

NIGERIA: ELITISM AND THE TRAVAILS OF A FAILED STATE

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Abstract

This paper traced Nigeria's woes to elitism- leadership by a select few for the select few. This draconian system is not peculiar to Nigeria only but has become the leadership style in most African states and it is the major reason for the collapse of virtually all African states. Peculiar features of this system of leadership are Machiavellianism, nepotism, cronyism, sadism, and fatalism. The effects of this system have been explored in the paper and measures have also been suggested to counter its continuance and save Nigeria from her present state.

Keywords: Elitism, Draconian, Machiavellianism, Nepotism, Cronyism, Sadism, Fatalism

Introduction

From Fredrick Lugard to the patriarchs: Nnamdi Azikiwe, Tafawa Balewa, Awolowo, and to General Gowon, General Olusegun Obasanjo, Shehu Shagari, General Muhamadu Buhari, General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida, Ernest Shonekan, General Sani Abacha, and back to Olusegun Obasanjo, Goodluck Ebere Jonathan, and back to Muhammadu Buhari; Nigeria has reeled under elitism. From colonialism to independence, federalism, military dictatorship, democracy, back to dictatorship and democracy, Nigeria has also experimented with all kinds of systems of existence without respite.

In all the systems of governance explored and irrespective of the individuals helming the affairs, one thing has remained constant: a total representation of the interest of a few. This smacks of elitism. Every regime comes in with empty promises of solutions to the nagging problems of infrastructure, electricity, water, education, health, housing, and employment but departs leaving the situation worse than they met it. Huge contracts awarded in millions and billions of dollars regularly appear on news media and also end there.

When the British came with Christianity, health care, and education; they actually came for the interest of the British Nation. The dividing and merging

of the entire people as Northern, Western, and Southern Protectorates were all ploys to keep everybody in perpetual skirmish and agitation so that they could quietly and indirectly consolidate and perpetuate British control. The target of the control was Nigeria's huge oil deposits and they have been draining it with abandon.

When we gained independence, we thought it would be a rebirth from the shackles of the past but it all dwindled into the same game of "drain as much as you can for yourself and your people". "Your people" here is a metaphor for the leader's immediate family, kinsmen, clan, community, and tribe and not for the entire nation and this was not different from what the British came to perpetrate. Top government appointments and positions were exclusively for the select few just as government contracts went not to the best bidder but to the next of kin of the president.

When the military forcefully took over power with the pretext of salvaging the economy everything nosedived into an abysmal state. Shameless and direct looting of the treasury, awarding nonexistent contracts, bogus budgets, recklessness in all spheres of governance, introduction of surreptitious economic programs such as SAP (structural Adjustment Program), unwarranted devaluation of the Naira currency, etc., and allocating huge and unaccounted contracts to family members, friends, girlfriends, concubines and rogues. One of such contracts was the infamous ITT contract which transformed MKO Abiola (Ibrahim Babangida's Friend) into a Billionaire within a very short time. That telecommunication contract was never executed nor accounted for till date.

General Sani Abacha (late) took over the reins of power as another military head of state and completed the mess his predecessors passed on to him. It is so shameful that for the past twenty years and more Nigeria is still recovering trunks of General Abacha's loot in millions of Dollars scattered across several and forgotten bank accounts around the world!

When the so called Democrats came to power with their so-called "Democracy" with Olusegun Matthew Aremu Obasanjo as the 'messiah' of the democratic system, many rejoiced that at last we were about to arrive the 'promised land' with a man who understood the terrain and pains of the nation. But, alas, after eight years of the same old story and music, it dawned on everyone that even though the drummer might have been changed but the rhythm was not changed; that is, Nigeria may not be salvaged again.

