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Mis-Education: The Bane of Nigeria Politics and Leadership Style

Kassim Awoyemi Oyewumi

Department of Educational Foundations,
Faculty of education,
Federal University of Kashere, Gombe.
kaoyewumi@gmail.com
+2348038038958

Abstract

Education in the real sense of the concept is expected to aid and assist in the art of good governance through production of ideal leadership style. However, mis-education seems to have over shadowed the good qualities of an educated man among Nigerian leaders, hence, the bane of politics and leadership style. The study therefore employed philosophical research method to critically examine the major concepts as affected governance and leadership style. Thus, conceptual analysis of education, mis-education, politics, governance and leadership style were given in the study to provide an in-depth understanding of the concepts as they address the major themes in the study. The conceptual analysis paved way for recommendations on the way forward to solving or ameliorating the negative influence of mis-education on governance and administration on human and non-human resources. Among the recommendations given was that educators should not shy away from their responsibility of providing necessary guidance and education whenever the opportunity beckon on them through public lectures, seminars, actual teaching and learning as well as research works.

Keywords: Education, Mis-education, Politics and Leadership style.

Introduction

Education or real learning is expected to aid and assist in the act of good governance through ideal leadership style. Education is an instrument par excellence to actualize meaningful development in a nation as enshrined in the National Policy on Education (NPE) (2014)¹. However, just as original is always one, while duplicates or copies are many, mis- education is a form of copies of original education concept. In other words mis-education has often been mistakes for education and has been the bane of poor governance and negative leadership style. This assertion was corroborated by the Nigeria Senate President in the ninth National Assembly Ahmad Lawan, (2021) when he called for adoption of deliberate policy to sustain and create leadership at all levels of governance, as there was dearth of quality leadership in the country.

Similarly, indices such as culture of mis-management, nepotism, favouritism, poor governance and host of others among the political class are evidence of mis-education or better still wrong application of acquired knowledge. Since no teacher deliberately teach any negative virtues through the curriculum implementation, thus, it can be concluded that all vices being perpetrated by majority are issues of mis-education of ill-informed individuals.

¹ FRN, National Policy on Education, 6th Edition. Lagos: NERDC; 2014

Nevertheless, for the society to witness peace and tranquillity there is need for re- education for the leaders in other to get things done rightly by both the leaders and followers. Therefore, the study is to embrace philosophical research method to examine the key variables of the research topic to ascertain the nexus among education, politics and leadership style; while Plato's theory of ideal society will suffice as the philosophical frame work for the study. Thus, the introduction is to be followed with the conceptual analysis of the major variables or concepts in the study; while the next session is to delineate the interrelatedness of the major concepts central to the themes of the study. That would be congruent to summary and conclusion while recommendations further studies wraps up the study.

Philosophical Rationality for the Study

The study is built upon the threshold of Plato's philosophical frame work for utopian state to be governed by the philosopher Kings as lucidly discussed in "The Republic ". Plato pontificated that for a state or nation to witness peace, tranquillity and sustainable development, responsibilities should be assigned to the level of individuals' education based on the category he belongs in his taxonomy of human beings in the society.

The theory of Plato's taxonomy of human beings in the state is that human souls are made up of three components namely: the rational, spirited and appetitive. He maintained that these three components are nurtured by four cardinal virtues: wisdom, courage and temperance. The dominant component in an individual soul determines its category/class. Plato further explained that an ideal state management is divided into three classes namely: Philosopher Kings (rulers), Solders (militant) and Civilians (commoners)². This taxonomy of human nature is also captured in another parlance as Philosopher King, Appetitive and Spirited. Among these three categories, he placed emphasises on philosopher kings as the only competent group of individuals who could be saddled with the responsibilities of leadership or governance in a state. The postulation was followed with stringent conditions and procedures of educating the philosopher kings because of the herculean task of governance before them. By implication not every man has the qualities of leadership.

It is upon the background of Plato's processes of producing philosopher kings for the smooth administration of the state this study was conceived. In other words, if actually leaders in the society have undergone certain education or training which qualify them for the position of leadership and yet what is evident in leadership administration is negative to the general expectation then one would be left with no other choice of expression than mis-education; the bane of Nigeria politics and leadership style.

