

Building a New Nigeria Where Things Work: Meritocracy, Pragmatism and Honesty Principles as Mode of Analysis and Prescription (MoAP)

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Abstract

As social engineers engaged in the study of social and management problems and proffering solution where necessary, this paper is an attempt to diagnose/analyse Nigerian socio-economic predicaments and to suggest ways of Building a New Nigeria Where Things Work within the prescriptive space of managerial principles of meritocracy, pragmatism and honesty, and justice. Nigerian has a population strength that is above 200 million, constitute home to one of every five Africans, blessed with abundant natural, minerals and human resources. Regrettably, since attaining independence in 1960, except for some few pockets of years (where things seem to work), the country has steadily plummeted from grace to grass with majority of its people unemployed, poor, dissatisfied with the performance of the country's political and socio-economic institutions. The country is blessed with abundant crude oil but has no functional refinery to refine its crude oil into petrol, diesel, kerosine and other related products for public consumption. These products are imported under a subsidy regime that is arguably questionable, suspicious and corrupt. The public universities are underfunded and welfare of academic and non-academic staff are among the poorest in the world. Insecurity, cases of kidnapping for ransom, banditry, terrorism, boko haram, unknown gunmen, money rituals, collapse of security institutions, cybercrimes, money laundering, etc. are on the increase and seem unabated. The country's public debt stands at 41.60 trillion Naira in the first quarter of 2022. How do we reverse this plummeting trend and build a new Nigeria where things work? This is where the crux of this paper lies. Thus, the paper argues that building a new Nigeria

Where Things Work should be grounded on the managerial principles of meritocracy, pragmatism, honesty and justice. These principles should be internalized and institutionalized at the micro and macro life of the country.

Keywords: *New Nigeria, Meritocracy, Pragmatism, Honesty, Generational Leadership and socio-economic development*

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JEL Classification: I28, L38, O29, Q01

Contribution/Originality

The paper is original by taking a social engineering approach that seeks to make significant contribution to how the principles of meritocracy, honesty, pragmatism and generational leadership style can be deployed as prescriptive measures to build a new Nigeria where things work and to bail the country from the trend of becoming a failed state.

1. Introduction

Nigeria is endowed with abundant natural, minerals and human resources. Crude oil explorations in commercial quantity which started in 1960 has generated well over 600 billion United States Dollars and statistics further revealed that between 1999 -2016, revenue earnings from the oil and gas sector of the country stood at N77.348 trillion. So much is generated as government revenue from tax and sales of the country's mineral resources, but, poor management, dishonesty, incompetence, corruption and lack of foresighted leadership/public managers have circumvented the economic and social development of the country.

Some explanatory/analytical models have been advanced to explained why the country has remained underdeveloped despite its abundant natural, minerals and human resources. For instance, the orthodox paradigm lays the explanation of Nigeria's development predicament at country's bazaar mentality, ineptitude to work, bureaucratic bottlenecks, corruption, laziness, lack of foresighted leadership. For this line of thought, the problem of the country is ahistorical and man-made. On the other hand, the radical paradigm explains the country's predicament of underdevelopment as something that is historical in nature, engineered/facilitated by colonialization, exploitation of the natural and human resources of the developing countries by the West, inequality in diplomatic and economic relationships, overdependence of the developing economies on the West, domination tendency and political interference. This process has been sustained by the process of neo-colonization. A critical look at the above shows that the two theoretical orientations possess some elements of objectivity and truism, thus, a combination of the two paradigms offers a balanced understanding of Nigerian economic and social woes of development. Since independence in 1960, the country's social problems have remained unabated. This raises the question, what do we do to bail the country from the present predicament and rebuild a country of our dream? Herein lies the crux of this paper.

