



POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND THE PARADOX OF AFRICAN ECONOMIC UNDERDEVELOPMENT 1960 – 2010: A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF NIGERIA AS A CASE STUDY

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Abstract

At her Independence in 1960, Nigeria held out prospects of being one of the fastest economies of the world and attainment of industrial status within a generation. This was because she seemingly had all that was needed to attain the objective: a buoyant agriculture, an assertive entrepreneurial class, a burgeoning middle class, an adequate financial base and a friendly external financial environment. So bright were her prospects that Malaysia came and got oil palm seedlings from her Institute of Oil Palm Research (NIFOR). Yet over fifty years on, while her contemporaries have joined the league of advanced industrial economies, Nigeria is still trapped in the back waters of the underdeveloped world, much to the embarrassment of her erstwhile contemporaries and chagrin of her citizens. This paper argues that the cause of this tragic experience is leadership failure. Whose multiplier effects are bribery, corruption, treasury looting and the various shades of political instability? The aggregate effects of all these is a prostrate Nigerian state groaning under the weight of its political misfortune.

Keywords: Economic, Underdevelopment, Political, Leadership, Nigeria, and African.

Introduction

Nigeria, a former British colony was granted political independence on October 1, 1960 after almost fifty years of nationalist agitation.¹ Britain had acquired the Nigerian colony to serve her imperial interests: to be a source of raw materials on the one hand, and a market for her manufactured goods on the other. To fulfill this role effectively, the colonial authorities had to put a number of infrastructures in place. First, roads, railways and seaports were built to ease the transportation of agricultural raw materials and minerals to the factories in Britain. Second, agricultural research institutes were established to help boost agricultural production through improved seedlings and extension services. Third, schools and hospitals were built or supported² to help provide the manpower needed in the exploitation of the human and natural resources of the colony. Fourth, Britain consciously encouraged rifts in Nigerian nationalism in a classic “divide-and-rule” tactic; one of which tactics was the creation of regions in 1945³ through the Richards constitution of that year. Fifth, Nigerians were enticed to imitate wholesale European way of life and concept of development; both of which reinforced Nigerians belief of inferiority before their former colonizers.⁴ Sixth and finally, the colonial authorities successfully

created a capitalist oriented economy firmly linked with that of Britain.

As an instrument *par excellence* of the foreign bourgeoisie, the colonial state sustained what old traditional institutions and practices this bourgeoisie thought would further its aims, it also accelerated the destruction or restructuring of those things that thwarted the goals of this same bourgeoisie.⁵

Even though there were differences between the views of the local and foreign capitalist classes, yet these differences were not fundamental and so were easily contained.⁶

On the eve of the departure of the British colonialist, educationally Nigeria was in an disequilibrium state. While the whole of Northern Nigeria had only eleven secondary schools and no lawyer, the Eastern region had one hundred and eight schools, and the Western region one hundred and nine to cater for eighteen, eight and six million

¹ Michael Crowder, *The Story of Nigeria* Faber and Faber, London, 1978, pp 267-8.

² Eme N. Ekekwe, “State and Economic Development in Nigeria”,. Claude Ake (edt) Political Economy of Nigeria, Longman Group Limited, Ibadan, 1985 p.56.

³ Uzodinma Nwala, “ The Poverty of Ideology in Nigerian Development”, Okwudiba Nnoli (edt) Path to Nigerian Development, CODESINA Book Series, Dakar, Senegal, 1981, p. 157.

⁴ Okwudiba Nnoli, “Development / Under development: Is Nigeria Developing”? Okwuida Nnoli (edt) Path to Nigerian Development, CODESINA Book Series, Darkar, Senegal, 1981, p. 26

⁵ Eme N. Ekekwe, *State and economic development*, p. 56

⁶ Emem N. Ekekwe, *State and economic Development*, p. 56

people respectively.⁷ This bore implications for political stability and socio-economic development of a future independent Nigeria. Nigerian rulers

did not promote nationhood ...our leaders were all committed to regionalism. The Sardauna upheld "one North," Awolowo insisted on the West, on Oduduwa, and Zik started by saying he is a national man, but after he lost in the Western House of Assembly, he moved back to the East. He created a lot of problems in the East and became the premier of the East. He too became an Igbo spokesman. So by design or default our three leaders were all regionalists. And where you have regionalism in a multi-ethnic, multi-national community it is difficult to evolve true nationhood.⁸

By no means, to compound Nigeria's problems, her political elite was divided into two major groups – mutually opposed and antagonistic: the Muslim oligarchy in the north and the Christian, secular and western-oriented in the south. The two competing cultures and world views operated in an environment that had "no overarching national ethos or attitudes mediated by the right type of education to help Nigerians develop a common purpose"⁹.

