

Change Mantra and Leadership Model: Schoolings from Emmy Idegu's *Another Odolu kingdom*

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Abstract

African's contact with the West and the imposition of its socio-political and economic administrative models to a very large extent has dealt a devastating blow on the way Africa now governs its people. Nigeria, as it is known today, before its amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates with the Lagos colony existed under the socio-political structures of emirates, caliphates, kingdoms etc., each having its peculiar constitutional model which engendered good neighbourliness, equity, justice among others. With the new order in place, Nigeria over the years has evolved several governmental replicas after the British and Americans. This seems not to have addressed the threat to our national co-existence, (perhaps because of our diverse cultural, religious and social frame of references). Many Nigerian leaders (both military and civilian) have tried to remain in power continually against the mandate of the masses. This has brought on its people litany of woes. It is against this grounding, which this paper is poking at Idegu's *Another Odolu Kingdom* with the view to upholding attitudinal leadership change among office holders in this era of change mantra. Therefore, the researcher among others recommends that African playwrights

should continue to imbibe the creative literary stewardship of Idegu in a bid to move Africa from its present quicksand.

Introduction

Politically, Nigeria as a nation has evolved many governmental structures in the neighbourhood of military and civilian rules. Each has produced leaders who promise to do just a tenure or to remain for a short period of time after ‘normalizing’ the economy. But on assumption of office and at the expiration of their tenures, have blatantly refused to relinquish power even against the people’s mandate. This no doubt, is a case in point why Nigeria has witnessed gamut of crises adorned in socio-political and religious uprising which is threatening its co-existence. For instance, their refusal to leave office as when due has led to inter party rancour, coup and counter coup, wanton destruction of lives, poverty, untold hardship, economic crunch etc. This claim Inyang validates that:

Beyond the Nigerian civil war, other conflicts have challenged the country’s prospect for stable nationhood and further expand the base of disagreement in the country. These include inter-ethnic uprisings, religious conflicts, tumultuous political crises especially the June 12, 1993 election... (135)

In all this, suffice to say that among the various crises Nigeria has witnessed, some are rooted in politics as a result of (a) leader(s) refusing to leave at the expiration of his (their) tenure(s) which has provoked agitations and even violent protests from non-governmental, Civil and other Human Right Organizations. Consequently, many lives have been lost and many properties

destroyed with heavy economic back-peddling, which has hindered its overall development. Even at that, leaders seem not to have learnt their lessons as many of them chose to remain and even die in office instead of leaving or resigning after the expiration of their tenures or even when they have become un-popular with the people. This position is better bagged in the words of Wole, as he avers:

The desperation of such usurpers of our political will is of a kind to which we are accustomed. One that has produced monstrosities in the form of... dictatorships and the descent of communities, regions and indeed, the nation into a lingering state of insecurity, with its attendant ills, not least of which is economic retrogression. (2)

From the picture painted above, there is the need for attitudinal change among leaders at all levels of governance in order to drive the Nigerian polity away from selfish and partisan politics, which have continued to score hunger, abject poverty, illiteracy, joblessness, lack of portable water, epileptic power supply, socio-political and religious insurgence etc. The point here is this, it is not as if as a nation, it has not made progress in some way, but definitely we are not where we are supposed to be considering its enormous natural and human resources. With this in mind, this paper attempts a contextual analysis of Idegu`s *Another Odolu Kingdom* (by way of research design) with the view to inculcating attitudinal change among leaders to jettison `sit-tight syndrome` that is marauding the African political landscape (even in a democratic locale) with reckless intemperance; because, according to Okeke:

The messages encoded in plays reflect the artist's vision and level of commitment towards the good of the society. This commitment is anchored on the fact that the ultimate concern of a playwright is to admonish society of her past mistakes and navigates ways of avoiding the pitfalls of the past in order to achieve a truly humane society in their present and future existence. (181)

Drama then, from the argument above has the credibility to incite behavioural change among its audience (both closet and public). It is capable of reforming even the political structure of a community for a more robust socio-economy advancement through the presentation and analysis of a recreated ugly past events, to forestall future occurrence. Therefore, it is hoped that this work will surely lead to the reduction of unpopular governmental policies and its attendant consequences on the leaders (themselves), the masses (who are always at the receiving end) and Nigeria at large. This desired change is imminent in this era of change mantra, which has taken over our air waves, social, print and electronic media.

Conceptual Studies

To advance further in this discourse, it is pertinent to do a clarification on some of the preoccupations of this paper so as to limit ambiguities that are usually encountered in an effort to comprehend concepts in a work as this. This is so, since no single definition has an exhaustive explanation. Therefore, we shall attempt to conceptualize Change, Mantra and Leadership within the purview of this paper.