Historically, since independence in 1960, Nigeria has been through three major forms of administration -democratic, military and interim national government led by late Ernest Shonekan. Although, each regime change came with promises of quality service delivery and improving the standard of living of the people, these were never satisfactorily fulfilled by the public managers (operators) of the system. It does seem that each regime change in the history of Nigerian Government and Politics has been associated with crisis of power. For instance, it was the "crisis of power" in the early 1960s that truncated the then democratic rule and brought the military into power

in 1966, barely six years after independence in October 1960. The military held on to power for a total of twenty-nine years until democratic resurgence on May 29, 1999.

Democratic rule is accepted as a global best practice of managing states' affairs. Even countries that are not democratic, claim to be, as means of gaining legitimacy and global acceptance. Why has democracy gained popular acceptance? Part of the answer to this question is located in the theoretical posture that democracy offers the opportunity to change a non-performing government through the process of democratic elections. Unfortunately, Nigeria form of democracy is not only expensive but has failed to deliver the dividend of democracy to the masses. Elected politicians and other political office holders at the federal, state and local government levels are the highest paid; consuming annual salary and allowances far above what US politicians earn (Agba, Achimugu, Chukwurah & Agboni, 2012; Agba, Chukwurah & Achimugwu, 2014). The National Assembly, representing the legislative arm of government at the national level of the country has consistently expended budgets that has attracted public criticisms. For instance, Baiyewu (2021) observed that the National Assembly in 2018 had a budget of N139.5bn, N125bn in 2019, N128bn in 2020 (N125bn proposed, N3bn added), N134bn in 2021. It is for this primary reason that the Nigerian political space has been conceived as the easiest means to wealth acquisition and primitive accumulation. The high cost of public governance has stimulated the call to reverse the trend and build a new Nigeria where things work and the dividends of democracy are delivered to the people.

For the purpose of exposition, the paper is divided into sections. Section one of the discussion covers the introduction while the next section presents the methodology of the paper. The third thematic division of the paper took a look at the potential endowments of Nigeria. Attempt was made in the fourth part of the paper to examine the managerial predicaments and troubles confronting Nigeria. This was followed by a discussion on Reversing the Trend and the Trajectory of Failure: Towards Building a New Nigeria Where Things Work - Meritocracy, Pragmatism and Honesty Principles as Mode of Analysis and Prescription (MoAP). The last section of the paper is the concluding remarks of the paper.

2. Methodology

The paper employed a descriptive research design and data were drawn from secondary sources-textbooks, journal articles, newspapers publications, government publications and the internets. The qualitative and empirical data gathered from the secondary sources were used descriptively as means of supporting the argument and points made by the authors in the paper.

3. Nigeria: A nation with great potentials and prospects

Nigeria otherwise called "African power house" (Oxford Business Group, 2022) is blessed with great potentials such that it is maintained that the country and its citizens should have no business with poverty and poor or declining standard of living. The country is rich in human and mineral resources and has good climatic and topographical conditions that can be harvested for its prosperity. With a population of more than 200 million persons, Nigeria constitute one of the largest markets in the world economy. Nigeria is blessed with an abundance natural and mineral resources. It is believed to be home to estimated 37.1bn barren of proven oil reserves, widely known for its hydrocarbon's wealth, contained 5.1trn cu metres of natural gas representing 2.7% of total global reserves, 230bn cu metres of total renewable water resources, vast land appropriate for agriculture and has significant deposits of iron ore, coal, limestone, lead, zinc and tin (Oxford Business Group, 2022). The above potentials and resources are of no use unless harnessed by means of strategic public sector management and leadership. As Adesina, the President of the African Development Bank (AfDB), observed some years

ago, “Nobody eats potentials” (Nwanma, 2021). To buttress this point, Nwanma (2021) has beautifully put it, thus,

True, all nations, big and small have potentials. For some, it could simply be their location close to the oceans, in which case their coastal areas could become a tourist attraction or great hub/passage for international commerce and potentially a gold mine for foreign exchange earnings. But, until that asset is developed, it remains a mere potential. Tourists will bypass it and head to the next destination that provides comfort, safety, and any other benefits they want (Parag, 7.)

