

## **Machiavellian Virtue and Leadership: A Panacea for Nigerian Development.**

Eze Chris Akani

*Political Science Department, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni, Rivers State, Nigeria.*

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**Abstract.-** For more than five decades, Nigerian basket of achievement has not recorded an appreciable outcome. This is in spite of its unparalleled endowment in human capital and mineral resources. In fact, the country was considered a leading light that would lead Africa out of the cocoon of colonialism and underdevelopment. The rising expectations were predicated on the fact that the new era of governance would lay a ground work for human development and respect of human freedom. Unfortunately, six years after political independence, there were palpable signs of failure and regression. By the twenty-first century, Nigeria has been reduced to a country with bleak prospects, and unmitigated corruption. The aftermath is that there is a heightened vulnerability of the country's political economy. This paper seeks to examine what led to this pitiable situation in the country. This is a qualitative study, and method of data collection was based on the secondary sources. These include review of existing literature, newspapers, magazines, official bulletins and gazettes. It was discovered that the crisis dogging the country for more than five decades is a precipitate of the nature and character of the leaders who inherited political power from the colonialists. This has been reproducing itself even up to the twenty-first century. We, therefore, recommend that for the country to rise beyond its underdeveloped status, it must ensure the triumph of human security, through a leadership that must necessarily imbibe the Machiavellian Virtue.

**Keywords;** *Leadership, Political Economy, Colonialism, Human Security, Development.*

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Nigeria is a blessed country in all ramifications. With a rich land mass of over 98.321 million hectares, of which 74,036 million are arable (Akani, 2015:1). More than 36 billion proven barrels of oil reserve and well over 187 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, it cannot be an absolute exaggeration to surmise that Nigeria is on an ocean of wealth. Its adventurous and industrious population of more than 167 million (Akani, 2015:1) has placed the country at the epicenter of human development. The country's continental and global contributions in peace building and humanitarian activities attest to the quantum of resources at the disposal of the Nigerian State. Adebayo (1988:70) stated that Nigeria assisted countries like Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Upper Volta (Burkina Faso) with the sum of ₦2 million when they experienced the 1973 drought. In 1974, Ethiopia benefited with the sum of ₦300,000 as a drought relief aid, Somalia got ₦250,000 in 1973 and ₦657,895 in 1975. As a result of its active participation in the decolonization struggle, particularly in the dismantling of the heinous apartheid policy in South Africa, Nigeria acquired the enviable status of a frontline state. Gradually, the country became a behemoth in the African sub-region. Although these donations were adjudged to be a show of recklessness, but it promoted the international profile of the country, and assumed the position of a Giant in the continent. In fact, Nigeria was regarded as the brightest star in the galaxy of new African states (Shraeder, 2004:120). All these progressive activities, specially, that of Liberia and Sierra Leone in the 1990s were possible because of the total reliance on petro-dollar. As the country became a Petro-state in the early 1970s, agriculture which was the mainstay of the economy dwindled. Its share to GDP fell from 61.50% in 1963/64 to 14.63% in 1983 (Anyanwu, Oyefusi, Oaikhenam and Dimowo, 1997:12).

Sadly, sixteen years to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the country's basket of achievements is full of perfunctory, contradictory and ineffective (Ake, 1996:43) programmes. These have ignited a reversal of fortune in all sectors. As the ruling class jostle to ensure their permanent right to political power, all attempts to human development have been trivialized, politicized, blunted and halted with arrogant impunity in favour of a few. Obviously, this has necessitated rebellious mood in all the corners of the country. This is the aftermath of a confusion of agendas (Ake, 1996). Jega and Farris (2010:6) averred that the country's inability to fulfill the basic responsibility of a State has given rise to offensive attributes such as 'a crippled giant, open sore of a continent, a giant with a clay feet, Africa's Gulliver faced the threat of becoming a Lilliput of the globe'. Therefore, this paper seeks to demonstrate that Machiavellian virtue and leadership represent an essential ingredient that would take Nigeria out of its political quagmire.