Change: According to Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary is “to become or make different; to become something or somebody different. “From this definition, one can deduce that, it means a transformation in one’s identity or makeup. This source, again at another level, views it as to “substitute or replace something: to exchange, substitute, or replace something”. From this assertion, it means that a particular mechanism in place no longer perform optimally, hence the need to replace such with a more relevant option to sustain the viability of a system. Finally, from the same source above and at a different dimension, sees change as a “pass from one stage to another: to pass or move something from one state or to another stage”. Drawing a leaf from this opinion, then change is a dynamical concept that moves from one spot to another, either as a result of having been in a place or stagnated for a period of time, hence the need to move to another realm of experience adjudged to be better than the previous state (of being). Therefore, this study will only view change from the perspective of (a) dynamic(s) set(s) in place to ensure the restoration of a system that has become moribund, through the mechanics of going over to a platform or experience that is better than the former.

Mantra: According to Encarta Dictionaries is “often repeated expression or idea: an expression that is repeated, often without thinking about and closely associated with something”. From this perspective, it is a cliché that is so popular in the lexicon of a people, so much that such a word or phrase becomes symbolic of certain phenomenon. For instance, change has become synonymous with All People Congress (APC) a political party in Nigeria. During the 2015 electoral campaigns, APC employed “change” as a pet mantra to score a point that, it is a better opposition party in Nigeria to drive home this message. Having won that election, anywhere change is

mentioned, APC as a ruling party or the personality of President Mohammad Buhari, comes to mind. Therefore, change has become a popular saying among the Nigerian populace so much that even when they exchange pleasantries, they ask; “How is ‘change’ affecting you?”; when they mean to say “How are you fairing”. It is on this popularity, that this paper sets its discourse.

Leadership: As a political concept, leadership is defined differently by various scholars. This basically, is as a result of the different ideologies which they are inclined to. But for the sole purpose of this discourse, the researcher will only take the definition offered by Borgadus in Olunloye quoted by Odife as “the creating and setting forth of exceptional behaviour patterns in such a way that other people respond” (220). Therefore, leadership in this context means the ability to influence others in order to command their loyalty through an exemplary behavioural lifestyle that is rare. It is this rare attitudinal disposition that will serve as a guide, persuasion, direction, control, motivation etc. that a leader wields over his followers towards achieving a mission or an organizational goal.

Theory of change

Theory of Change (TOC) ordinarily, is a detailed template that gives a narrative and picture to achieving a desired goal. It asks questions on why there should be a desired change and how is it achieved within a given prevailing circumstance. Therefore, “Theory of change (TOC) as the name suggests is the thinking about how a particular intervention will bring about result” (Brown Ann-Murray usaidelearning.org...). Furthermore, it is majorly concerned with the;

...mapping out” filling in” what has been described as the “missing middle” between program or change initiative does (its activities or intervention) and how these lead to desired goals being achieved. It does this by first identifying the desired long-term goals and works back from these to identify all the conditions...that must be in place(and how these are related to another casually) for the goals to occur... ([https://www.thetheoryofchange.org/...](https://www.thetheoryofchange.org/))

From above, TOC also readily becomes “a tool for developing solutions to complex social problems” as it “explains how a group of early and intermediate accomplishments set the stage for providing long term results.” www.hfrp.org/evaluation/the-evaluation-exchange/issue

For better understanding and evaluation of how change can happen within the purview of this study, TOC serves as that thinking that identifies the nature and the link between activities that bring about desired goal. This study therefore, reveals the desire of a personality, who thought something had to be done to alter the sit tight syndrome that has brought untold hardships on the developmental stride of the nation. Hence, personal sacrifice is made to concede to defeat even as an incumbent.

Politics and Drama in Nigeria

The ‘new’ political administrative models African countries inherited from their colonial usurpers seem to be posing a serious challenge to good governance in the continent. Many African leaders are yet to come to terms with this reality, as there have been secret and open moves by some of them to continue in power by all

means. The sanctity of the ballot box for instance, is yet to find strong footing among its political gladiators, because in the opinion of Adeoti:

Independence among other things was to usher in a people's rule that would ensure self-reliance, a stable polity and accelerated economic development. However, attempt at self-rule sooner receded into absolute rule from Togo-Uganda, Ghana, Nigeria, Benin Republic, Central Africa Republic, and so on. The result is the perpetuation of undemocratic politics superintended by autocrats, despots and other aberrations sometimes decked in trappings of democracy. (68)