Nigeria is also blessed with ethnic and cultural diversity which arguably constitute a great potential that has not been fully tapped for the benefit of national and economic development. The country has over 250 diverse ethnic groups and cultural sites that could constitute tourist attraction and earn revenue for the country. Diversity if properly harnessed can constitute a competitive advantage enhancing organizational performance. Krause (2019) observed, management related researches have demonstrated that workplace diversity can contribute to better productivity and performance, thus, putting a compelling demand on organizational managers and leaders to design and promote culturally friendly and inclusive environments that permits individuals to enjoy equal opportunity, dignity, and wellbeing. The federal character charter in Nigeria is therefore viewed as public sector management technique that offers opportunity to diverse regions and ethnic groups to be represented in federal appointments and employment. This position has been taken further to suggest that diversity in representative bureaucracy can promote organizational legitimacy and responsiveness to diversifying society and nation (Ashikali, Groeneveld & Kuipers, 2021).

In spite of the above potentials, Nigeria has negatively been described as the “crippled giant” (Osaghae, 2002) and the symbolic of unfulfilled dreams and potentials largely because of leadership crisis and failure, structural deficiencies, weak institutions and policy miscalculations and inconsistencies. The bureaucratic and political elites in power at that federal, state and local government levels have failed to deliver the dividends of democracy and transform the country’s potentials into prosperity and blessings for all. In the absence of clear discharge of democratic dividends, the country has experienced since democratic resurgence in 1999, the increase in political thuggery as means of securing electoral victory (Agba, Coker & Agba, 2010).

4. Managerial Predicaments and the Trouble with Nigeria: Reflecting on the Wrong Pillars

Nigeria has over the years been administered on wrong pillars which have hampered the development of the country. This section is devoted to discussing the managerial problems confronting Nigeria

Wrong Civil Service Culture: Nigeria as a country is administered via the civil service structure and government institutions created primarily to formulate and implement policies and public programmes for the socio-economic development of the country. The civil service since creation by the British and bequeathed to Nigerians that took over the affairs of the country at independence in 1960 has grown in structural size and personnel composition. As Anazodo, Okoye and Chukwuemeka (2012) observe, at independence in 1960, the civil service institution bequeathed to Nigeria by the British (the country’s colonial master) was not developmental in nature as it was alien, foreign and narrow in scope. They further observe that the federal civil service in 1960 had a workforce of 30,000 personnel which has since increased to 200,000 in the late 1990s due to political patronage. For political and ethnic considerations, the civil service and governmental agencies at

federal and state levels of the federation have become home for many unsuitable and unqualified personnel (that perceive the civil service job as not their father's business, thus, does not require commitment and devotion from them) and consuming more than 87% of the total government revenue. Thus, the managerial principle of meritocracy has over the years been underplayed in the recruitment and selection process into the Nigerian civil service.

Military Rules: Constitutionally, the military is established to defend the territorial integrity of the country from eternal aggression. By training, the military is an apolitical institution of disciplined men and made of three distinguished uniformed service branches: The Nigerian Army, Navy and Air Force. In 1966, the military took over power from the democratic government and held onto power from 1966 to 1999, apart from a short-lived democratic government of the Second Republic (1979 - 1983). What was the wrong pillars in the military government and administration in Nigeria? We will state a few. Although, the military intervene in Nigerian politics to save the country from the collapse, political crisis and tensions, it failed in a number of respects. First, the military became dictatorial, suspended the constitution of the country and ruled by decrees, abuse of human rights and privileges offered by democracy, and foster corruption. Having tasted the gains, privileges and honour of being in charge of the political leadership of the country, the various military administrations were not sincerely committed to transiting power to civilian administration. The cancellation of the June 12, 1993 elections (deemed to have been the freest and fairest to the history of democratic elections in the country) by the regime of General Ibrahim Babangida supported the thesis that the military was not sincere and committed to handing over power to democratically elected government.

