bail Out and the Paris Club Refund. The absence of philosophical insight to leadership may be responsible for the non-performance of some of the governors. Leadership is about serving the people by taking very critical decisions, but greedy and lily-livered politicians cannot take people-oriented decisions. People who are qualified to be senators and governors should be those that are already contented with their achievements in life, and are therefore ready to serve the people, as those politicians pursuing private wealth cannot be good leaders. Some political godfathers would not allow the puppet governors to take decisions in favour of the voters. Osayi [13] corroborated this view, just like Stephen Ellis, when he x-rayed the ignoble role of god fathers in Nigeria regressive democracy. The immediate past president alluded to this in his address during his party non-elective convention when he said that his party leaders and elders didn't support the implementation of the Treasury Single Account [14].

The underdevelopment of Nigeria is linkable to the warped recruitment process that has been placing square pegs in round holes. When ministers and commissioners are to be appointed, the godfathers would nominate their protégés without considering their

pedigree and competence. A nerveless president or governor would accept such nominations and this leads to poor performance. If the guys that can deliver are not members of the ruling party, there is nothing unethical or sacrilegious in sourcing for them from outside since the goal of politics is to bring development and progress to the people. The Bible is very clear here: the people rejoice when good leaders emerge. The president, governors, legislators, ministers and commissioners etc. should be incorruptibly honest. Nigeria remains underdeveloped not because of its contact with imperialism but because of bad rulers who had mismanaged its resources and patrimony over the years. There is nothing to show for the oil wealth in terms of world class infrastructure. Only the rulers and public officials have world class properties some of which have been confiscated by the anti-graft agency, the EFCC [15,16]. The story of Nigeria is that of wasted opportunities as the oil boom is painfully over. The oil that has made Nigerian rulers indolent and lunatic before May 29th 2015 will soon be irrelevant.

The appointment of vice chancellors and rectors or provosts in the universities and polytechnics are not based on merit any more. It is now political. If this can happen in citadels of learning, then it can happen in any other sector. If political bigwigs are those determining who becomes VCs and rectors as well as members of governing councils, the rot and fallen academic standard should never be a surprise to any sane person. During recruitment exercise, such vice chancellor or rector must honor the list submitted by the man who made him or her get the job. It is immaterial if the recommended applicants are qualified as lecturers or not. No wonder the children of vice chancellors and rectors are not attending schools over which they superintend, they study abroad. If the schools are not good for their wards, which wards are they meant for? State governors and other top government officials also send lists of thugs who assisted them during elections to vice chancellors and rectors for employment. These are the undesirable elements extorting money and sexually harassing female students in the higher institutions today. This does not happen in civilized societies. Very qualified PhD holders are denied the rank of professor especially if they are critical of the school leadership style as regards the application of funds, and if they refuse to do the bidding of the powers that be as well as refusal to be cult members. But praise singers who are not due for the rank, and who are cult members ready to be used for ungodly assignments, are promoted to the professor rank. This is morally reprehensible, disgusting and capable of discouraging hard work. If appointments and promotions are hinged on demonic cult membership, then the country is dead. The poor recruitment process has indeed destroyed Nigeria.

### Concluding Remarks and Recommendations

Bad leadership recruitment process has been an impediment to development in Nigeria because people without competence and interest to serve the masses have been manning the public offices. The

elections are monetized: the costs of expression of interest and nomination forms, campaigns and other logistics are above the reach of gentlemen and ladies with genuine desire to render selfless service and are therefore foreclosed from standing for elections. This is why the bad guys with ill-gotten wealth and those who are willing to do the bidding of insatiable predators with cult bond are those allocating the nation's resources. This is a huge negation to the growth of Nigeria; hence it remains the creeping giant of Africa.

The electorate must come out from slumber and start interrogating the process leading to the emergence of candidates. This would prevent unarmed robbers from contemplating to run for election. The political parties must demonetize politics by reducing the cost of nomination forms to attract responsible men and women. Zoning arrangement or federal character be jettisoned: merit should be the only criterion for electing or appointing people into public offices. The remuneration for elected officers is reviewed downward so that only those who are willing to serve the people would come forward. Any person found guilty of electoral violence is given capital punishment.

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