From the foregoing, it is worrisome that the right of an average African, as it relates to who governs him/her and how he or she is governed and for how long, are still political concerns. Over time, we have seen African leaders using the power of incumbency, with all its paraphernalia at their disposal to perpetuate their stay in command when election is approaching and correspondingly, a tempering with the constitution to prolong their stay in power towards the expiration of their tenures having become unpopular with the masses. Perhaps, according to Jega "sit tightism as a vice is new to African experience, where we are used to kings and local chiefs that rule for up to 60 years". He further argues that:

In the first three decades since Italian, German, British, French, Belgian, Spanish and Portuguese colonial rule ended in most African countries sit tight rulers were the norm all over the continent. Except in Congo Kinshasa, Togo, Algeria, Nigeria, and Ghana where pioneer rulers were overthrown within five years of independence, many of the

early African rulers went on for two to three decades. (www.nairaland.com/788333/africa-leadership-how-long is long enough?)

The graphical picture painted above is awful. Ordinarily, the advent of democratic governance should have brought succour to the numerous hardships confronting the majority of the people of Africa. But that a particular government, which refused to perform up to expectation as a result of parochial and selfish interest, wants to still superintend over the affairs of that country continually, calls for a serious concern considering the aftermath effects. Wole captures its aftermath effects lucidly, as he avers:

The desperation of such usurpers of our political will is of a kind..., one that has produced monstrosities in the form of military dictatorship and descent of communities, region, and indeed, the nation into a lingering state of insecurity, with its attendant ills, not least of which is economic retrogression. (2)

Nigeria's bid to economic greatness has suffered set back as a result sit-tight syndrome, coordinated by many of our political actors. Hence, even as the giant of Africa, basic social needs for the masses are not only out of their reach, but remain as articles of ostentation. Ugly situation as this provides the creative materials with which the playwrights pen their experiences, with the view to reproving their immediate community to learn from their past. Akon and Olayiwola confirm this assertion that:

To state the obvious, therefore, is the fact that events either past or current supply materials for the dramatist's creation. It is not uncommon to see dramatists transforming historical

materials into creative endeavours. In Africa, and Nigeria in particular, dramatists often recreate historical events for their audience's viewing pleasure and for documentation purposes...Issues raised in such plays are usually oppression, tyranny, and the pain and hardship suffered by the citizenry as they lose lives and property. (91)

With the above claim, it only becomes incumbent on the playwrights to create fast the goings on in their immediate environs, they live in those same communities and some of the on-going social interactions rob off on them. They are bound by sense of responsibility to capture these issues though objectively, comprehensively in order to set the social order in the right perspective and to chart a new course towards achieving a society that will uphold and sustain the welfare of the downtrodden. To further strengthen this argument, Okeke supports:

The messages encoded in plays always reflect the artist's vision and level of commitment towards the good of the society. This commitment is anchored on the fact that the ultimate concern of a playwright is to admonish society of her mistakes and to navigate ways of avoiding the pitfall of the past in order to achieve a truly humane society in their present and future existence. (181)

From the foregoing, it affirms that drama has the potentials to bring about desired change through prompting its audience into critical thinking and decision making, resulting to attitudinal transformation which could bring about, a total turn-around of an existing social order that has deteriorating effects on the commonalities. This

objective is attainable (to an extent), since drama inspires community members to critically reflect on issues presented in a performance, with the view to discovering pre-emptive measures to handling those exhausting tasks confronting them. The implication is this, it is not the position of this paper that, drama has an immediate solution to all human challenges “but can, armed with more objectified perception, open or provides insights into social problems which insight could melt consciences and refine sentiments” (Uka, 227).

Nigeria and Tenure Elongation syndrome

The African continent is one that has a high share of record of leaders who have deliberately remained in office even after the expiration of their tenures or attempted to prolong their stay. They have been able to hold on tenaciously to power by building strong political structures to keep them perpetually in power against the will of the masses. Uhara relates this clearly thus:

...Some African leaders have succeeded in turning their countries constitution to their certificate of occupancy. They create political structures that enable them to manipulate the electoral system to perpetuate themselves in power. To them democracy begins and ends with periodic elections. They use all the paraphernalia of power at their disposal to destroy every institution and make themselves the institution. (thenigerianvoice.com/newgIs/114814/)

The elongation of tenure in office in Africa “has a long and troubling history. It is characterized by wilful reluctance on the part of political leader to relinquish power. It is facilitated by dictatorship

and oiled by brutal repression of dissent and fundamental freedoms” (Kunuyi, <https://lexacosult.com/2016/o2/27>).

