

# Leadership in Nigeria - the bottomline

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People go into politics with different motives. But the purpose of politics is to provide a vehicle to serve the community. This primary aim unfortunately is rarely upheld and if at all, by a tiny few.

There are three main groups of individuals who go into politics - the incidental person who may not be well off but due to circumstances agrees to serve, the 'career' politician who sees politics as a means of income and does all he can to ensure he is elected, and a third group who are quite well off and chooses to enter into politics as a means of furthering their influence or estate; either for good or otherwise.

Each person in any of these three groups (and others you may identify) may end up where they never expected to be due to what unfortunately is a denominator, majority carrying the vote! Essentially people lose their voice when the majority pulls the decision in a direction they are unable to change.

The 'manifesto' of each political group seeks to mitigate this risk. However what is becoming increasingly evident is that the politics of African nations and Nigeria in particular lacks credibility or authenticity. The last three decades of Nigerian politics led by PDP and APC has sadly not measured up in many ways including meeting basic needs of grass root communities.

Meeting the basic needs form the bedrock of a progressive society - food, shelter, health, safety and then others including education and industry etc. What is good for the goose is good for the gander. But this is not the reality on ground. The leaders do not travel in these trike taxis they so heartily encourage, they do not get stuck in hour long road traffic jams, in major cities, they do not use local health care services and majority send their children to private schools local or abroad. Essentially they never have a taste of their own bitter pill!

A leadership that prides itself in promoting their self interests certainly is not worth that name. The last few decades have witnessed so-called leaders preoccupy themselves with amassing stupendous wealth, stealing state resources and diverting funds met for community projects to their own purposes. The policies of government have been crafted to entrench corrupt practices, the most depressing being the massive pay structure gap between the leadership arms of government and the rest of civil service agencies as well as the state governors equivalent security votes.

It is so shameful reading how much is spent on party primary elections, sums of money that would transform rural communities in a fiat; yet exchanged for the pursuit of office. And these are the characters you believe have the interest of the common man? Then I am afraid this is self delusion and anyone belonging to such entities are indeed the problem of Nigeria - period!

There is an African proverb that says a leopard cannot loose its spots and neither can people offer what they don't have. The psychology of human behaviour also echos the reality that frequently expressed patterns are more likely to be replicated in given situations. It is therefore very likely that the current crop of politicians seeking office across the main platforms are certainly not going to offer the change currently desired. The evidence for this is not far-fetched.

There is no attempt on the part of those in leadership to address the inequity in salary structures among politicians. The wilful neglect of grass root development as evidenced by the depredation and extreme poverty across villages and cities speaks volumes. There is similarly so much desperation and lawlessness that the absence of government is the experience of majority forced in certain cases to 'pay their way' in order to access services. Salaries are routinely unpaid. Our institutions have become a shadow of themselves with private bodies taking over healthcare or education, sustained in some cases by funds diverted by politicians. The average Nigerian "lives by faith" and not by virtue of a government process.

Some in frustration have opted to join the status quo and have become rabid supporters of 'Any Government in Power' (AGiP)!

I would rather that the current Labour Union organise a strike insisting that the arms of government review their salary and allowance structures downwards to internationally accepted standards and not just advocating for increasing the 'minimum wage' which sadly is not even a living wage.

I believe in a New Nigeria built on foundations of truth and integrity none of which is currently demonstrated by the parties in the corridors of power.

*More of the same sadly will keep us locked-in in this quagmire.*

The only solution I see is for the crop of new politicians to sit up and stop being self-centred; and pull together a framework that would upset this applecart of maleficent impostors in the sit of government.

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