President Goodluck Jonathan came in as a young leader and an academic with the hope of cleaning up the mess over the land but that hope was dashed with the same type of leadership coiling up around him like a mamba which is

characterized by nepotism and looting. One of his ministers, Mrs. Deziani Alison –Madueke, who happened to be the president’s sister in-law, looted and laundered so much money as the petroleum minister that everyone became benumbed. Even after about six years of his leaving office the country is still laboring to recover the loot of Deziani which amounted in Billions of naira. Dame Patience Jonathan, the wife of President Goodluck Jonathan, is involved in a current case in court now over millions of dollars stashed out in one of her foreign accounts.

In 2015 General Muhammadu Buhari, who has transformed into a civilian after retiring from the Army, took over from Goodluck Jonathan with the noise of ‘change, change, change’ everywhere. Four years of his ‘change campaign ‘has elapsed without any good results and he has returned again for the second term of taking the Nation to ‘the next level’ after an inglorious election that witnessed the highest level of thuggery, intimidation, money sharing, ballot box snatching, and violence across the nation. It has become clear to all Nigerians that this present government is the government for the ruling party, All Progressives Alliance (APC) alone. Nothing is progressive about the alliance. The government has become notorious for shielding the most corrupt politicians provided they could shift grounds by joining and supporting the affairs of the party. The Economic Financial crimes Commission (EFCC), the financial watchdog of the Nation, has completely lost the trust of the people as a result of their hunt of perceived political enemies of the president and the party chieftains.

It is worrisome that this demonic system of governance has persisted in Nigeria since inception, where one takes up the mantle of leadership only to appease a select few in a country of about two hundred million people (200,000,000). It is on this premise that this paper seeks to address the issues appertaining to the travails of Nigeria and push for a solution.

Definition of Concepts

Certain terminologies and concepts that formed the thrust of this paper shall be examined here.

- **Elitism**

Elitism is a political ideology with the belief or attitude that individuals who form an elite- a select group of people with an intrinsic quality, high intellect, wealth, special skills, or experience- are more likely to be constructive to society as a whole, and therefore deserve influence or authority greater than that of others (Wikipedia, 2019).

Elitism as a socio-political movement emanated from the word ‘elite’ which means a small group of people with the highest status in a society, or in some

domain of activity, who have more privileges or power than other people due to their status. Elitism therefore is believing in or promoting this sort of arrangement, whether that be in the academic world, politics, art, sports, or anywhere else.

- **Pluralism**

This is the belief that societies should be governed by a plurality of viewpoints- the more the better. This stands in favor of democracy and against elitism- since the members of any elite group share similar interests. Pluralism does not oppose giving high status to some kinds of people who can attain high status (Wikipedia. 2019).

- **Populism**

This is basically a synonym for democracy- rule by the majority. Unlike pluralism, populism does not say anything about how many different viewpoints should exist, but it is assumed that rule by the majority requires multiple choices for voters to choose from (Wikipedia, 2019).

- **Egalitarianism**

This is the philosophy that all people should have equal rights and be treated equally in general. So, any kind of privilege or elitism is anti- egalitarian (Wikipedia, 2019).

The United States of America is famed for being pluralistic, populist, and egalitarian.

- **Machiavellianism**

This is a political philosophy championed by the Italian philosopher, Niccolo Machiavelli. This ideology recommends that for rulers to achieve absolute control, they must be ready to act, in unscrupulous ways such as resorting to fraud and treachery, elimination of political opponents, and the usage of fear as a means of controlling subjects. Machiavelli's view that acquiring a state and maintaining it requires evil means has been noted as the chief theme of the treatise (Wikipedia, 2019).

- **The Draconian System**

This system came from Draco in Athens 621 BCE when he established a constitution enfranchising hoplites, the lower class soldiers. The Draconian laws were noteworthy for their harshness; they were written in blood, rather than ink. Death was prescribed for almost all criminal offenses (Wikipedia, 2019).

- **Nepotism**

This is the granting of jobs to one's relatives or friends in various fields, including business, politics, entertainment, sports, religion and other activities. It is the act of using one's power to secure better jobs or unfair advantages for a family member when they may not have the right skill, experience or motivation compared to others (Wikipedia, 2019).