Furthermore, Embu chronicles some of the African leaders (both living and dead), who were caught in the web of elongation of their tenures in office to include, but not limited to the following; Late Eyadema (Togo), Mbutu Sese Seko (Zaire), Laurent Kabila (Congo), Maummer Gaddafi(Libya), Samuel Doe (Libya), Robert Mugabe (Zimbabwe), Charles Taylor (Liberia), currently serving jail term for crime against humanity in Liberia during his reign as president, Hosni Mubarak (Egypt) (503),Blaise Compaore (Burkina-Faso), though now a civilian president, ever winning in elections with predictable outcome...etc. represent the sit-tight tendency of Africa’s post-independence leaders (Adeoti and Evwierhoma, 12). They and their political apostles overtime went into creation and re-creation of governmental structures, sheltering arrangements and suggesting reasons that ensured the achievement of their elongation agenda. They went to the extent of suggesting to the whole world that the incumbent has no other alternative match to saddle the responsibility of the affairs of their states.

Nigeria, as a nation has not also been spared from this syndrome. Nigeria has a history of tenure elongation like many of its sister nations. This has actually put strong strain on her developmental drive as many successful transitional programmes from one administration to another have been impeded. For instance, “Babangida who apart from making repressive laws to suppress popular opinions was also inconsistent in the pursuit of his transition to civil rule. In the end, the June 12, 1993presidential elections that were to lead to a new democratic process was annulled” (Adagba, 121). This could be linked to Nwosu contentions when he recounts that:

The acclaimed giant of Africa (Nigeria) still cannot afford jobs for over eighty percent of her educated youths. Basic infrastructural facilities like portable water, electricity supply, good roads and affordable telecommunication are still luxuries and out of the reach of the masses. Among the nations' litany of problems is her depressed economy, which has refused to thrive under either democratic or military system of government. (24)

The above contention, favours the position of this paper since no reasonable development can be attained when a sitting leader, who is not performing to the expectation of the electorates insists to remain in power to complete a second term. This has led to several civil unrests and violent protests leading to the grounding of its economy, loss of many lives and the destructions or vandalization of government facilities in the process. Yahaya in his summation paints this glaring graphic picture, as he opines:

The temptation for public office holder to elongate their tenure beyond constitutional limits has always been the bane of our political progress over the years. Consequent upon this, successful transition from one administration to another has always being a jinx which the country finds it difficult to break. This had led to several political history that at some points in our history even threaten to tear the country apart and end up leaving permanent, even irremovable strains on the image of the perpetrators or what remains of it. (www.gamji.com/article5000/NEWS643.htm)

From Yahaya's position, leaders seem not to have learnt their lessons as a good number of them will insist to remain, either to fulfil their selfish or the political parties' interest. "The

constitutional right to two terms office is not a mandatory sentence on the electorates” (Wole, 13). In Nigeria, political parties even before approaching the pool would have made plan to return the incumbent to second term regardless of poor performance. To say the least, this is undemocratic and demonic to socio-economic and political development.

At this juncture, this study will go down memory lane to list out some leaders in Nigeria, especially those who have held post either as president(s) or head(s) of state and eventually tried to elongate their tenures. “For instance, it is on record that it was the temptation by Gowon administration to truncate the democratic transition process and elongate its tenure that led to the collapse of the administration and took to the back burner, all its achievement including its successful handling of the Nigerian civil war” (www.gamji.com/article5000/NEWS643.htm). Another case in point, is General “Babangida’s endless transition programme(1985-1993)” (Embu 502). Additionally, “in 1989 Babangida legalized the formation of political parties and that... a presidential election would be later that year... elections went ahead as planned. On 12 June 1993 presidential election was held but result was held back”(<https://en.m.org/wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibrahim-Babangida>). This Babangida’s outrageous act is encapsulated in the graphic paintings of Asigbo and Ejue that:

The historical or epoch-making event of the annulled June 12, 1993 election will forever remain a missed opportunity for Nigeria. That election, which witnessed Nigerians voting as Nigerians and not as Christians, Muslims, Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa, was sadly annulled by the government of General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida, thus setting Nigeria back decades on the hands of history. It was

a national tragedy which almost brought Nigeria to stand still after the annulment. (68)

From the affirmation above, “Babangida’s pronouncement is an act of perfidy that cost this nation hundreds of lives and inserted a deep cleft of mistrust in the relationships among its part... an act that inflicted five years of agony of this nation and leaves us, even today, as an imprecise entity whose violent twitches contradicts the name of a nation” (Wole, 8).