Post-Colonial Nigeria

Post-colonial Nigerian state was a minefield of political and socio-economic booby traps for her leadership. These were made worse by the expectations of Nigerian citizens. To the Nigerian people, independence marked the "end of political oppression, economic exploitation and human degradation which are the essential characteristics of alien rule"¹⁰

Why so? Because during the nationalist struggle Nigerian leaders made promises which "raised high hopes and expectations" as they had pledged that on attainment of independence and sovereignty, they would among other things, put an end to oligarchic oppression and capitalist exploitation, elevate them from the morass of humiliation and indignity into which colonialism had kept them and usher in for them, a new era which would guarantee them basic freedoms and the full enjoyment of the fruits that come from the products of their lands and labour.¹¹ The majority of the target audience of these promises lived in squalor, below the poverty line, ridden with diseases and ignorant and the unemployed. They all believed and trusted their leaders. These expectations of brighter days to come sustained their loyalty and patriotism.¹²

Nor were these high expectations confined to Nigerians. The international community of which Nigeria became a member, had considerable optimism about her future – particularly the Western countries. And why so? Independence had come through patient and peaceful negotiation and not by a violent revolution. What made it all very appealing to the West was that not only did Nigeria's three governing parties at the regions espouse "Western style parliamentary democracy," but also at the federal level

the NPC and the NCNC, despite the considerable differences in the political philosophies, had agreed to form a coalition government; while the Action Group provided the "loyal opposition" Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe...agreed to take on the purely ceremonial post of Governor General... The PM, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa...known for his political moderation, a factor which particularly appealed to the Western powers with whose economics Nigeria was still closely integrated.¹³

Perhaps what made it all so appealing was that unlike the majority of African countries, Nigeria had "a viable, diversified economy with great potential for development given the size of the market and the existence of substantial oil resources". Furthermore, despite declarations of socialist intent, all the governing parties were committed to the capitalist economic system.¹⁴ Even though Nigerian was still a sea of tranquility after its first year of sovereign nationhood, yet the tensions that were generated before independence made it clear that Nigeria needed a leader to help confront the problems that faced it.

Economically at independence Nigeria was "closely integrated" with the Western capitalist system and there was "declaration of socialist intent", so the country's political leadership had to make a choice one way or the other which development path the country was to adopt: either the capitalist, socialist or mixed economy. The capitalist

⁷ Yusufu Bala Usman and George Amale Kwanashie (ed) *Inside Nigerian History 1950 – 1970 Events, Issues and Sources*, The Presidential Panel on Nigeria since Independence History Project, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, 1995, p. 37

⁸ Yusufu Bala Usman; George Amale Kwanashie, *Inside Nigerian History*, p. 57

⁹ G.A. Akinola, *Leadership and the Post-Colonial Nigeria Predicament*, A Publication of the Department of History, University of Ibadan, Monograph Series No.1, 2009, p.3.

¹⁰ Obafemi Awolowo, *The Problem of Africa, the need for Ideological Reappraisal*, Macmillan Education Limited, London, 1977, p. 35.

¹¹ Obafemi Awolowo, *The Problems of*, p. 35

¹² Obafemi Awolowo, *The Problems of*, p. 36

¹³ Michael Crowder *Story of Nigeria*, p. 259

¹⁴ Michael Crowder *Story of Nigeria*, p. 259

path was propagated by her petty bourgeoisie that is to say, captains of industry, merchants and the professionals left behind by the departed colonial masters.¹⁵ The capitalist path was presumed to lead to a pattern of good life which has been achieved by the advanced capitalist nations; even though these nations and societies varied politically, economically and militarily.¹⁶ The central distinguishing feature of this path of development is the transformation of labour power of a man into a commodity to be bought and sold in the market for gain like any other object of exchange. It was the first system of production and so far the only one in the history of humanity to make labour power a marketable commodity.¹⁷

In this mode of production, the producers are separated from the means of production. This system was nonexistent in pre-colonial Nigerian ethnic nationalities where whether peasant or craftsman, produced and marketed his products and where the purchase and sale of inanimate objects not human labour power was of primary concern. Capitalism is governed by private investment of capital in production of goods, decision of what to be produced, how the products are to be distributed and profit maximization.¹⁸ Capital dominates labour power since labour power can be hired and fired by owners of capital.