## II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

It would be opposite to define some of the concepts that would feature in this paper. This is extremely important because it would facilitate the comprehension of this study. These concepts are virtue, leadership and development. Virtue is one of the ingredients of leadership and moral growth. The word emanated from the Latin *virtus*. *vir* (man) represent manliness and strength of character. For the Greeks, it is called *arête* – doing things well. Virtue is an indispensable quality that strengthens and sharpens the contours of morality. Right from the 5<sup>th</sup> century Athens to the Roman Empire and the Italian Renaissance, virtue was seen as a necessary prerequisite for social and personal development. Sullivan (1997:147-8) defines it as a good quality or habit of the rational powers which renders them capable of acting rightly, and which cannot be used badly. It is a habit of the irascible appetite which subjects it to the control of reason in the enduring or repelling of the control of grave danger (Sullivan, 1992:162). Virtue, therefore, is a quality which aids its possessor in acting excellently, rationally and wise. A man of virtue is a man of wisdom, justice, prudence, temperance and fortitude.

Aristotle (1985), Cicero (1971), Machiavelli (1998) and Rousseau (1968) emphasized the importance of virtue in their treatises. They were convinced that any person without virtue is unworthy for leadership responsibilities. The acquisition of virtue helps to overcome the challenges of the time. Aristotle (1985:33) noted that virtue of thought arises and grows mostly from teaching, and hence needs experience and time. Virtue of character results from the habit, hence its name-ethical. Virtue is a desideratum for the attainment of moral uprightness in the society. This is why it is a pre-condition for a patriotic duty.

*Virtue is the quality of which it is possible to maintain a stable and lasting political security. The man of virtue can be recognized by his absence of private ambition, and his corresponding willingness to place the benefit of the republic above his own interest (Skinner, 1978).*

The Italian Humanists clamoured for a united Italy whose leader must possess virtue for efficacious governance. They declared that we need the virtue that hold men together to live a perfect social life, the greatest of which are justice, equity, liberality and love (Skinner, 1979:92). The Humanists wrote books often called advice-books drawing attention to the moral decadence of Italian society, and the urgent need for unity to save the country from barbarous tyranny.

*They declared that unless corruption is eliminated, self-interest is abandoned, and everyone acts in accordance with the virtues, the greatest aims of political society will be jeopardized: the leading citizens will be unable to attain their highest goals, and the commonwealth as a whole will be unable to fulfill its fundamental purposes (Skinner, 1979:233-4).*

Some of the advice-books include:

- The family by Alberti, L. B.
- The Rule of Princes by St. Aquinas
- The Kingdom and the Education of the King – Patrizi, F.
- Dial of Princes – Guevara, A.
- The Christian Prince – Erasmus, D.

These books were intended to teach rulers the benefits of leadership, and how to acquire virtue. Indeed, it was to prepare would-be leaders/princes for the eventualities of governance. Although, Machiavelli (1995) agreed with the Humanists on the acquisition of virtue, but he was opposed to the moral and religious content of their virtue. For him, therefore, virtue is the ability to take decisive action in the interest of the State as circumstances dictate. According to Skinner (1981:35),

*It is often complained that Machiavelli failed to provide any definition of virtue and even that he is innocent of any systematic use of the word. But it will now be evident that he uses the term with complacency. Following his classical and humanist authorities, he treats it as the quality which enables a prince to withstand the blows of fortune, to attract the goddess' favour, and to rise in consequence to the height of princely fame, winning honour and glory for himself and security of his government.*

His ambassadorial appointment under the republican government of Florence in the fifteenth century, exposed him the act of politicking and state preservation by States actors in Europe. By the time he was relieved of his position, he became convinced more than ever that strict adherence to moral virtues cannot assist a Prince surmount his political challenges. This seemed to be a direct reference to Italy under the bondage of imperial influence, and passing through a barbarous tyranny that stinks in everyone's nostrils (Machiavelli, 1998:84). In this circumstance, any leader/prince that want to rise beyond moral inhibitions must be impetuous. He/she must necessarily acquire virtue to serve as an embankment and dyke's against the manipulations of fortune. As he put it,

*I hold strongly to this that it is better to be impetuous than circumspect because fortune is a woman and if she is to be submissive, it is necessary to beat and coerce her. Experience shows that she is often subdued by men who do this than those who act coldly (Airaksinen, 2009:550).*

In a nutshell, any leader that wants to subdue internal and external challenges, must possess the Machiavellian virtú.