Moreover, “early in 1998. Abacha announced that election would be held at August, with a view to handing over to a civilian government on 1st October. It soon became apparent, though that Abacha had no intention of permitting an honest election” ([https://en.m. Wikipedia.org/wiki/Sani-Abacha](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sani-Abacha)).

Another good example of Nigerian leader who clandestinely made move to elongate his stay in office is General Obasanjo (199-2007) (Embu 503). “In his second term, he proved not to have lost his militaristic, anti-people attitudes...Especially when he began to run for unconstitutional third term, which would have debased the democratic process” (Adeoti citing Wole 87). In another source, it is on record that “Obasanjo was embroiled in controversy regarding his “Third term Agenda” a plan to modify the constitution so he could serve a third, four-year term as president. This led to a political media uproar in Nigeria and the bill was not ratified by the National Assembly” (<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olusegun-Obasanjo>).

The documentation of the above experiences on the Nigerian political landscape, is one that has left majority of Nigerians still drinking from the miserable cup of poverty, joblessness, educational retrogression, infrastructural lack and decay amongst others, setting

“Nigeria back decades on the hands of history” Asigbo and Ejue (68).

Synopsis of play

The text under study, tells a story of two major characters; Akpeja and Adode, in a kingdom called Odolu. As it is the tradition of this kingdom, after every four years a new king is selected to superintend over the affairs of the territory. The present king, Akpeja is about ending his first four-year tenure and as the custom demands, it is his right to re-contest for a second term, if he so wishes.

He consults his advisers whether to re-contest or not, obviously, there are divided opinions, some are of the opinion that he should have a second shot at the throne, some are afraid to voice their mind and while those who tell him to step down, are seen to be those walking against the incumbent since there is no obvious reason for such discerning opinion. A delegation from his constituent also visits, commending his effort over these years for keeping his calm despite all the unpleasant comments thrown at his person as the king of Odolu. The delegation equally, advises that he seeks for the second term as they reaffirm their support for him. He appreciates them and promises that he will consider their request and will get back to them soon.

He goes into the contest. Tension mounts high as the supporters of Adode, his contender, vow to rain down mayhem on the land, if their favourite losses at the contest. Akpeja, eventually losses, though surprisingly against Adode, who was dragged into the contest, since contesting and losing three consecutive times running. Yet he is calm, and calls on his aggrieved supporters, who feel, he

should have won considering his contribution to the development of the kingdom over the past four years to equally sheath their swords. He declares that his political ambition does not worth a drop of any body's blood. So he calls and congratulates his contender, bringing to an end the impending doom waiting to befall the domain.

Leadership Concerns in *Another Odolu Kingdom*

The socio-political policies and anti-people's behaviour of most Nigerian leaders seem to hold no future for the majority of the people of this great country. These opportunistic leaders, in all arms of government have continue to perpetrate a clear act of injustice, systemic corruption and what have you, thereby dashing the hope that should have come with the dividends of self and democratic governance of their followers. "Nigerian political leaders over the years have replaced the spirit of nationalism with self and parochial interest making improvement of the life of the people least on their agenda (Asen, 73)." They have become so selfish to the extent that, even when they are not performing well by the rating of the populace, they will insist to remain in power until death. It is this mind boggling concern that prompts Ideguto voice his disquiet. Because in Okeke's judgement:

Every playwright is committed towards the enlightenment of his society and thus pricks the conscience of the people through his works. In each play, the playwright sets out to tackle a problem which directly affects his immediate environment. Such problem could be political, religious, cultural, social or psychological, in some instances; a play

may deal with most if not all of these problems in various dimensions. (182)

Coincidentally, most of the crises witnessed in this nation have its roots entwined in politics as a result of leadership questions. It is such, which has called for the attention of Idegu as he pokes at this worrisome enigma in our political history as a nation. It is not the position of this paper that all African leaders who elongated their tenures brought untold hardship and underdevelopment; some have brought a high level of development to their countries, since in the view of Jega;

While many, sit-tight African (leaders) rulers ruined their countries, some such as Botswana's Sir Seretse Khama (who ruled 1966-80) and Cote D'ivoire's Felix Houphouet-Boigny developed their countries economics admirably. Julius Nyerere sat tight- for 25 years, but he is widely regarded in Africa as saintly, given his wisdom, his austere lifestyle and his commitment to African unity. (www.nairaland.com/788333/african-leader-how-longis-enough ?)