As far as Okwudiba Nnoli sees it, capitalist path of development is not a suitable path to be adopted by Nigeria in her quest to develop because, among other things, its export system is not based on the sale of surpluses of goods that are consumed first and foremost by our people before external consumption, the absence of an independent and creative ruling class of the type that brought about industrial revolution in Western Europe and Japan, the existence of a high rate of rural-to-urban migration that is not related increased agricultural production and the worsening of urban conditions all of which led lower standards of living and thereby deteriorated their capacity for self and national transformation.¹⁹

The second alternative path of development is the socialist path advocated by Nigeria marxist scholars²⁰. The socialist path is also presumed to lead to a pattern of good life enjoyed by the advanced socialist countries and that predicted by socialist theory.²¹ In this path of development, there is no separation of the actual producers from the means of production because the means of production are concentrated in the hands of the social collectivity as a whole, labour power is not a commodity to be bought and sold for profit and the interests of labour are superior to those of capital in deciding what is to be produced, how it is to be produced and how the products are to be distributed.²² This path emphasizes collective ownership and control of the means of production and collective appropriation of the surplus social product. Labour is “regarded as a means to the full development of all the faculties and potentialities of the individual and as a conscious service by him to the society”.²³

Socialist ideology posits that production cannot be in the interest of the workers unless it is transferred from private to public hands.²⁴ It also argues that public ownership is important only if it leads to workers control of production which in-turn should lead to workers control of the decision of the process of production and how the surplus is distributed.²⁵ There was no working class - the proletariat in pre-colonial ethnic nations that comprised colonial and post-colonial state Nigerian essentially because, there was no separation between the producer and the means of production. Second, even in colonial Nigeria, public companies were not controlled by the workers because they were not so designed. Rather, they were meant “to service the activities of the foreign capitalists, their local agents and the colonial state”. This basic character of public enterprises was carried into the post-colonial state...²⁶

The third path of development is the mixed economy model first stated by Elliot Berg. He argued that the mixed economy option was advocated because of the absence of skilled workers and what he called impediments like “difficult climatic conditions, ossified structure of the African community”²⁷

Although Nigerian leaders were yet to make a choice of the path of Nigerian development, yet the capitalist path was the one on ground having been bequeathed by the colonial masters. During colonial rule the peasant farmer, artisan and petty industrialist groaned under various disabilities. The peasant farmer borned the brunt of the production of cash crops and it was through this that he was linked to the international economy initially though the

¹⁵ Okwudiba Nnoli, “Introduction: The Intellectual Aspects of the Struggle for Nigerian Development”, Okwudiba Nnoli (edt) *Path to Nigerian Development*, CODESIRA. Book Series, Dakar, Senegal, 1981, p.1.

¹⁶ Okwudiba Nnoli, *Introduction*, p.1

¹⁷ Okwudiba Nnoli, *Introduction*, p.2

¹⁸ Okwudiba Nnoli, *Introduction*, p.2

¹⁹ For details, see Okwudiba Nnoli, “Development/Underdevelopment: Is Nigeria Developing?” Okwudiba Nnoli (edt) *Path to Nigerian Development*, CODESIRA Book Series, Dakar, Senegal, 1981, pp. 24-26.

²⁰ These are a legion, the likes of Bade Onimode, Okwudiba Nnoli, Kenna Nzimiro, Inyang Eteng, Yusuf B. Usman, Uzodinma Nwala, etc.