Conceptual Analysis of Concepts

This section is to dwell on the conceptual analysis of the major variables in the study which includes; education, mis-education, politics, governance and leadership style. The analysis is to establish the inter-connectivity of these concepts as related to the themes of the study. It is truism that the concept education is a nebulous concept which cannot be proved down to a particular definition. However, some scholarly definitions would be examined here for the

² Patrick Akinsanya, *Philosophising about Education: A prolegomenon*. Lagos: University of Lagos Press and Bookshop; 2015: 79 - 80

purpose of clarity and better understanding of the major concept. A comprehensive definition of education was given by Fafunwa (2004) as:

The aggregate of all the processes by which a child or adult develops the abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviour which are positive value to the society in which he lives; that is to say, it is a process of disseminating knowledge either to ensure social control or to guarantee rational directions of the society or both³.

The above definition justifies the appropriateness of this study in the sense that those at the helms of Nigeria affairs are adults in the society. Not only that, they are expected to develop abilities, attitude and others forms of behaviour which are positive value to the society. However, rather than positive values from the leaders, negative attitude of corruption, nepotism, favouritism, embezzlement and host of other vices are the emblems of Nigeria leadership style.

Education is a value laden concept, therefore any kind of behaviour exhibited by an individual at any point in time which is not in conformity with the norms, expectation and values of the society as well as international best practice would be mis-education. Nevertheless, mis-education can be accepted as a form of education since references can be made to individuals who are mis-educated through their disposition to issues related to human being as well as their conducts in the society. In other words, a mis-educated individual can be used as corrective example to wayward child.

A scholar in an open intellectual discourage argued that education cannot only be product of positive values. He further substantiated that learning how to steal, to kill, to rob and other social vices are still tantamount to education. Since the general purpose of education is for knowledge acquisition. However, such knowledge acquisition can be judged as mis-education and the implication of mis-education is that one knows the right thing but choose to do the wrong. For instance, a medical student who learns about how to carry out abortion to safe live and the use of lethal injection in the course of education but after graduation specializes on them would be adjudged as mis-educated medical practitioner. Similarly, no teacher in the school deliberately thought student's examination malpractice, but students engage in it with high level skills. This is another scenario of mis-education because certain efforts and skills have been deployed to perfectly execute such behaviour through some negative knowledge acquisition.

The Concept of Politics

Politics as a concept has arrogated to itself various meaning or interpretation especially when this is determined by certain characteristics of politicians. Therefore, the concept politics may be defined from two perspectives namely layman meaning and professional meaning of the concept politics. Layman defines politics as a dirty game especially in third world countries like Africa. This definition is arrived at going by the activities of African political gladiator where opponent are being killed of maimed simply because of political posts. Similarly, layman

³ Babs Fafunwa, History of Education in Nigeria. 2004

describes politics as tricks of falsehood activities where individual manoeuvre his ways into offices through deceitful means, vague promise and so forth.

Nevertheless, scholars have given professional definitions of politics. Lasswell⁴ defines politics as who gets what, when and how? This implies that the act of politics is an understanding the roles of the agents of government through political institution. Similarly, Jimwan⁵ describes politics as the art and science of governance or leadership. One can then conclude that politics, leadership and governance are contextually synonymous because one manifests and explains the other. From another point of view, Aristotle described men as political animals. This indicates that naturally each individual has certain political tendency which makes him responsible for certain roles in the society, such as leadership roles. It could mean that right from the family level, political education is being inert to the offspring by the head of family who determines who gets what from the family's available resources. It can therefore be extrapolated that any family or society is doomed if the leadership gets it wrong or mis-educated of the concept of politics which determines their roles. It is also established from the foregoing that politics and leadership are siamese twins which are difficult to be separated. The former is the antecedent of the latter.

The Concept of Leadership

Leadership and politics appears to be sides of a coin. If politics is described as having the authoritative power to acquire and distribute the resources of a community, society or a nation, then the ability to gain and control power is tantamount to leadership activities in a given entity or any geographical boundaries known as a state. As in the case of the concept politics, leadership can be viewed from different viewpoints. Some scholars identify physical qualities of a leader as parameter to describe leadership while other focused on the reality of leadership style and *modus operandi*.