### **Leadership**

Leadership is commonly used in many social discourses, but few people tend to comprehend its contours and implication for human security. Although it is as old as humanity, but one of the most arduous realities in social mobilization. Obviously, this has resulted to poor appreciation and application. It is against this background that Kondlo (2013:88) averred that:

*There is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success than to take the head in the introduction of a new order of things is still a germane description of the risks of leadership and resistance to it.*

Therefore, what is leadership? Peretomode (2012) provided fifty-three definitions of leadership. This underscores the relevance of the concept and its frontiers. As human beings climb the echelon of life, they are called to play two important roles which ostensibly relate to that of a leader (leadership) and manager (management) (Peretomode, 2012:18). It is axiomatic that every human being is born with a spark of leadership. The degree to which people distinguish themselves as leaders depends on their acquisition of the spirit of leadership through effortless, consistent, determined and frequent training. As a derivative of leadership, Munroe (2005:124) noted that manifesting the spirit of leadership is a matter of discovering and nurturing your true self so that you can naturally evidence your leadership nature. The process of ‘nurturing yourself’ entails a journey of self-assertion, self-discovery and self-manifestation. It is after this intense soul-searching process that we begin to acquire the leadership spirit which is an inherent desire to regulate and control our circumstances and environment (Munroe, 2005:102). For leadership to perform its role of service, it must be prepared because, there is no royal road to science, and only those who do not dread the fatiguing climb of its steep paths have a chance of gaining its luminous summits (Marx, 1986:30).

Bolman and Deal 9197:294) stated that:

*Leadership is universally offered as a panacea for almost any social problem. Around the world, middle managers say their enterprises would thrive if only senior management provided ‘real leadership’. A widely accepted canon holds that leadership is a very good thing that we need if, at least, more of the right kind.*

It is important to note that possession of leadership is not enough to solve any social problem. Hence, Philips (2000:23) opined that:

*Leadership is leaders acting as well as caring, inspiring and persuading to act for certain goals that represent the values, the wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations of themselves and the people they represent. And the genius of leadership lies in the manner in which leaders care about, visualize and act on their own and their followers’ values and motivations.*

Leadership is the rare ability of a person or group of individuals to see a positive world that lies beyond tomorrow, to excite others in the possibility of acting what is seen; and to have (most of) them willingly participate or cooperate in ensuring its achievement or completion with available resource (Ekekwe, 2011:15).

From the definitions herein, we can deduce tow salient facts of leadership.

- (1) Leadership is primarily concerned with the attainment of a goal.
- (2) Leadership has some essential features if it is to accomplish its desired goal.

These features include but not limited to vision, justice, emotional intelligence, tolerance, uprightness and virtue. These essentials are the building blocks of leadership. In all circumstances, they prop the foundation of leadership to transcend the status quo, develop a social lens that is not constrained and dimmed by the contradictions of the time. Hence, leadership is the capacity to influence others through inspiration motivated by passion, generated by a vision, produced by a conviction, ignited by a purpose (Munroe, 2005:59). Leadership is a trigger of transformation, and a prerequisite for development. Cicero (2008:29) underscored the importance of leadership when he noted that, when the people are deprived of a just king, they are like orphans. A sense of loss lingers within their hearts.

According to Nzimiro (1996:10), a leader must:

- (1) be the creator of a great ideology.
- (2) He should possess an outstanding act of leadership.
- (3) He should possess the real revolutionary trait of unbounded love towards his people, that is, love of honesty and unbound loyalty to the people’s care.
- (4) He should cultivate the habit of strategy, analyzing and practicing and finally, he should not occupy mechanically.