²¹ Okwudiba Nnoli, *Introduction*, p.3

²² Okwudiba Nnoli, *Introduction*, p.3

²³ Okwudiba Nnoli, *Introduction*, p.3

²⁴ Okwudiba Nnoli, *Introduction*, p.5

²⁵ Okwudiba Nnoli, *Introduction*, p.5

²⁶ Okwudiba Nnoli, *Introduction*, p.5

²⁷ Okwudiba Nnoli, *Introduction*, p.4 His ideas were accepted by Nigeria’s Constitution Drafting Committee (CDC) in 1976.

commercial houses like the United African Company (UAC), John Holt, Lever Brothers etc; and after the second world war through the marketing boards. By paying the peasant producer pittance of what were the prevailing world market prices, the marketing boards earned surpluses which went into helping British reconstruction efforts after the war on one hand; and on the other, ensuring the supply of the needed raw materials for British industry. Very “little benefit accrued to the Nigerian peasant.”²⁸ Yet emphasis was on cash crop production consumer goods, taxation while at the same time the peasant society was being penetrated by introduction of consumer goods, taxation and in some cases alienation of land helped out in the penetration of peasant society..²⁹ The state on the other hand came to depend on revenues from the export of cocoa, palm produce and groundnuts which came to over 57.7 percent of its earnings as at 1960.³⁰

The lot of the artisan, trader or factory worker was not better in post-independence Nigeria. Yet in a ministerial statement on Nigeria’s economic planning policy, the minister of Economic Development, Mallam Waziri Ibrahim argued in 1961 that the policy was “one of encouraging private investment both indigenous and foreign - in order to develop our resources ...”³¹ Justifying the adoption of this policy, he declared that although foreign investment comes in to make profit, yet we “...must accept that and allow them to repatriate their profit”. In a response to questions from members of the House of Representatives on the dangers of foreign economic domination and exploitation, he argued that both were

Inevitable and natural ...much as we appreciate the good intension of Hon. Members, we must also not overlook the fact that we shall continue to be under the control of imperialists and capitalists who have taken the lead in this world in economic development.³²

He then wondered whether a radical break with imperialism was even possible at all and rhetorically asked members of the House of Representatives what they thought informed the assassination of Patrice Lumumba. He answered himself

“Imperialists saw that he (Lumumba) was a real nationalist, that he was out to see that the resources of the Congo were used to improve the welfare of the Congolese people as a whole...we do appreciate all the excellent ideas advocated by Hon. Members but a complete turnabout of the economic system is not an easy thing”³³

Although Waziri Ibrahim gave a seemingly plausible reason, yet he was very economical with the truth. Nigerian rulers benefited enormously from the socio-economic status; fully aware that the economic system was exploitative and that they were, themselves, exploiters as their material interests coincided with those of the foreign capitalists.³⁴ Nor was any member of the ruling class willing to be another Patrice Lumumba. Hence they sought theoretical justification of the status quo. Second, economic missions abroad funded by the state became occasions for striking private business deals while unviable government agencies were created to provide jobs for their clients and supporters and this at a time when the working class was asked to make sacrifice in very harsh economic times.³⁵

Third, cash crop production favoured Nigerian rulers by way of provision of foreign exchange and surpluses. While the former gave them cash to spend, the latter helped the regional governments to establish loans boards from which they and their supporters secured loans that went into conspicuous consumption and were often not repaid.³⁶ Where the surpluses did not go to them directly, they went indirectly in support of overall capitalist development through the regional development corporations that owned either wholly or partly, enterprises like bottling industries and industrial estates, Nigeria Cement Company and the African Continental Bank (ACB) in the East and West Africa Portland Cement and Vono Industries in the West.³⁷

As a result of the emphasis on cash crop production, food shortages became rife. This led to the establishment of the Nigeria National Supply Company (NNSC) to import and distribute consumer goods. Food shortages also informed the launching of the Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) and later the establishment of the River Basin Authorities and the Land Use Act. The peasant was consistently short changed, sidelined and made extremely poor when these schemes were put in place supposedly to help alleviate their plight.³⁸ So given the misery of the

²⁸ Eme N. Ekekwe, *state and economic development*, p. 58

²⁹ Eme N. Ekekwe, *state and economic development*, p. 59

³⁰ Eme N. Ekekwe, *state and economic development*, p. 60

³¹ Uzodinma Nwala, *The Poverty of Ideology*, p. 160

³² Uzodinma Nwala, *The Poverty of Ideology*, p. 160

³³ Uzodinma Nwala, *The Poverty of Ideology*, p. 161

He went on to elaborate the extent to which imperialists would go to deal with any leader whose actions threaten their interests.