From the contention above, the position of this paper remains that, as long as it celebrates development, it is against the prolongation of tenures of leaders so much that it triggers violent protests from the masses to the extent that lives and property are lost and the economy stagnated. For instance, Gaddafi of Libya ruled for a long time and was said to have brought a high level development to his country but "the fact that thousands of Libyans who were not even trained soldiers took up arms against Gaddafi clearly means that they have very deep-seated grievances against his rule. Their grievances are hardly visible to other Africans, who insisted to see the

infrastructure and elaborate welfare system that Gaddafi built in Libya” (www.nairaland.com/788333/african-leader-how-longis-enough?). It is on this note that, the researcher shall take time to go in the analysis of the text under study.

In furtherance of this discourse, *Another Odolu Kingdom* is a creative graphic metaphor that captures the Nigerian 2015 presidential election which major contestants were Dr. Goodluck Jonathan and President Muhammadu Buhari. Though the play text sets in the North Central of Nigeria, Kogi State and Igala land to be specific. Odolu as a town in Igala land invariably, represents Nigeria as a country in Africa. Akpeja in the Igala dialect means “a fisherman”. While Adode means “a hunter” or “one who wields a gun. “from the analysis so far, Goodluck is from Bayelsa State and the Bayelsians are traditionally fishermen. President Buhari, was a soldier and soldiers wield guns, which is characteristics of hunters. Thus, the play text in view, re-enacts the historical events that played out before, during and after the announcement of the election results of the immediate past presidential election in Nigeria 2015, where it is the first in history that an incumbent president lost an election under a democratic dispensation.

The attitude of Nigerian leaders towards aspiring to rule and the principles guiding such aspiration, is such that have shown that, they are yet to understand what it means to, how and who to even lead. Most often than none, many of them feel being in power only presents an opportunity for these political gladiators to immediately change their financial status and to become famous. To achieve their egocentric ambitions, they could go to the extent of manipulating on the minds of the poor masses they are to lead, either by doling out peanuts or through engaging in propaganda on air waves to score cheap point against their opponents. Having succeeded in working

on the psyche of the led, the masses no longer see themselves as a people who should present their predicament on a single platform. This nagging issue is what degu nudges at through the dialogue between Citizen 1 and citizen 2 who are at each other's neck here.

Citizen 2: Take it easy my friend, just take it easy. At least as to day Akpeja is still the king of Odulo Kingdom.

Citizen 1: He should be reminded that being a king is wearing a borrowed garment.

Citizen 2: What do you mean by that? From those who think ruling this kingdom is their birth right? The same people who I say again and again improvised this kingdom for years with their selfish and... (14-15)

The conversation above only brings to the burner how selfish an average Nigerian politician is. It is on record that because some politicians are so self-enriching, they quickly get around unsuspecting supporters and flatter them with their selfish, sectional, regional and partisan ideologies. Political actors in Nigeria are so ethnical biased to begin to feel they belong to the largest ethnic group; hence no opportunity should be given to the minority except through providence. Hence, such politicians are always insistent that, they should be allowed to produce the leaders to rule at any time opportunity presents itself. This again is unhealthy to the effort toward reclaiming our status as the giant of Africa.

Another concerns which the playwright prods out here, is the concern of threat that plays out in our politics all times. No time in our political journey as a nation, is the political environment so

heated up and become so tensed like during elections at all levels of governance. The dramatist orchestrates this peril thus:

Citizen 1: I hope he will listen to the voice of wisdom and not plunge this kingdom into any avoidable chaos.

Citizen 2: What chaos? What chaos? Did other parts of the kingdom tear the kingdom apart when those who erroneously think the kingdom is their birth right ruled and reigned whichever way suited their fancy? Besides has king Akpeja not done well enough to be allowed to have another chance? (15-16)

Citizen 2: What is there under the sun that the eyes of men have not seen. Let his Highness be. He has worked hard. He has tilled and planted well. Now he is set to harvest the fruits of his labour, enemies are raging.

Citizen1: Why not? Why should they not rage? Must his Highness harvest all that he planted? You can blow your nose and whistle at the same time. It is enough. Let Highness remember that the warm water was once cold. He has tried. It is enough. (18)

Nigerian politicians have a way of overcharging the polity so much enough to create unnecessary tension, so as to divert the attention of the populace. This they carry out through inciting comments and

issuance of threat to the opposing party in order to keep them under control. They even go on air to attack and assassinate personalities and not issues; they declare that 'The upcoming election is going to be a do or die affair', 'It is going to be blood for blood', 'Those who are ready to contest with me in the next coming election should go home and write their will, if they have not done that'. They do not stop at the threat realm; they equally go the extent of hiring and arming thugs to carry out their threats. Therefore, before, during and after elections many innocent blood is shed, lives lost and property destroyed. This is the reason why in Nigeria, a leader is ousted out of the office based on sentiments and not on the ground of performance. This again, has serious implications on our political and socio-economic progress.