Poor Democratic Governance: May 29, 1999 marks the resurgence of democracy in Nigeria after long military rule. Nigerians had high expectations that the resurgence of democracy in the country will deliver the needed national development. Unfortunately, twenty-three years into democratic governance in the country, little impact has been made in terms of the delivery of democratic dividends to the masses. Nigerian democratic practice has been declared expensive with political office holders earning far above their counterparts in other parts of the world. Annually budgetary allocations to the National Assembly are in billions considering the size of National Assembly. For instance, in the 2021 budgetary allocation of the federal government, the National Assembly got N128 Billion (Erezi, 2020); N169 in the 2023 budgetary provisions (representing the highest in the last four years) (Amata, 2022). As a way of cutting down cost, there have been arguments that the national assembly job should be made a part-time job where members are paid allowances based on the number of sittings a year. The salary earnings of political office holders in the executive arm of the government have attracted public criticisms. Statistics shows that the basic annual salaries of some public and political office holders are as follows: The President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria N14,058,820 per annum (p.a.); the Vice President N12,126,290p.a.; Ministers, Secretary to the Government of Federation, Head of Service, Chairmen of Constitutional bodies N7,801,640:00 p.a.; Ministers of State and members of Constitutional bodies N7,536,683 p.a.; Special Advisers, Assistants including speech writers N7,091,493 p.a (Daily Trust, 26th Oct. 2022). These figures did not include other allowances such as: furniture, accommodation, duty tour, estacode, medicals, leave, severance gratuity and motor vehicle loan and salaries of domestic staff among others (Daily Trust, 26th Oct. 2022). A democratic system where politics is made so attractive that it has become an avenue for wealth accumulation is detrimental to socio-economic development and prosperity of the nation. It is even worrisome when on considered that the minimum age of civil servants is 30,000 per month. Such a reward system is demotivating and counterproductive. Reversing the trend and repositioning the political space of Nigeria will demand a rebuilding of Nigeria on the principles of meritocracy, pragmatism and honesty.

Insecurity: The social contract existing between the government and Nigerians include among others the protection of lives and property. This is one of the major reasons the masses vote democratic governments into power. Evidence from Nigeria revealed that the government at federal, state and local government levels have failed in the rendition of social services that guarantees the security of Nigerians and their property. Mounting cases of kidnapping for money, separatist agitations, insurgency, arm robbery, communal clashes, money rituals, terrorisms, banditry, farmers-herdsmen conflict are recorded across the country. It is estimated that the country losses \$40.6 Bn worth of investments annually due to insecurity. Other effects of insecurity are: drastic reduction in food productions, increase in IDPs camps, brain-drain especially in the medical lines, etc. It is valued that a whopping sum of N6tr has been spent by governments with no headway recorded. There have been agitations for community policing and state police as the way out. Surrounding the management of the security sector of the country are allegations of compromises, corruption, indecisions and ethnic and sectorial politics in appointments, resource utilization, and execution of security operations. Reversing the trend and repositioning the security sector of Nigeria will demand a rebuilding of Nigeria on the principles of meritocracy, pragmatism and honesty.

Corruption: Corruption affects most fabrics of the country and primarily accounts for the slow progress recorded in the socio-economic life of the country. A country cannot record significant progress in the midst of political and bureaucratic corruption. In the 2021 Transparency International Corruption Index, Nigeria ranked 154th in the 180 countries (with South Sudan ranked as the most corrupt (180th) and Denmark the least corrupt) (Transparency International, 2021). It is estimated that the country has lost over 400 Bn USD to corruption since independence. Such amount if deployed to execution of public programmes and projects will transform the country to a greater height of development. Political and bureaucratic corruption is regarded as the primary obstacle preventing Nigeria from accomplishing its full potentials. Corruption has been categorised in various forms: political party corruption, media corruption, electoral corruption, legislative corruption, bureaucratic corruption, petro-corruption, trade related corruption, industrial corruption, agricultural corruption, infrastructure corruption, power sector corruption, financial sector corruption, environmental corruption, defense sector corruption, police corruption, judicial corruption, anticorruption corruption, educational corruption, health sector corruption, humanitarian corruption (Page, 2018). It is our conviction that Reversing the trend and repositioning the conduct of government business will demand a rebuilding of new Nigeria on the principles of meritocracy, pragmatism and honesty.