³⁴ Uzodinma Nwala, *The Poverty of Ideology*, p. 162

³⁵ Uzodinma Nwala, *The Poverty of Ideology*, p. 162

³⁶ Eme N. Ekekwe, *State and economy*, p.60

³⁷ Eme N. Ekekwe, *State and economy*, p.60

³⁸ Eme N. Ekekwe, *State and economy*, pp. 60-67

Nigerian peasant farmer and the working class particularly those at the lower cadres, under Nigerian rulers were there any hopes of development? The inevitable answer is no, then why?

Development connotes training in the art of using local resources and creative human energy in solving problems rather than wholesome imitation of the path to a good life that some societies have attained.³⁹ Clearly, Nigeria was not developing since development refers to man's progressive qualitative and continued self-improvement socially, economically, culturally and environmentally.⁴⁰ If Nigeria was to make any significant socio-economic progress in her development efforts, a new radical approach different from that hitherto applied was a must.

Nigerian socio-economic development clearly needs a new type of political leadership different from what she has had hitherto.

Apart from diligent cooperation with international capital and imperialists, Nigerian rulers were very intolerant of dissent both before and after independence. Mallam Ibrahim Imam who was the Secretary General of the Northern People's Congress (NPC) – the ruling party in the Northern region, and patron of the Borno Youth Movement (BYM)⁴¹ had cause to disagree with some of his party's policies and decisions and fell out of favour with the regional government. He was harassed into exile in Tivland where he contested and won a seat in the 1961 regional elections into the Regional House of Assembly under the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) from a constituency over a thousand miles from his home town, Yerwa⁴². During the 1962 Eastern regional election campaign, Michael I. Okpara, party leader and premier, took the stand of "No vote for NCNC, no amenities" He went ahead and "vigorously carried into effect" this slogan in the minority areas of Calabar, Ogoja and Rivers Provinces.⁴³ Needless to say, these acts were not those that good political rulers should perpetrate.

British military tradition abhors military intervention in politics. Cadets who go through British military institutions are instilled the virtues of begin a political. It is universally accepted that military intervention in politics is an aberration, which is not conducive to the enthronement of political culture. Unfortunately for Nigeria, barely five years of nationhood under a civilian dispensation, her military struck to deal with those it perceived were enemies of the country.⁴⁴ The first coup d'état was followed by four other successful ones. The military ended up having a longer time at the helm of affairs than the civilians. Instead of ushering in political stability, the military not only compounded the country's problems but also denied her the opportunity of evolving patriotic, people-oriented leadership.

Corruption⁴⁵ appears to be the most formidable obstacle to the emergence quality political leadership in Nigeria. It has its root in colonial Nigeria. It had gone so bad that the Emir of Gwandu moved a motion in the Northern House of Chiefs

that this House agreeing that bribery and corruption are widely prevalent in all walks of life, recommends that Native Authorities should make every effort to trace and punish offenders with strict impartiality and to educate public opinion against bribery and corruption.⁴⁶

It was the prevalence of this vice in the Western region that informed the setting up of a committee to study the ramifications of the vice and proffer ways of eradicating the disease. Corruption has indeed become so pervading that it literally walks on four legs particularly among the ruling elite.⁴⁷ It has been used by some coup d'état leaders as one of their grievance that informed their actions⁴⁸ Although the military used corruption as one of their reasons

For detailed survey of these issues, see G. K. Helleiner's "The Eastern Nigeria Development Corporation. A Study in Sources and Uses of Public Development Funds, 1949-62," *Nigerian Journal of Economic and Social Studies*, 6,1, 1964, pp 120-23); Sayre Schatz's *Economics, Politics and Administration in Government Lending: The Regional Loans Boards of Nigeria*, OUP, Ibadan, 1970; Dupe Olatunbosun's *Nigeria's Neolected Rural Majority*, OUP, Ibadan, 1975, and Tina Wallace's "Agricultural Projects in Northern Nigeria," *Review of African Pot Economy*, 17, 1980, p. 62

³⁹ Okwudiba Nnoli, *Development/ Underdevelopment*, p. 36

⁴⁰ Okwudiba Nnoli, *Development /Underdevelopment*, p. 37

⁴¹ Usman Ladan, "The Independent Struggle and Political Repression; The Role of Ibrahim Imam, 1951-1966", Yusufu Bala Usman and George Amale Kwanashiel (edt) *Inside Nigerian History, 1950-1970 Events, Issues and Sources*, Project, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, 1995, p. 356.