Leadership at whatever level, in this case political is a change agent, and trigger of creativity. It is saddled with the onerous responsibility of lifting the people from the quagmire of underdevelopment to the pinnacle of development. It has the capacity to inject a new meaning into the veins of history and civilization (Philips,

2000:39). Mobilization of the masses and expanding their basket of development can only be possible through a leadership that is conscious of its consciousness. Perhaps, this is why Adei (2004:vii) declared that:

*Leadership is the development of visions and Strategies, The alignment of a relevant people behind these strategies; and the empowerment of individuals (groups and societies) to make the vision happen despite obstacles.*

### **III. DEVELOPMENT**

Hitherto, development was measured strictly on economic growth indicators and Gross National Product (GDP). These were per capita income, national reserve, reduced external debt and spatial growth. But by the 1960s and 70s, the experience of many Third World Countries, particularly in Africa, necessitated what came to be a 'dethronement of GNP'. Development acquired a new definition and focus. Scholars such as Rodney (2005), Ake (1996), Adedeji (2002) and Asante (1991) gave a new meaning to development. Simply put, development can be defined as a process of expanding the wellbeing and happiness of the people. The United Nations Development programme (UNDP) stated that development is about people, about expanding their choices to live full, creative lives with freedom and dignity (Nault, 2009:18). It involves creating a democratic atmosphere for good governance to triumph. This means enlarging the choices available to the people so that they can build and strengthen their capacities. Amartya Sen, the 1998 Noble laureate in Economics stated that, economic growth cannot be sensibly treated as an end in itself. Development has to be more concerned with ensuring the lives we lead and the freedoms we enjoy (Todaro and Smith, 2004:17). The 1991 World Development Report noted that:

*The challenge of development is to improve the quality of life. Especially in the world's poor countries, a better quality of life generally calls for higher incomes, but it involves much more. It encompasses as ends in themselves better education, higher standards of health and nutrition, less poverty, a clean environment, more quality of opportunity, greater individual freedoms and a rich cultural life (Todaro and Smith, 2004:17).*

Essentially, development is beyond economic growth. Fundamentally, it implies increased skill, capacity, greater exercise and enjoyment of basic rights, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material wellbeing (Rodney, 2009:1). From the above, we can sieve out the basic ingredients of development as follows:

- (1) Good governance
- (2) Expansion of the fundamental freedoms of people
- (3) Involvement of the people in governance
- (4) Popular empowerment through skill acquisition and capacity building.
- (5) Raising the quality of life of the people.

It must be stated that these ingredients have no terminal end as development is a dialectical process. Since development is human-centered, people must directly participate in the process, otherwise it becomes counter-productive and soon face inevitable collapse. This was why a mindless imitation of western models in the name of development was unreservedly condemned by some African scholars. Asante (1991:7) asserted that we need to set in motion a development process that puts the individuals at the very centre of the development efforts, a development process that is both human and humane without necessarily softening the discipline that goes with development but which enhances man's personality, a development process that does not alienate man from his society and culture but rather develops his self-confidence in himself and identifies his interest with those of his society and thereby develops his ability and willingness for self-reliance. Sadly, for more than five decades, development in Nigeria has been characterized by a confusion of agendas (Ake, 1996), perfunctory, contradictory and ineffective (Ake, 1996:43).

### **IV. MACHIAVELLIAN VIRTÚ AND NIGERIAN DEVELOPMENT**

Machiavelli was an Italian statesman of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. He was born during the Renaissance period on May 3, 1469 in Florence. Florence was noted for its architectural beauty and political activities. Between 1469 to 1493, the Medici family constituted the political leadership of the city. But they were overthrown in 1494, and a Republican government established. It was this government that appointed Niccolò Machiavelli as the chancellor and secretary to the Second Chancery, the Ten of Liberty and Peace at the age of 25. As an Ambassador of the city of Florence, he had the rare advantage of witnessing the rugged politics of expansion in Europe by the dominant countries like Britain, Spain, France and the Roman Catholic Church headed by the Pope. From 1469 to 1527, he saw eight popes from Pope Paul II (1464-1471) to Pope Clement vii (1523-1534). More interesting was their political intrigue, manipulations, cunning and hypocritical conduct. Unfortunately, his Republic government was overthrown by the Medici family with the assistance of the Spanish government. Through a Decree promulgated on November 7, 1512, he was arrested on charge of conspiracy tortured and imprisoned. In 1513, he was released, but two people charged with him were executed. Machiavelli was pained and sad. He felt betrayed, and sort for any opportunity to relay his wealth of experience

to leaders of his cherished city. He was... rotting away unable to find man who recalls my service or believes I might be good for anything' (King, 2007:150). Among his works include:

- (1) *The Art of War*
- (2) *The Prince*
- (3) *The Discourses*
- (4) *The History of Florence*.