- **Cronyism**

This is the practice of partiality in awarding jobs and other advantages to friends or trusted colleagues, especially in politics and between politicians and supportive organizations (Wikipedia, 2019).

- **Sadism**

This is a psycho-mental condition of receiving pleasure by inflicting pain on others (Wikipedia, 2019). A sadist derives pleasure for the suffering of others. A sadistic leader enjoys the sufferings of his subjects.

- **Fatalism**

This is a philosophical doctrine that stresses the subjugation of all events or actions to destiny. It is the belief that we are powerless to do anything other than what we actually do (Wikipedia, 2019).

Some Historical Highlights on Nigeria

Elitism as a political system does not operate in isolation rather it employs so many other socio-political patterns listed and explained from the foregoing. Elitism functions with Draconianism, Machiavellianism, nepotism, cronyism, sadism, and the rest of them.

Throughout all military regimes in Nigeria the Draconian ideology was implemented. It reached its height in the reign of late General Sani Abacha (1943-1998) who ruled the country from 1993 to 1998. So many people got missing particularly those who dared raise their voice in opposition. Some were fed to crocodiles. Sani Abacha, in his peculiar draconian style, convicted and hanged Ken Saro-wiwa alleging that he masterminded the killing of four Ogoni chieftains at a pro-government meeting. But the truth was that late Ken Saro-Wiwa dared to speak up and lead an agitation against the government for the oilpollution and negligence the Ogoni people suffered.

The military dictatorship of General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida, who passed the baton to late Sani Abacha, his crony, also witnessed the devastating bombing of the editor of *NEWS WATCH* magazine, late Mr. Dele Giwa. Mr Dele Giwa received a letter bomb from 'the presidency' that blasted him to shreds. It happened that Dele Giwa was closing in on a drug and money laundering case against one Miss Jennifer Mmadike which indicted the head

of state. The Machiavellian act of bombing Dele Giwa created fear and panic across the nation but the rest has become history.

This is the kind of brutality and bloodletting that Nigeria has been swimming through for decades without any respite. The issue is that the military assumed some kind of elitist leadership: rolling out all sorts of decrees, killing and maiming oppositions, looting and laundering funds from the national treasury, appointing their cronies and friends into positions of authority and leadership, enriching and empowering their families, concubines, and kin to the peril of the populace.

The situation got so terrible that the wife of M.K.O. Abiola, the acclaimed winner of June 12 election of 1993, was murdered in cold blood by the henchmen of the military. Kudirat Abiola, by campaigning and demanding for the release of her husband from prison and the restoration of his presidential mandate, was seen as a threat to the military junta of Sani Abacha and the elitist military arrangement in place. For her tenacity, she received several hot bullets piercing her heart through her back! The rest, as usual, has become history.

For several years after this incident and the death of Sani Abacha, the Nation toiled, travailed, groaned, and groped in gross darkness but as usual everyone resigned to fate. General Abdusalami Abubakar finally took over the affairs of the nation after the demise of tyrant Abacha and held an election that produced Olusegun Obasanjo, a former military Head of state, and handed over power to him on May 29, 1999 as a civilian president. Many welcomed this as a new leaf that turned for Nigeria even nicknaming Obasanjo the 'political messiah' of the nation but many were skeptical about the issue, particularly identifying Obasanjo as a by-product of the military in a civilian attire.

Olusegun Obasanjo heralded the era of 'democratic rule' in Nigeria but it did not take much time before the fears and skepticisms that surrounded him and the system that produced him crystallized. Nigeria witnessed an unprecedented rise in reckless looting and spending, ostentation, infrastructural decay, and insensitivity to societal problems. He stepped into the oil boom of that era and yet nothing to show for it as regards the improvement of the lives of Nigerians. He borrowed billions of dollars from the IMF promising to fix Nigeria's power problem and till date nothing has been done and no account of the fund.