⁴² Usman Ladan, *The Independence Struggle*, pp. 356-69

⁴³ Uzodinma Nwala, *The Poverty of Ideology*, p. 158

⁴⁴ A. H. M. Rirk-Greene, *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria: A Documentary Source Book, 1966-1969, Vol. 1*, Oxford University Press, 1976, pp 125-7.

⁴⁵ This is the use of public office for private gain or the use of official position, rank on status of an office bearer for personal benefit for detail examination of it, see *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* Vol., 23, 204, pp. 67-91

⁴⁶ Emmanuel Oladipo Ojo, "Nigeria 1914-2014: From Creation to Cremation?" *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, Vol. 23, 2014, p.77

⁴⁷ Emmanuel Oladipo Ojo, "Nigeria 1914-2014: From Creation to Cremation?" *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, p.78-81.; Also see Aliyu Mohammed et al, 'Nigeria cobweb of Corruption and the Path to underdevelopment, *Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 3, 3, 2014.

⁴⁸ Major Chukwuma K. Nzeogwu, Brigadier Murtala R. Mohammed and Mohammed Buhari used it as an excuse for their staging their coups d'état

for staging their coups d'état, yet some of them perpetrated more heinous acts of corruption.⁴⁹ Its not only the rulers who steal, their cronies, supporters, top government officials and even corporations e.g. the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) indulge in the act.⁵⁰

The prolonged and unhindered looting of the national treasury by the ruling elite and high government officials has brought with it many unsavoury consequences. Although Nigeria earned \$500 billion from liquefied natural gas alone in 2010, yet her citizens live in grinding poverty. Nigeria is home to 7% of the world poor with poverty levels of 72% North, 27% South and 35% Niger Delta. Hence a World Bank report described Nigeria as “an extremely poor country.”⁵¹ Second, power generation is also badly hit. While countries like South Africa and South Korea generate 40,000 mw and 83,000 mw respectively for 50 and 55 million people respectively, Nigeria with over 170 million people generate a paltry 3,400 – 4000 mw.⁵²

Consequent on this miserable power generation, unemployment is rife as, according to the National Association Chambers of Commerce, Industry Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA), more than 9,000 businesses in Lagos either closed shop or relocated on account of poor industrial infrastructure like electricity of which the country needs 85,000mw⁵³. Although the nationalist leaders had castigated the British colonial authorities over unemployment, yet this social vice has worsened under their watch, largely because of the paucity of industries and neglect of agriculture particularly with the onset of the oil boom in the 1970s.⁵⁴

Corruption has impacted on national security. Although a total of \$1.459 billion was allocated to the armed services in 2010, yet they were hamstrung to discharge their assignment because Boko Haram fighters were better armed, while the soldiers and police were ill-trained, ill-equipped and unmotivated.⁵⁵ So it was that Boko Haram fighters were able to destroy churches, mosques, markets, schools and sack towns. While Boko Haram fighters were marauding the northeast of the country, militancy in the Niger Delta was wreaking havoc on the environment through pipeline vandalism,⁵⁶ and oil exploitation activities through kidnapping of foreign oil workers. In their aggregate Nigeria ends up the big loser as insecurity stalks the country scaring away investors; and surfs sharp decline in revenue generation.

Colonial authorities built roads to facilitate exploitation of the natural resources. Over fifty years after, the situation of roads in Nigeria leaves much to be desired. Global Road Safety Faculty of the World Bank notes that roads in Nigeria “rank among the poorest in the world in terms of safety facilities and road network”⁵⁷ Nor is the situation different with regard to potable water. Over 70 million Nigerians have no access to potable water and the implications of this to public health are obvious.