Of all his books, it is *The Prince* that espoused the essentials of his political thought. While some scholars see it as a political guide book that heralded the modern theory of State, others conceive it as a kind of conspirator's handbook (King, 2007:204). We cannot understand *The Prince* without appreciating his ambassadorial experience which taught him how to capture and preserve political power. This was in accordance with fifteenth century political ferment. Regrettably, Italy was unaffected by this political ferment because of internal strife. The result was that she became a prey in the estimation of other countries - France and Spain. Three reasons were responsible for the disunity and political weakness of the country. These are:

- (1) Leadership deficit
- (2) The domineering influence of the Roman Catholic Church
- (3) The imperialist activities of some European countries in Italy.

He was convinced more than ever that if Italy had had a strong leadership, it would easily surmount its perennial crises. Regrettably, in spite of the cultural and natural endowment of the country, it has become weak and subjected to constant forage and manipulation. He lamented thus:

*Look at the duels and the combats between a few, how the Italians are supreme in strength, in skill, in inventiveness, but when it comes to a matter of armies, they do not compare. All this is because of the weakness of the leaders (Machiavelli, 1995:82).*

The aftermath is that Italy has become a spoil to be plundered by powerful countries because of dependence on mercenaries, triumph of irreligious life and increase in moral depravity. Instead of the church serving as a rallying point for nation-building, it exacerbated the situation.

*The church, then has neither been able to occupy the whole of Italy, nor has it allowed anyone else to occupy it. Consequently, it has never come under one head, but has been under many princes and signori (Machiavelli, 1998:144).*

Machiavelli unequivocally averred that Italy has become a country without embankments and dykes, hence it has been flooded at will. He decided to engage in a deep research so that a solution can be found. As he enters the venerable courts of the ancients – the worlds of men such as Alexander the Great, Xenophon, and Julius Caesar and nourishes himself 'on the food that alone is mine and for which I was born' (King, 2007:148). The result of this interaction with the ancients was *The Prince*. *The Prince* was aimed at what politics is and not what it ought to be. This was the point of departure from existing political writings that rooted politics on ethical foundation. For Machiavelli, a Prince must understand and dissociate himself from it otherwise his downfall would be imminent. This is why virtú becomes a necessity .

In a nutshell, a leader with the Machiavellian virtú must at all times act as circumstances dictate. *When the safety of the country depends upon the resolution to be taken, no consideration of justice or injustice, humanity or cruelty, not of glory or of infamy should be allowed to prevail. But putting all other considerations aside, the only question should be what cause will save the life and liberty of the country (Machiavelli, 1995:515).*

Possession of virtú will make a leader subdue the mechanization of fortune at all times like Caesar Borgia. Fortune as a goddess 'arranges and rearranges' human affairs in her own inscrutable fashion... without following any discernable plan (King, 2007:153). This is because 'Fortes Fortuna Adin Val – Fortune favours the brave (Skinner, 1929:129). After all, virtú is a cultural value encompassing toughness, bravery and never-say-die willingness to combat adversity (King, 2007:154). It also entails ability to act contrary to social norms to save the State. In this regard, some qualities of the fox and lion becomes important.

*The fox is conceived a master of deception and cunning, but it cannot fight very well. A lion may be physically strong, but it has little cunning or ability. It is only by combining the best elements of each animal that a ruler may remain in power and control his realm (White, 2007:214).*

Machiavelli regards the people as ungrateful, fickle and liars; they shorn danger and greedy for profit, while you treat them well, they are yours, they can risk their property when danger is remote, but when danger arises, they turn against you (Machiavelli, 1995:52). This misanthropic feature of people is a warning signal that the Prince should be cautious and circumspect in relying on the display of popular emotions. Other essentials of the Machiavellian virtú include:

- (1) Appointment of a team of advisers who must be bold to tell the leader the truth and not flatter hm.
- (2) Circumvent the hatred of the people. This is by abstaining from their property and their women.