No one was surprised at the non-performance of Olusegun Obasanjo because the system that produced him (the military) was, behind the scene, dictating the tunes for his policies. The political killings did not stop; once you were

perceived as an enemy to the PDP (People's Democratic Party) agenda you became marked for annihilation. Prominent Nigerians fell during this dark era such as Harry Marshal, Bola Ige, and many more. The PDP was a rubber stamp of the military cabal controlled by such men as Generals Ibrahim Babangida, Abdusalami Abubakar, Theophilus Danjuma, and many others. Nigerians were deceived to believe that there was a complete change and transformation in governance but, alas, it was a special elitist arrangement of army generals recycling themselves or their cronies in governance. It was a typical biblical case of 'Esau's skin but Jacob's voice'

The political killings was not domiciled at the presidential level but was witnessed within states. Many got missing till date in various states for challenging, opposing, or exposing the misconduct of their governors. In Anambra State for example, Barrister Barnabas Igwe and wife were killed in cold blood by gunmen for vehemently opposing the system of governance in the state. It was so gory that even the wife was butchered along with a three month old pregnancy! All these draconianism happening in a democracy.

When President Olusegun Obasanjo discovered to his amazement that he has spent eight years as the president of Nigeria achieving nothing, he quickly transformed into a sober and remorseful leader pleading for a third term in government even against the constitution he swore to defend. He made dubious moves, lobbied all the powers that be, made so many consultations and connivances, and threw his entire life into the unholy pursuit with futility.

This typifies the kind of system that operates in Nigeria: the belief that no one else or no other people can rule except a select few and this has become our bane. People are ready to grab unto power at all costs even when it is crystal clear that they are not performing.

Nigerian waggled and wobbled through this mess for years and later landed in the arms of late president Umaru Yaradua, a man of resolute demeanor. Many rejoiced at the emergence of Yaradua as the president because he had about the cleanest record as governor but the question still persisted: what kind of political arrangement and experimentation produced him? Somehow it was discovered that President Obasanjo and Shehu Yaradua (Umaru yaradua's uncle) were bossom friends and had some secret pact no one could explain. It appeared that Shehu Yaradua did some favour to Obasanjo which he, Obasanjo, needed to repay and that was settled with the position of Nigerian President offered to Umaru Yaradua.

As funny as this account might sound; it has been confirmed by many sources as true. Here we see a non-violent but a very dirty aspect of elitism at play! One becoming the president of a nation not by merit or consensus of voting

but by the secret pact and private arrangement of certain friends. No wonder we have failed and continued to fail as a nation even after fifty nine years (59) of nationhood.

Nigerians soon swallowed and ignored the insult and effrontery of Obasanjo and gave President Umaru Yaradua the benefit of doubt- the opportunity to prove himself. But it was not long before the realities of the faulty experiment dawned on everyone: President Umaru Yaradua was sick of a rare and irreversible condition known as auto immune disorder(lupuserythematosus). It was discovered that during his four - year rule as the governor of Katsina state, he travelled to Germany about eight times for medical treatment and former president Obasanjo knew about the situation.

Everyone was dumbfounded at this discovery and a plethora of questions arose to the rationale behind Obasanjo's choice of Yaradua. Why make such a man the president of the most populous and perhaps the most problematic country in Africa knowing his health challenge? Not only had Umaru Yaradua a serious health problem; it was irreversible and terminal. Why would Umaru Yaradua accept such an enormous task knowing his health status? Is there no capable one to lead in a country of about two hundred million people? This is just a tip of the several shady deals that transact in an elitist system of government.

The death of President Umaru Yaradua ushered in his deputy into the helms of power, President Ebele Goodluck Jonathan. A man many believed could steer the country out of murky and troubled waters having come from the academia and a humble beginning in the remote creeks of Otuoke, Bayelsa State.

Generally Goodluck Jonathan appeared sound and promising but within a very short while in his administration, the elitist syndrome set in. The major drawback with elitism is that no matter how articulate and poised any leader might appear at the onset, he would surely find himself grappling with the dictates of the mafia that enthroned him. Huge contracts must be awarded first to party chieftains, whether they are qualified to handle them or not and even before any other bidder could be considered. Oil wells and fields must first be shared within the elitist circle before any other considerations. The list of candidates and nominees for special positions is handed over to the president by the elites even before his inaugural speech and he dares not reject it because of the consequences. Sensitive positions such as the governor of the Central Bank, comptroller of customs, minister for power, minister for petroleum, minister for natural resources, directors of sensitive parastatals are decided and noted down even before the president assumes office.