Nevertheless, Fayemi⁶ defines leadership as combination of complex biological, social and psychological processes that determines the leadership potentials in an individual. This implies that leadership potentials are not necessarily inert of esoteric features of some few individuals. The assertion corroborated Rousseau's⁷ submission that man has two births; biological birth and knowledge birth. In other words, even if a man is born with leadership qualities as evident in Plato's taxonomy of human souls, he still needs to be educated in the act of leadership meant for human beings.

The proposition is further consolidated by Ogunyemi⁸ that leadership demands a number of virtues which direct the swing of a leader towards achieving a set goal for an organisation and society as the case may be. In addition, a leader's disposition to issues and situations defines a leadership quality or worth of an individual than any other human attributes that cannot be predicted. It can therefore be gleaned from the foregoing that leadership requires certain

⁴ Harnold Laswel, Introduction to Politics. London: Paul & Kegan Ltd;

⁵ C. S. Jimwan, Education and Political Culture: The role of Family, 2009

⁶ A. K. Fayemi . philosophy of Education and the Nigerian Educational System. 2009.

⁷ Rusk & Scotland. The doctrine of the great educators. London: Macmillan Publishers. 1981

⁸ F. T. Ogunyemi, Preschool Education and Preparation of the Nigerian Child for Leadership.2009

biological and psychological qualities as well as positive values; particularly those that have to do with humanities and humanitarianism.

After a critical observation of the leadership scenario in Nigeria and personalities involved, it is not uncommon to note that there exist dearth of leadership qualities among those who have assumed the mantle of leaderships. Thus, the disposition and responsiveness of these gladiators have been attributed as the source of under-development and bad administration in the land. However, educational attainment has been one of the strongest factors for any individual to have entrance into the corridor of power in Nigeria. Then, the question to ask is why the educational levels of our leaders has at various levels, has not assisted them to bring the kind of change or development desired by every citizenry? It is upon this background that this study presumed that mis-education is the bane of Nigeria politics and leadership style.

Implications of Mis-Education on Politics, Governance and Leadership Style

Education by description goes beyond certification or ability to read and write. It includes development of positive attitude, upright character, and ability to solve any human problem. In as long as educational achievement plays vital role in the emergence of leaders in the modern society known as democratic system, while the state and masses experiences of governance are negative; then it suffices to conclude that the leaders are mis-educated and its multiply effects are social vices, mis-management and poor governance. Just as an African proverb says that once the head is spoilt the whole body becomes rotten. The implication is that once the leader is bad, it affects the whole system including the subjects under the administration.

Chinua Achebe⁹, a philosopher and poet once said that:

The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with Nigeria character. There is nothing wrong with Nigeria land and climate or water or air anything else. The Nigeria problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal example which is the hallmarks of true leadership.

It can be established from the above scholarly submission that Nigeria leaders are neither un-educated nor oblivious of their responsibilities but they fail due to inability and unwillingness to deliver the expected qualities of leaders. This could be attributed to mis-education in term of wrong advices and prevalent negative mind-set of hegemonic subjugation of the common man. Mangu's¹⁰ affirmation supports the proposition that African leaders particularly in Nigeria are mis-educated. He says that colonialism and authoritarianism by the colonialists aggregated corruption in African states and further escalates it to a cancerous proportion as can be witnessed today for many historical, political, economic and social reasons. It is a belief that imperialists bequeathed political system to Africans. In other word, politicians were trained by the colonialists on the act of political processes including election processes. This implies that African leaders and Nigerian political leaders in particular were educated by the colonialists of

⁹ Achebe Chinua, *The Trouble with Nigeria*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishing Co. Ltd;1983

¹⁰ A. M. B. Mangu , *Good governance and democratic leadership for an African Renaissance: A reflection of AU member state's compliance with the AUCPCC: 18 - 37*

all the act of political and economic self-aggrandizements because even the kind colonial rule handed over to them was based on exploitation, cheat and selfishness.