*Any leader that engages in this, is building his/her leadership on a sandy foundation. But above all, a prince must abstain from the property of others, because men soon forget the death of their father than the loss of their patrimony (Machiavelli, 1995:63).*

Furthermore,

*He (prince) will be hated above all, if as I said, he is rapacious and aggressive with regard to the property and the women of his subjects. He must refrain from these. As long as he does not rob the great majority of their property or women, they remain content (Machiavelli, 1995:57).*

- (3) A leader must rely on his army trained in the act the of virtú, and not to depend on mercenaries.
- (4) A leader must learn the technique and tactics of historical figures. This is to know how they survived in the struggle for political preservation.
- (5) A leader's action must be moderated as circumstances dictate. While acquisition of virtuous qualities should not becloud his sense of political realism but, he should refrain himself from inflicting grave injury on anyone in his service whom he has close to him in his affairs of state (Machiavelli, 1995:63).
- (6) A leader must be compassionate, faithful to his word, kind, guiltless and devout. He should know how to do evil if that is necessary, to be a man of good faith, of charity, kind and a religious man (Machiavelli, 1995:56).
- (7) Must inspire confidence, trust and not be despised. Must avoid like a plague such qualities as being irresolute, cowardly and effeminate.

Machiavelli was doubly sure that a leader with these qualities would surely overcome the manipulation of fortune and the deception of people. This is because: the man whose natural abilities match the temper of the times will obviously be successful, while anyone who proves incapable of this assimilation will inevitably fail. And truly, anyone wise enough to adapt to and understand the times of the pattern of events would always have good fortune or would always keep himself from bad fortune (King, 2007:57-8)

Machiavelli was optimistic that a leader with these qualities would necessarily accomplish his/her stated mission with ease because there is great justice in our cause (Machiavelli, 1995:81). He completely deviated from the conventional way of assessing politics from ethical orientation to, lay bare a political trajectory that purged the game of politics of extrinsic moralizing clout. He visualized politics from the prism of what men do and what they ought to do. Hence he is mostly seen as the forerunner of political realism. It is against this backdrop that Croce (1925:20) asserted that Machiavelli was:

*Simply a 'realist or a pragmatist advocating' the suspension of common place ethics in matters of politics. Moral rules have no place in the sort of decisions that political leaders must make and it is a categorical error of the gravest to think otherwise.*

It is important to state that Machiavelli's political postulation was not based on peripheral grounding, but a precipitate of long acquaintance with contemporary affairs and a continual study of the ancient world (Adams, 1977:148). Perhaps, this was why he was adjudged to be a kind of Galileo of Politics, separating the facts of politics from the values of humanism. Right from the 1960s to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Nigerian rulers have not demonstrated any pretense of transformational leadership; a leadership that would lift the country beyond 'Abdulistic vision' and social quagmire. The ruling class have been primarily involved in private accumulation of property, rationalized with primordial sensibility. Just as occupation of public office guarantees unhindered access to public wealth, hero-worship, flagrant abuse of rules have resulted to popular suffocation and bad governance.

The Minister of Transportation, Rt. Hon. Rotimi C. Amaechi revealed that the sum of ₦3.4 trillion cash and assets were stolen by public officers. Today, occupation of public office has become synonymous to display of unwanted arrogance, debauchery, absolutism, and discretion of cultural, and filial ties have become the accepted norm. The gargantuan display of recklessness, administrative rascality, incompetence, and managerial mediocrity (Ihonvbere, 2011:45) have reduced the value and essence of leadership. The aftermath of this failure of leadership is the deepening of a fatalistic orientation, hopelessness and social restiveness. In this scenario, the rulers only exude more verbosity, less vision, governing without leading, maintenance without movement (Uchendu, Okpoko and Augwom, 2010:35).