President Goodluck Jonathan struggled with all these commotion until his tenure elapsed and it was when he wanted to return for the second term that all hell was let loose against him. There arose another mafia apparently stronger than the machinery that put him in power. This new group was the Fulani mafia led by Muhammadu Buhari, a former military head of state, who swore with his life that blood would flow if he failed to win the election and should Goodluck Jonathan continue to hold onto power. He was actually sending clear signals to Jonathan that war has been declared against him already. Drums of war by the Fulani hounds and killings and beheadings by the dreaded Boko Haram group had already begun and was spreading across the entire nation like wildfire all in a bid to rattle Goodluck Jonathan.

General Muhammadu Buhari, a purported septuagenarian and a retired army general, started campaigning all over the country with the slogan of ‘change’ and the zeal to quash ‘corruption’. As usual, he drew many crowds of sycophants but some reasonable minds got worried over what he was coming to do again as the president of the country. Nigerians saw the worst of economic repression under his military rule between 1983 and 1985 when he completely failed as a leader, and so why him again? Everybody knew, by virtue of Nigeria’s political gimmicks and antecedents, that there was no stopping of the craze to enthrone Muhammadu Buhari.

Retired General Muhammadu Buhari finally ‘won the election and was sworn in as the president of Nigeria with little or no education. It was not long before it dawned on Nigerians the agenda of the president: Fulani Hegemony. Nigerians were greeted everywhere around their country with kidnappings, rape, torture, banditry, armed robbery, communal killings, herdsmen attacks on commuters and villages, military harassment, torture, and killings such as ‘operation python dance’. It has never been so bad in Nigeria not even during the civil war! Why would a president mount the podium of leadership of a troubled nation like Nigeria and become preoccupied with cow grazing and Fulani settlement? It appears he actually came for the Fulanis that were scattered throughout Africa promising them grazing and settlement bases across states in Nigeria. For four years of his first tenure the debate was on grazing bill and RUGA settlement and not on infrastructural development, nor education, nor health, nor industrialization; nothing but cows and Fulani settlement and hegemony.

While the entire country is suffering and groaning under intense hardship, the mafia that enthroned this leadership is looting the treasury and laundering public funds, enlarging their bank accounts across the world and even clamoring for the next election come 2023.

The country is five years into the rulership of Muhammadu Buhari and there is no single project nor achievement to credit to the administration. This has been the problem facing Nigeria for fifty-nine years and there appears to be no hope of breaking loose in sight.

Some Philosophical Argumentations

Some scholars have argued that elitism is not entirely bad particularly if it is employed with some reasonable sense of responsibility. The main argument in favor of elitism is that the smartest and strongest people are the best qualified to lead and wield power- that it is in all of our best interests to have the best people at the top (Wikipedia,2019).

This argument is completely beneficial if elitism attends to what it purports to attend to because one cannot rule out completely the reality of social stratification or class in every society. In any given society, not everyone would be educated or like to be educated and some are shy to positions of leadership and authority. It is positive that the demands of leadership should be attended by those who are qualified and capable to handle that. But the problem lies in usurping such privileges. If a leader is not conscious of the laws of nature and providence that allow such natural selections in society he would take his position and opportunity for granted and become self-centered and elitist in his thinking. This fact leads to the arguments against elitism.

The arguments against elitism are that it opposes equality (egalitarianism), diversity (pluralism), and democracy (populism). And the observation that the elite, in practice, do not actually include all or only the best people, but rather often, simply the people from certain families (Wikipedia, 2019).

Some other facts against elitism is that power corrupts; and elite groups will always use their power for selfish ends, rather than doing the best for the rest of the people. It is also possible to run a healthy society without the elitist group.