Similarly, if education is seen as positive concept and that any negative outcome of what is intended to educate is mis-education; then the present form of governance processes is mis-education. For instance, at the national level informal decision-making structures exist like the kitchen cabinets or informal advisors. These informal advisors are those educating the government machinery on what decision is arrived at, and implementation of such negative and anti-people's policy. Governance is a process of decision making and the process by which decisions are implemented or not implemented; whereas actors involved in these processes include government machinery, the military and civil society. Sometimes, crime syndicates who are set of mis-educated men are involved or influence decision making as can be alluded to in the case of banditry, kidnappers, boko haram members and so on whose activities have become a strong factor for decision-making in Nigeria.

The Way Forward

The way forward is to revisit our education system as well as the point of interaction by the education agents and the social environment. In Rousseau's postulation as recorded by Rusk and Scotland¹¹, the aim of education was virtue and morality. This assertion was underscored by psycho analytic view of human nature which says that:

Without the reforming influences of education the individual would remain a selfish, jealous, impulsive, aggressive, dirty, immodest, cruel, egocentric and conceited animal; inconsiderate of the needs of others and mindful of the complicated social and ethical standards that go to make a civilised society¹².

Based on the above proposition, any human being who possesses all or any of the qualities delineated here in has mis-educated. Similarly, anyone found in the place of authority or leadership with any of the above negative qualities has received negative education which could be the bane of cruelty and wicked administration as witnessed among the manager of the states. Thus, effort should be redirected by stakeholders in education to give proper education to the youths or learners who are the leaders of tomorrow for desirable changes. In the same token our leaders in Nigeria should be educated rightly by every opportunity given to the educators such as seminars, public lectures, and opinion polls, and so on. They should be informed that their actions and attitudes towards follow men and the administrative styles suggest that they are mis-educated despite their educational attainments and there is need for them to be re-educated in the proper aim of education that should have man as central object of development.

It is obvious that the scourge of mis-education in the leadership style is not hidden because recently at a public function, the Nigerian Senate President: Ahmad Lawan called for adoption of deliberate policy to sustain and create leadership at all levels. The study is of the view that

¹¹ Rusk & Scotland, The doctrine of great educators, 1981

¹² UNESCAP, What is good governance? Thailand: UNESCAP UN Building

what this translates to, is giving leadership education to all the chosen of appointed leaders at all levels of government. In his word, he says:

Lack of leadership at all levels of government in Nigeria is major factor preventing Nigeria from attaining certain development. In all cases we never stated anything about leadership in Nigeria for us to reach the level of development that we need in our country, every part, segment and state of the society must have a develop, deliberately focused leadership, so that what we do at the local level compliments what we do at the state level from there terminating at the apex – the federal level¹³.

One can infer from this humble submission by the Senate President that even those in the position of authority know that quality leadership is eluding the nation. In other words, the crop of leadership in Nigeria today can be described as a set of mis-educated leaderships who need to be re-educated properly if sustainable development could be achieved through governance.

Summary, Recommendations and Conclusion

The study has been able to identify mis-education as the major cause of impediment to good governance and ideal leadership style in Nigeria. This was achieved through the critical examination of the major variables central to the themes of the study: education, mis-education, politics, and governance and as well as leadership style. It is established that lack of right disposition by the appointed leaders which is one of the elements of mis-education culminates into sour governance and source of hardship and agony among the masses by the leaderships.

The study therefore recommends that the process of choosing leadership should be reviewed so that the necessary prerequisites of leadership qualities will be considered before the emergent of any Jack and Harry as leaders in the society. There is need for education to live up to expectation of being the think tank of administration through a synergetic efforts between gown and town to produce worthwhile individual who could stand to seek for leadership consideration.

Based on the foregoing, the study concludes that there is need for educators with proper and adequate knowledge of educational needs to rise up to the challenges, by giving appropriate education to all and sundry for better society to emerge through good governance by well-educated leaders in the society. Education is life long programme which means that even the so-called leaders should not see themselves as above seeking knowledge which must be accompanied with the right attitudes and dispositions for better society for all.

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