In the health sector, there is some improvement in supply of medicines and other health products at the national level; more needs to be done to strengthen the capacity national quality assurance policy at state and primary levels. There is also shortage of biomedical engineers and poor institutional capacity.⁵⁸ Nigeria along with Pakistan and Afghanistan are the only countries in the world where polio is still endemic,⁵⁹ outbreaks of meningitis are frequent and health facilities are not adequate.

In the Niger Delta and elsewhere in the country, the unemployed youth have become an instrument of criminality in the fierce and unbridled struggle for political power by the elite; largely because of the huge benefits that come with acquisition of political power. The World Bank estimates that “about 80 percent of Nigeria’s oil and gas revenues accrues to just 1 percent of the population”, while N600 billion of the annual fuel subsidy paid by the government goes to the “pockets of just a few persons who constitute the cabal”. These huge sums of revenue so, according to the World Bank, to feed “political venality.”⁶⁰ Instead of being left to the state to fund education for which UNICEF has recommended that developing countries should allocate 26 percent of their annual budget. Nigeria abides by this recommendation in the breach. Yet quality human capital is very critical to national development which not surprisingly, education in the country is in shambles because of neglect⁶¹ and this has been the cause of the frequent conflicts between the Federal Government and the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU).

⁴⁹ Emmanuel Oladipo Ojo, *Nigeria 1914-2014*, pp 79-81. Also see ‘Lan Joseph, *Nigeria Shadons of a Great Nation*, Dubeo Press Limited, Lagos, 1995, Chapter 25

⁵⁰ Emmanuel Oladipo Ojo, *Nigeria 1914-2014*, p. 83

⁵¹ Emmanuel Oladipo Ojo, *Nigeria 1914-2014*, p. 81

⁵² Emmanuel Oladipo Ojo, *Nigeria 1914-2014*, p. 82

⁵³ Emmanuel Oladipo Ojo, *Nigeria 1914-2014*, p. 89

⁵⁴ Emmanuel Oladipo Ojo, *Nigeria 1914-2014*, p. 87

⁵⁵ Emmanuel Oladipo Ojo, *Nigeria 1914-2014*, p. 86

⁵⁶ Eboe Hutchful, “Oil companies and environmental pollution in Nigeria,” Claude Ake (edt) *Political Economy of Nigeria*, Longman Group Limited, Ibadan, 1985, pp. 116-119

⁵⁷ Emmanuel Oladipo Ojo, *Nigeria 1914-2014*, p. 83

⁵⁸ Nigeria healthwatch.com

⁵⁹ Emmanuel Oladipo Ojo, *Nigeria 1914-2014*, p. 81

⁶⁰ Daniel A. Tonwe, Godwin Uyi Ojo & Tiro Aghedo, “Greed and Grievance : The Changing Contowns of Environmentalism in Nigeria’s Niger Delta region, *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, Vol. 20, 2011, p. 58.

⁶¹ See the needs Assessment Report.

Since acquiring political power has become a very lucrative business, the ruling elite go to any extremes to subvert the peoples will by all manner of electoral malpractices. Save the 1922 elections, all other elections in Nigeria have been rigged by all the political parties involved.⁶² These electoral malpractices are many and varied.⁶³ Allied to these electoral concerns is population census upon which seats in the legislatures are allocated. Not surprisingly, since 1962 the country has been unable to conduct a credible census, and this sad development does not allow for socio-economic planning which is very essential in economic development.

The ruling elite tolerates corruption and it does it with panache. Yakubu Gowon who had cleared Joseph D. Gomwalk of accusation of financial wrong doings⁶⁴ and whose (Gowon's) regime was overthrown for corruption, was given a national award. So were Ibrahim B. Babangida, who squandered \$12 billion Gulf War oil windfall; Sanni Abacha who stole billions from the national treasury, and Abdulsami Abubakar whose regime was also 'face with monumental corruption'.⁶⁵ Equally, Diepreye Alamieyeseigha who was convicted of money laundering charges after jumping bail in London, was given both presidential and state pardon⁶⁶. While James O. Ibori who had been discharged and acquitted by a Nigerian court was convicted and jailed by a London Crown Court of just ten out of the 170 charges he had been acquitted.⁶⁷ This unbridled corruption breeds impunity as often displayed in disregard of court orders and commission of the social vice at all levels of government.⁶⁸