Winston Churchill (1874-1965)(Former British Prime Minister) once argued that: “ the average voter is not qualified to make good decisions- whether that be due to their intelligence, their morality, education, or other qualities” (Wikipedia, 2019)

This argument is faulty and favors the perpetuation of class consciousness and suppression. The so-called ‘average voter’ possesses the potentiality for good leadership if given a chance through proper education.

The most disturbing reaction to these debilitations in Nigeria is the people’s resignation to fatalism. Majority of Nigerians have taken the bad leadership

system in Nigeria as our destiny and that nothing can undo destiny but this position is defeatist and can only make the situation worse. It is only in Nigeria that a retired army general resurfaces to take up the mantle of leadership of the country and his wish is granted. It is also popular in Nigeria for a leader to perform poorly and still strive for a second term and easily realizes it. No one ever speaks up against the tyranny maybe for fear of being crushed. Everyone has turned into sycophancy just to survive.

Although majority of the people are too scared to raise a voice but some courageous ones have at various times spoken to condemn and demand for good governance in the country. People like late Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, late Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Ken Saro-Wiwa, Ben Nwabueze, Bishop Mathew Kukah, late Dora Akunyili, Engineer Galadima, Arch-Bishop Chukwuma, and currently Nnamdi Kanu, Fani Kayode, and Olusegun Obasanjo, to name a few.

Pitiably, some vehemently spoke against the ills of government and the political class but suddenly went dumb and shifted over to the side of the elitist after being offered appointments and lucrative posts. The most notorious of them are Adams Oshiomole and Festus Keyamo. Adams Oshiomole became endeared to the masses for the Nigerian struggle as the president of the labor union between 1999 and 2004 when he resisted almost all inimical policies of the Obasanjo administration particularly in fuel pricing. But by some strange maneuver he found himself in politics, becoming the governor of Edo State for eight years and literarily leaving the State in a mess.

Festus Keyamo made a name as human rights lawyer and activist but suddenly joined the elitist mafia and transformed into the defender of all the ills of the Buhari administration. He has been rewarded with a portfolio in as a deputy minister for the Niger Delta.

Even University professors and free thinkers in the society who are supposed to voice out their concern over governmental ills have been bankrolled and they now aid in rigging elections.

Some Pertinent Interrogations

Many concerned Nigerians have boldly interrogated the situation with a bid to ascertain the missing link. Why and how did we arrive at this spot? Which system can ever work in Nigeria having gone through colonialism, practiced federalism, and now experimenting with democracy? Has the so-called 'Curse on Africa' bedeviled and befallen us? Truly the entire African continent has been laboring under some mysterious yoke of underdevelopment for centuries now. Virtually all African nations borrow from the West to sustain their

respective economies and Nigeria's case is even worse with all the massive deposits of natural resources. We virtually import all items we use even the minutest domestic item like tooth pick and razor blade. Premium spirit (fuel) which is a by-product of crude oil refining is also imported. How truly free and independent have we become from the West?

From all indications we are still under the British colonial rule. This has been substantiated by the fact that the two major British oil companies (shell and BP) have been in charge of our crude oil explorations, mining, exportation, refining, and sales for decades. This exposes the fact that Nigeria is not in control of her oil resource but Britain. It is most shameful! One should not wonder why Britain quickly aided the crushing of the first uprising in Nigeria in order to sustain this control. The Biafran agitation was vanquished with British war planes because the agitation would have emancipated a lot of people if it had succeeded. The interpretation of the whole clandestine activities of Britain is that our natural resources are employed to develop their land while we wallow in poverty and confusion.

This explains why there is no true leader nor government in Nigeria. They ensure that whoever is enthroned swears some oath of secrecy and allegiance to the dictates of the elites and this includes Britain and their Nigerian cohorts.

