**Leadership in our Society and its Effects**

According to the Oxford dictionary of English, Leadership can be defined as ‘’the action of leading a group or an organization OR the state or position of being a leader’’.

To me, leadership is a partnership between the leaders and the followers. Both leader and followers must come to an agreement before a decision can be made. But in my opinion, the leadership system in our country does not agree with my definition alongside other leadership roles. Thus, my main focus would be on the bad leadership in our society.

In Nigeria, which is our focal point here, we were in initially running the military system of government, which ended in 1999, after 16 years of consecutive military rule under Ibrahim Babangida’s regime. This leadership style has its features. Some of the features are: dictatorial form of government, highly centralized system of government, absence of elections, absence of all forms of opposition, among others. The points I have mentioned here would help to back up my points on the body of discussion later.

In 1999, we changed to civilian rule, which basically implemented the democratic system of government. Democracy can be defined as ‘’a system of government in which all eligible members of a country at large, are allowed to take place in decision making that would affect them in the long run’’. Here basically, power lies in the hands of the people. The features of democracy are the complete opposite of that of military rule.

Some features of democracy are: the people elect their own representatives, all citizens in the country are treated equally, majority rule and minority rights, individuals have their fundamental human rights which are not to be violated, the system strictly follows the rule of law, and the judiciary is independent, among others.

In a normal democratic country, all these are meant to be implemented fully. But in my dear country Nigeria, things are done to the favour of the influential, in my opinion. In some cases, we act like we are under military rule still. I would explain further in subsequent paragraphs.

First of all, I am absolutely confused about the decision making system in the country. Democracy says that decision is made based on the majority. But I see the complete opposite in effect in this country. The house of representatives and senate, which are meant to be helping us with this aspect, spend most of their meetings disputing over absolute insignificant things like whose state is being favoured or not. When most decisions are analyzed, they are to the favour of the rich and those in power. A reason I am particularly pained about this is that they make the decisions assuring us that they have our best interests at heart. When we come up with our own suggestions, they are shoved to the side or we are even punished for it as if we are in the military rule. This just defeats the whole point of democracy since decision making has been made one sided.

Another factor- corruption and embezzlement. We owe a lot of debts to different bodies. If I check very well, we have enough funds to settle our debts. But our corrupt leaders use our money to their advantage. They embezzle funds meant for developing the country, not caring about the needs of citizens first of all. This at the end has an adverse effect on our economy and on the image of the country as a whole. Investors would not want to invest in a country filled with corruption, and our country is a typical example of such a country. These crimes also have an adverse effect on the lives of our citizens in the sense that the poverty level is increasing gradually. Money is not properly allocated to these people and it is just worsening their situation.

Election process!!! This is another crazy problem in our society. I remember last election, no one wanted Buhari to return for a second term. But lo and behold! Buhari returns. Now how exactly did that happen when we were basically hearing the complaints of most people about his tenure? Electoral malpractice is a major crime our leaders are guilty of. They do all their bidding under the guise that elections are free and fair. Sometimes I just wonder what exactly is the point of voting when at the end of the day, my vote really does not count. They do not know that they are slowly encouraging political apathy, which is not needed in a democratic system of government. God -fatherism is another contributing factor to electoral malpractice. There are highly influential people in power, especially in political parties, that ensure that their preferred representative wins the elections by all means, thus not giving room for free and fair election.

Sometimes I actually wonder if our judiciary is really independent. It seems sometimes as if they are bribed. A lot of leaders have gone scot- free with a lot of crimes they have committed. I know leaders cannot be apprehended while in office. But what is done with them after they leave office? The case is just swept under the carpet as if nothing happened. Even if they decide to handle the person in question, they would just give them fine to pay, as if they do not know that money is not an issue for them. They are given separate treatment from other citizens, which is not right according to the rule of law. We are all equal before the law and no one is above the law.

Another problem I have is that our leaders do not use the facilities in our country, thus the different sectors are not really appreciated. For instance, health facilities and educational facilities. When they are sick or any of their family members are sick, the first place they think of is abroad. My own is that if you know the educational facilities in the country are not good or are not standard, why don’t you upgrade it rather than running to another man’s land for help? Concerning our educational sector, they claim that they build more public schools. But they should ask themselves: can my child attend this school? The answer is definitely no. they would be there running out of the country in order to educate their children. Does that even make sense at all? They are not even encouraging youths to stay in the country in order to develop the country. And they claim we are the future of the country. I really do not understand this at all, but something needs to be done as soon as possible.

Also, the age of our leaders is so frightening. We basically have mainly old people in power. They are not giving room for the young ones to be in power because they think they are inexperienced. I mean, is it not the job of the older ones to put them through, rather than come and occupy leadership positions and using archaic methods to make decisions? Young and innovative minds are the future of this country. They should be trained as to what is expected from a leader. Let them use their fresh minds to provide solutions to these our problems. They are the future of tomorrow, as we know.

The last point I would like to establish is monopoly of resources. God has blessed our dear country with a lot of resources. But those resources are not explored at all to the advantage of the country as a whole. We are only depending on crude oil as the source of our income. Now that there is lockdown and importation is quite difficult, I wonder how we are going to survive for so long. Taking another case, the power distribution in the country. It is only controlled by one body, which is not a good thing. There are other sources of electricity, like dams, etc. they should be explored also and used resourcefully. All these instances just come down to one point- our resources are not utilized fully.

In my opinion, the people in position of leadership should be replaced totally. They are not helping our situation in any way. Reorientation is needed to the core if our system is to work. Let us stop relying on crude oil in order to progress. Let our definition of democracy be that which I stated before and not a definition of confusion between that of military rule and democracy. Let us not forget, the youths are the leaders of tomorrow. They should be utilized. Above all, we need God. He is the only one that can save us, as He is our pillar.

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