Finally, the astute playwright, whose work is under study, as it is customary of his calling craftily points at the way out of the political challenges clogging the wheel of Nigerian democratic advancement, because if we must continue to advance purposeful and people centred governance in this era of 'change mantra' (that has become a cliché in our everyday interactions), of course, we must embrace a change of attitude from our primordial selfish, partisan and ethnic political sentiments as a people. Nigeria cannot afford to live in the past of tenure elongation for want of it. Thus, Ebirikwu plainly states that:

The society is in constant motion and to be stable, it must flush out laws and traditions that are detrimental to human advancement. Things do change and traditions should be limited by their times and dynamism of the society under which they operate. (279-280)

Drawing strength from the contention above, Idegu is vehement on the need for Nigerian politicians to shift paradigm, though behaviourally, from the order of holding tenaciously to power at the detriment and against the mandate of the led. The attempt at and prolonging one's tenure is enigma to our overall development. Nigerian politicians should be seen to be emulating leadership model elsewhere, where a leader will merely resign when alleged to have committed a crime and not waiting to complete a term or better still, resigns on the ground of incompetence and ill health. It is one of such virtues which Dr. Goodluck Jonathan exhibited while in power as the president that has won the admiration of this dramatist, which he eulogises.

Dr Goodluck Ebelle Jonathan, the immediate past president, of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is projected by Idegu as a leadership role model, not because he is the best President Nigeria has ever had. His administration was alleged to be largely marred by Islamist insurgency in the North-East, corruption, piracy, kidnapping and oil theft. These issues were actually captured in an 18 page open letter written by Mr Olusegun Obasanjo to Dr Goodluck Jonathan in December 2013 (www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-12192152). His ability to be calm in the face of opposition is one virtue which is rare in our political history. For instance, Idegdu extols his comportment in the face of attack at his person. He relays this quality thus:

Elder 1: We say so because you are the most insulted, degenerated and humiliated king Odolu kingdom ever had. Those who want to sit on the throne after you forget that life is a seed... (24)

Elder 2: The way you smile in response to those insults endear you to our hearts very deeply. You are showing the

world that the heart of a wise person lies quiet
like still waters. (25)

The preceding dialogue is a creative measure implore by the playwright to bring to the fore, the behavioural bankruptcy of some public officials who engage in war of words each time their policies are critically criticised or their persons attacked. A virtuous leader does not just talk back at or send the government machineries after critics. We have seen in this country, where leaders quickly throw out persons adjudged enemies of the state out of their cabinets or are made to become a regular visitors of Economic and Financial Crime Commission's officers simply because of a constructive disapproval. This is a conundrum to the Nigerian overall progress. For Whitney and Packer in Yerima:

A leader must understand the capabilities of his followers, not as they exist today, but as they would exist if they were stretched. The leader's job is not to seek what is comfortable but what is possible and what will ultimately serve the purpose. (180)

Dr Goodluck Jonathan was able to handle his critics so much that he was able to ascend to the highest height of his political career through this quality. Leaders are those with an elaborate unruffled nature, enough to accommodate the elastic temperament of their followers regardless of their ideologies and party affiliations. In any social setting, policies of any government are bound to be scrutinized mainly by the opposition party. Hence, a leader should not lose his mind and keep critics behind bars or call for their heads as it is common on the Nigerian political setting.

Another asset which Idegu feels many of our leader's lack is selflessness. Many of the Nigerian statesmen ascend political offices walking on the blood bathing of their supporters as their red carpets

to the top of their political career. For them it is victory or nothing less. He craftily relays it through the protagonist thus:

Akpeja: Like I always say, my ambition to be king a second time is still not worth the blood of any citizen of Odolu Kingdom. I love peace and I know that the best bed a man can sleep on is peace. (28)

From above, Idegu is punching profoundly at the conscience of an average Nigerian politician who feels politics is just a recreational activity that can be deployed to boost and satisfy their ever self-seeking comforts, not minding whose horse is gorge. It is either s/he wins an election or arms her/his supporters to wrath havoc so as to heighten tension and heat up the polity, thereby making governance difficult for the winner. Destruction of human lives and property does not concern them as long as they remain in power and control the resources of the country (Chijioke, 187).