The Depth and Demerits of Elitism in Nigeria

This unproductive system of leadership has eaten very deep into the kernels of the Nigerian political, education, religious, social, and economic systems. For instance:

- **The Political System**

The Nigerian political system is so toxic and backward that it is no longer a game for the noble. All kinds of things come into play such as diabolism, occultism, witchcraft, assassination, rituals, and godfatherism. You do not come to power unless you belonged to or backed by the elitist circle that dictates winners or losers. It is so messy that election results get decided by the mafia even before the actual voting. In most electoral zones the number of votes always surpasses the number of accredited voters! Political office holders are no longer selected by the masses via voting but by the elites. The case of Lagos State in the just concluded Governorship election was a serious case in point where Asiwaju Bola Tinubu, National Leader of the ruling party (APC), decided who will be the next Governor even before the actual voting and it happened that way against the wish of the people. The former governor was denied a return ticket because he failed to appease party chieftains with robust contracts during his first tenure.

- **Employment**

Employment in Nigeria has become by nepotism and cronyism for the elites. You get employed only if you are related or connected to the president, vice president, senate president, governors, etc. No one employs anyone based on merit after all the president has remained the president for four years and more even without a single certificate. That explains the level of quackery witnessed everywhere in the country even in the academic and medical systems.

- **Education**

Public schools have been left unfunded hence the dilapidated state of virtually all public schools and institutions. The politicians rather scout for international schools and institutions for their wards in foreign lands. Such prestigious and costly higher institutions as Oxford, Harvard, Wales, Birmingham, Aberdeen, etc. enroll many Nigerians every other session. Elitism does not favor the education of the masses for threat of mental emancipation and empowerment that usually come from proper education.

- **Economy**

Nigeria's economy has been in shambles since the inglorious emergence of Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida who introduced and encouraged looting and money laundering in the country. All the structures that create a healthy economy such as industries, factories, agriculture, craft, farming, production and exportation have all been crippled by the elitist mafia from the tenure of Babangida till date so that the masses will never rise to achieve economic freedom and prosperity. Till date Nigeria cannot properly account for the drilling, refining, and sales of its natural crude. A country that cannot refine its own crude for fifty –nine years is in bondage. Nigeria is the only country in the world that allocates oil wells to individuals. Why would individuals take possessions of oil wells that should generate revenue for the entire nation? This is just how vicious elitism can be. Ibrahim Babangida is yet to account for the \$12.5 Billion Dollars allegedly realized from the oil sales during the Gulf war between the USA and Iraq that crippled oil sales from Iraq, Kuwait and some Middle Eastern Nations which allowed Nigeria to sell beyond measure.

- **Health**

There is no standard and functional public hospital in Nigeria at the moment that is equipped to handle emergencies and special cases. As a matter of fact, the elites easily find their way to foreign lands for medical attention from the president down to the governors. Nigerians die every year in millions from simple and curable ailments such as malaria, infections, hepatitis, labor complications, cancer, diabetes, hypertension, etc. as a result of poor health services.

- **Transportation and infrastructure**

Our transport system and infrastructure are in total decay. Nigerians have been groaning under bad roads, few and congested sea ports, and very few and malfunctioning airports. Functional transport structures are only seen around government agencies and parastatals which are operated by politicians in power. Every other place is left in shambles. For example, the federal capital city, Abuja, boasts of solid and functional network of roads and airports because that is the home of all the Nigerian politicians both retired and active in looting. From Abuja, they can easily and always jet out to any part of the world, some with their private jets. The wedding in 2017 of the second daughter (Halimat) of the former Military dictator, Ibrahim Babangida, witnessed more than twenty four private helicopters of politicians in attendance.