It is clear from the foregoing that if Nigeria to make significant progress in her development efforts apart from a new path to development, she will be led by transformational leaders. These are leaders who disseminate new values, seek alternatives to existing arrangements, shared purpose of leaders and followers and concentration on long term issues and have an organic world view and altruistic motives based on the promise of a better future.⁶⁹ In economic terms, transformational leadership entails staunch decision by leaders to

reduce imports and encourage local production of substitutes for domestic consumption and export, a determined policy to improve the quality of education at all levels and a conscious decision to insert indigenous professionals, technicians and workers at the center stage of building national development infrastructure.⁷⁰

This type of leadership does not imply isolation from globalization. Rather, it asserts independence and exercise of courage in "making choices (that are) in the best interests of their countries in the global system of interaction."⁷¹ Qualities which the Nigerian ruling elite seem not to possess and which account for the difference between Nigerian rulers and rulers of Southeast Asian states like Singapore, Hong kong, Taiwan and Malaysia. These states that were contemporaries of Nigeria but are today industrial nations⁷².

Iron and steel industry plays a crucial role in industrial development. This was recognized by Nigerian rulers in 1960.⁷³ It was the Olusegun Obasanjo regime that signed the contract for the construction of the Ajaokuta steel plant. It was the Shehu Shagari administration that implemented the idea in the early 1980s. The rolling mill and some shops of the steel complex was commissioned in 1983. The entire project had attained 95% completion rate.⁷⁴ Then the project was stalled as government officials during the military regimes that followed got bogged down with the international politics between the Western Bloc and USSR on the viability and desirability of owning an integrated steel plant by a third world country. The Sanni Abacha regime's debt buying back syndrome compounded matters that led to the near extinction of the plant after \$7 billion (N1.1 trillion) had been sunk into the project.⁷⁵ Through the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The USA and Britain Nigerian rulers' supposed friend, increased their opposition to the project describing it as unviable.⁷⁶ As a result, successive regimes have failed to complete and operate the mill. Thanks to ideological poverty of Nigerian rulers

Conclusion

With her natural and human endowments Nigeria does not need any form of development aid. All she needs is

⁶² Yusufu Bala Usman and George Amale Kwanashie, *Inside Nigerian History*, p.100

⁶³ Lai Joseph, *Nigeria Shadow*, pp. 100-9

⁶⁴ J. Isawa Elaigwu, *Gowon*, West Book Publisher Limited, Ibadan, 1986, pp. 186-90

⁶⁵ Emmanuel Oladipo Ojo, *Nigeria 1914-2014*, p. 79

⁶⁶ Emmanuel Oladipo Ojo, *Nigeria 1914-2014*, p. 79

⁶⁷ Daniel A. Tonwe et al, *Greed and Grievance*, pp. 57-8.

⁶⁸ Daniel A. Tonwe et al, *Greed and Grievance*, pp. 79

⁶⁹ Chikwendu Christian Ukaegbu, Development Lag and the Imperative of Transformational Leadership in Sub Saharan Africa, Egodi Uchendu, Pat Uche Okpokpo and Edlyne Anugwom (edt) *Perspectives on Leadership in Africa*, Afro Orbis Publications Ltd, Nsukka, 2010, p. 30.

⁷⁰ Chikwendu Christian Ukaegbu, *Development Lag*, p.34

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⁷² Chikwendu Christian Ukaegbu, *Development Lag*, p.26-28

⁷³ Abdul Aji, Egbunu Akoko Shrine: A mystery Behind the failure of Ajaokuta Steel Company, www.com accessed June 5, 2017.

⁷⁴ Abdul Aji, *Egbunu Akoko Shrine*

⁷⁵ Abdul Aji, *Egbunu Akoko Shrine*

⁷⁶ Abdul Aji, *Egbunu Akoko Shrine*

a large dose rulers who have a clear vision and understanding of what are the national interests of the country. Rulers who possess abundant faith and devotion to serve the people of Nigeria and not themselves, rulers who are committed to the enthronement of good governance, accountability and the rule of law. Rulers who sincerely believe and are committed to the Nigerian project. It is the absence of these sort of rulers that has kept Nigeria in the backwaters of the developed world since her independence.