Additional leadership demeanour which the immediate past president exhibited, and worthy of recommendation is integrity. The creative artist here lauds this feature because most Nigerian political figures are reliability deficient. During electoral campaigns, most public office seekers go to nook and crannies of their constituencies and promise to bring down heaven on earth if they are voted into power, but in no little time when in office, they quickly forget or deny and abandon promises made to their supporter and worst still shut them out of their agenda entirely. This concern Emmy thrust up through:

Citizen 2: His royal highness, Akpeja sent word round the kingdom that all who are angry because he was not selected again as king should put down weapons of war and accept the choice for the throne.

Citizen 1: Even before the traditional announcement of the king-elect by the king makers?

Citizen 2: He said for him, there was no need for war but that there was every reason to celebrate.

Citizen 1: Celebrate? You don't mean it

Citizen 2: To prove his words on the sacredness of any body's blood at the expense of his ambition, he has accepted the king maker's verdict and even embraced prince Adode and wished him well. (71)

Dr Goodluck Jonathan, in the last presidential election displayed a high sense of honesty when he lived out his earlier promise that his political ambition does not worth a drop of anybody's blood. This disposition, is a total change from the `do or die` and `making the state ungovernable for the winner` inciting comments. Here, we see a rare gem in Nigerian political personalities, an incumbent leader, who called his opposition and congratulated him ahead of the final announcement of result of the election. He did not just stop here. He went ahead to remind his angry supporters who felt he should have won considering his performance while in office, that his ambition to become the president for second term does not worth a drop of their blood not to talk about their lives. Therefore, he advised that they sheath their swords and celebrate with the winner in order to usher in peace. This singular unequalled exhibition of selfless leadership, forestalled the carrying out of post-election threat from both sides, giving that hundreds of lives had already been lost before, during and after the announcement of the election results. Remember, the election actually marked the first time an incumbent president lost election in Nigeria.

Conclusion

It has been established so far in this paper, that most of the crises witnessed in this nation has its tap root in politics which have resulted to quantum loss of lives and property that has contributed greatly to the weakness of her development strides. It is as if to say, that leaders in Africa, are yet to come to terms with the governmental or administrative model bequeathed to them by their colonial administrators. This is seen over the years in their reluctance to relinquish power at the expiration of their tenures or when they are voted out of office. It is equally the stance of this study, that even though drama does not have absolute solutions to human challenges, yet “it triggers humanity into deep and critical reflections, so as to explore proactive strategies of dealing with arduous challenges that face mankind” (Sopko, 35). By implication, drama avails humankind the ability to engage a practical stratagem to contending and bringing human challenges to its barest minimum. Consequently, drama is proposed here to help ameliorate the unconstitutional attempt and prolongation of tenure.

Therefore, Idegu’s *Another Odolu Kingdom* is x-rayed to bring to the burner the events that played out in the 2015 presidential election and the outcome of what transpired between Dr Goodluck Jonathan and President Mohammadu Buhari. Jonathan’s leadership model is extolled, though over his questionable policies while in power. His willingness to hand over power after losing out in an election superintended by him, while many preceding governments both military and civilians had continued to grapple with surrendering to defeat is a case in point. As a result, “Nigerians and Nigeria alike have been faced with imposed leadership, a trait in the power tussle among the ruling elites” (Uzoji.52). Jonathan’s acceptance of defeat, his reminder and advice to his supporters that his second term ambition does not worth a drop of any citizen’s

blood and to sheath their sword, brought to an end the impending threats from both groups.

Recommendations

It is against this back drop of the discourse so far, that this study recommends that in this era of ‘change mantra’ the government in power should see to it that issue of poverty is adequately addressed, through the revitalization of our local and agro allied industry so as to boost self-employment that will engage so many of the brigade of the unemployed that are easily recruited by some unscrupulous politicians to carry out their evil agenda. Additionally, olive branch should be extended to non-party members with credible antecedent to help develop the economy. The implementation of the constitutional conference convened by Dr Goodluck Jonathan, when he was in power, will help in taking care of some the sectional politics having field day in the Nigerian polity. So that no particular geopolitical zone is seen to be a better zone that should always produce who should rule at all times. Public offices should be made less attractive financially. This can be achieved, if the number of personnel, vehicles, and allowances attach to their offices are reduced minimally. Only then will Nigeria have on stage genuine political actors, who will be ready to serve.

It should be part of the Nigerian political agenda that as part of their retreat programmes for leaders, public officers should be mandated to visit the theatre at all levels of government, where they can be treated to performances with this kind of preoccupations to help tame the excessive rampaging impact of this hazard. Playwrights, especially the class of the new voices and upcoming generation, should emulate the creative ingenuity of Idegú to furnish the Nigerian stage with plays that will sincerely prick the conscience

of its audience to bring about attitudinal and developmental strides on the Nigerian political platform.

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