- **Judiciary**

There is no justice in Nigeria's judiciary system. Justice is the preserve of the elites. Cases are decided even before they appear in court. Indictment is preserved for the masses who cannot afford the bribery package for the judges and who are not listed amongst the ruling mafia. The practice now is that indicted governors of states who stole billions from their state coffers are advised to quickly join the ruling party (APC) for the atonement of their sins but the common man goes to jail for a paltry five thousand Naira indictment

- **Security**

Security is too expensive and lofty for the masses in Nigeria. Police protection and military surveillance are exclusively for the elites. You would always see them cruising in high speeds with sirens and exotic armored vehicles while the masses are abandoned at the mercy of kidnappers, robbers, rapists, night crawlers, ritualists, and bloodthirsty men. Every politician is entitled to at least four security aides fortified with sophisticated weaponry. The children of the elites in Nigeria perambulate with armed escorts and sirens even during shopping. It is difficult and almost impossible to call and get police response during emergency because of their preoccupation with the security of the elites.

Ahmed Bola Tinubu and the Clamour for 2023

Bola Ahmed Adekunle Tinubu, born 1952, is a man Nigerians will never forget easily. A former senator representing Lagos central senatorial zone, two-time governor of Lagos State, and currently the national leader of the ruling party- All Progressives Coalition (APC). Tinubu ruled Lagos State, former National Capital, for eight years without any substantial achievements and transformations in the lives of the people of Lagos State. Currently all the choice lands and properties in Lagos are owned by him. More than fifty percent of government contracts are handled by his personal companies or

companies affiliated to him. Currently Lagos State is the only State in the country with toll gates fixed in strategic places and the toll fees accrue to him. Tinubu decides who takes any appointment in Lagos State or not. He personally enrolls the Governors of Lagos State. The state pays him some undisclosed amount in millions every month as gratuity for being a former governor. His major challenger and opposition in his second term bid for governorship, Funso Williams, was murdered in cold blood in his home under suspicious circumstances.

Tinubu was a major financier of the 2014 presidential election that enthroned retired general Muhammadu Buhari as the current president of Nigeria and he was rewarded with the post of the national leader of the party.

Currently Bola Ahmed Tinubu is clamoring to become the president come 2023 when the tenure of president Buhari will have elapsed. The development is already gathering momentum in the news and in every circle but something is particularly worrisome about the whole matter. Tinubu has held Lagos state under duress for more than two decades now and he went further conniving with some people in their mafia racket to enthrone Muhammadu Buhari, who has also failed abysmally as leader; so why the clamour for 2023? If he personally enthroned three governors in Lagos State after himself and assiduously worked for the enthronement of the current president, then he is surely bent on enthroning himself as the president of Nigeria come 2023 against all odds.

Why is there no one speaking up? Where are the fathers and elders of the land? Where are the wailing women? Where are the academics and free thinkers? Where is the clergy? Where are the youths? Where are the lawmakers? Why are we so dumb at such a moment?

Someone tried to lead a revolution some time ago, Mr Sowore, and he is yet to be released from police custody. But are we to continue this way? Should we all sit idle in the face of tyranny? Why are we all so blind and insensitive to the impending doom? Why sit still till we all perish in the hands of this selfish elitists?

Recommendations

Every Nigerian both at home and in diaspora is hereby called to find their voice and might. The country is overdue for a revolution and positive transformation. Let us all rise like Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela, Stephen Biko, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, Jerry Rawlings, Robert Nester Marley, Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Miriam Makeeba, and the rest of them. Let us rise with words, poems, speeches, agitations, books, sarcasm, songs, etc for the battle line is drawn. Surely the intimidations, harassments,

imprisonments, torture, brutality, ostracism, and the rest of them will come but freedom must surely come! It is better to arise now to challenge and break the yokes of bondage than fold our hands and hope that freedom will appear someday from the moon.

Let us push for an inclusive system of governance for true democracy, for populism, for pluralism and for an egalitarian society.

Conclusion

Nigeria and Nigerians have endured so much under this elitist system of governance that has existed from the colonial era to the present. The demand of this system is so vicious that if left unchallenged can make the nation to cease to exist in a very short time from now! The perpetrators of this system have continued to amass wealth in billions along with their families and cronies while the masses are left to perish. A system that is characterized by looting, money laundering, nepotism, cronyism, sadism, killings, inhumanity, insecurity, unemployment, infrastructural collapse, educational and health sector malady, injustice, and complete societal decay is not worthy to be sustained.

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