Onuoha and Fadakinte (2002:54) put it in this manner,

*The emerging dominant class therefore first needed to consolidate their economic base to create autonomous bourgeoisie with sufficient magnitude to stimulate industrialization. And because there was political power with them, the state was compelled to function as an entrepreneurial force.*

This was the genesis of placing a high premium on political power and political dissent was criminalized (Ake, 1996). With a continuous grip on political power, economic debauchery became a never-ending process. This simply explains why 80 percent of Nigeria's oil and gas revenue accrue to just 1 percent of the population (Taylor, 2009:48). As Ake (1996) pointed out, a country experiencing this kind of harsh reality

cannot witness the triumph of democracy. That Nigeria with all its vaunted wealth cannot be counted among the list of developed countries sixteen years into the 21<sup>st</sup> century is because of abysmal failure of leadership.

Achebe (1983:1) captured the whole picture when he asserted that:

*The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian land or climate or water or air or anything else.*

Development process is driven by a strong and patriotic leadership. Development is masterminded and executed by an excellent leadership which gives definition to the vision of a common great reality, assumes responsibility for the attainment of the dream, and supervises that process in such a manner that each citizen enjoy maximum benefit from it without curtailing the right of others to similar participation and enjoyment, and without inhibiting of society itself progressively to improve the social condition and the common good (Konndlo, 2013:94). Although, Nigeria and Machiavelli's Italy differ in geography, time and space, but the two countries exhibit some similarities in their quest for development. This has made it possible for a common panacea. While Italy was endowed with some human potentials, leadership deficit made it become a prey in the hands of imperialist forces. In the same vein, Nigeria with its unrivalled wealth has remained a crippled giant and a poor country, unable to feed its people. This is the paradox of plenty. It has become imperative for Nigerian leaders to acquire the Machiavellian virtú so that the country can be lifted from its recession to the Olympian height of development.

## V. CONCLUSION

From our analysis thus far, it is indubitable that Nigeria is bleeding from would inflicted on it by leadership dysfunctionalism. It is sad that a country that was voted to be a leading economic colossus within the Africana sub-region because of its bountiful riches has nosedived into recession and political miasma. This is the paradox that is facing the 'Giant of Africa', five decades after political independence. It may not be a surprise to asset that the Nigerian State has started exhibiting traits of a failed state; While it is a truism that the country passed through a horrendous and unforgettable colonial suffocation with its accompanying misery and unending misery (Davidson, 1990). This cannot be an alibi for the glaring display of gross leadership incompetence, opportunistic posturing and provocative official deceit. It is strange that while majority of Nigerians are living below the breadline level, the ruling class remains unperturbed and acquired a notoriety in the ethnic of materialism and ostentatious lifestyle. As squander mania consciousness gradually become the 'official core value', the aspirations and needs of the people are consigned to the dustbin of abandoned subjects. Why not? With a fallacy of electoralism, they can prolong and firm their grip on power. This is the reason behind electoral fraudulence, sophistry, primordial sensibilities, rented crowds, shrinking of the political space, shameless flattery and bandwagonism. It becomes difficult for human development and security to triumph within this anti-human and anti-democratic order. Nevertheless, for Nigeria to rise beyond the immediate political lethargy, that will ensure a self-reliant development founded on good governance, it must have a leadership that is clothed in the Machiavellian virtú. A leadership that must be public spirited and committed to the service of human development. A leadership that has the competence, ability and vision to mobilize the people so that they can increase their capacity to develop their potentials and live not by the begging bowl. To accomplish all this feat, such a leader must be ready to respect people's rights and property, ready at all times to hear the truth, must be ready to listen and feel the pulse of the people, and above all, ready to smash an aid-dependent mentality. Nzimiro (1996:11) noted that a leader is one and the same with the people. The leader is not delinked from the masses. Such a leader cannot base his/her actions on emotional impulse, but as circumstances dictate. Regrettably, leadership in the country has been trivialized and bastardized, to connote rulership in perpetuity. As Machiavelli assures us, there is great justice in our quest for good governance only if only we stop the merry-go-round and adjustment without transformation. This is how most developed countries came to occupy their enviable position in the comity of states.

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