Funding of Public Institutions: Over the years, the funding of public institutions like the education sector has been abysmally poor and epileptic. This has given occasion to persistent strikes in the university sector and increase demand by the Academic Staff Union of Universities for adequate funding of the sector by government. It is generally argued that the national budgetary allocation in the Nigerian educational sector is far away from the international prescribed standard of funding required for a healthy sector. Adesina (Oct. 4, 2021), painted a succinct picture of poor funding in the Nigerian educational sector, when, he observes as follows:

Thirty-one years after the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, UNESCO, recommended that developing nations give up to 25 per cent of their annual budget to public education, Nigeria's allocation to the sector is still less than 10 per cent. Consequently, of the N55.3 trillion allocated to the education sector by the federal government in the last six years (2016-2021), only N3.5 trillion had been given the sector, and this represents less than ten per cent. In comparison, though Ghana and South Africa have not actually met up to the recommended 25 per cent by UNESCO, they

have done far more than Nigeria, allocating a maximum 23 per cent and 16.7 per cent respectively. In 2016, of the total budget of N6.06 trn, the sum of N369.6 billion or 6.7% of the budget was allocated to public education in the country. In 2017, N550 bn or 7.38% was allocated to education out of N7.29 trn budget, while in 2018, N605.8 bn or 7.04 % was given to education out of N9.2 trn budget (Adesina, Oct. 4, 2021, p.).

The above unpleasant development in the educational sector has gross/calamitous consequence on the society and Nigerian development: poor research output, great gaps between the educational sector and industry, poor infrastructural development, poor global ranking of Nigerian public universities in World Index, brain drain in the sector, millions of dollars spent to access and study in foreign universities with better facilities, etc.

There is also another side of the argument on funding of public institutions and programs. Performance assessment of most public institutions funded by government shows epileptic performance index. For instance, despite funding and carrying out turn maintenances in the oil refineries of the country (Port Harcourt Refining Company (PHRC), the Warri Refining Production Company (WRPC) and Kaduna Refining Production Company (KRPC) they have simply refuse to perform or meet the expectations of such investments. For instance, in 2021, NNPC claimed to have spent 100 billion Naira in the rehabilitation of the country's oil refineries under its supervision and management. Consequently, Nigeria spends billions of dollars importing refined petroleum products through purchase and questionable oil subsidy regime.

Wrong Policies and Public Programmes: Nigeria have been plagued with wrong policies and public programmes initiated from the top with no direct beneficial impact on the masses. These policies are sometimes initiated by the elites and top public managers and imposed on the masses. There are also instances where good policies are formulated by government but fail at implementation levels due to corruption, lack of political will, lack of timely release of resources, poor monitoring and evaluation strategies, policy inconsistencies, regime change and other intervening variables. This has undermined the development of the country.

Political Recruitment and Political Thuggery: The nature of political recruitment supported by political thuggery has hampered the development of the country. By democratic praxis, political parties are expected to present candidates and manifestoes that increases their chances of winning at the polls. Unfortunately, primaries of the major political parties in Nigeria are characterized by vote buying. Votes of delegates in party primaries is obtained by the highest bidder. The end result is emergence of party flag bearers who lack the leadership credentials to deliver democratic dividends to the masses. Why are politicians so desperate to win elections by all means? The answers lie in the fact that politics is the shortest path to wealth accumulation, attain and sustain in Nigeria.

Mono-economy: Since the discovery of oil in commercial quantity in 1960, the has been a paradigm shift from an agriculture driven economy to a mono-economy sustained on crude oil production and sale. The fear of what will befall Nigeria when the price of crude falls or when there is a decline in oil production has occasioned the need to diversify the economy to such sectors like agriculture, tourism, etc. Driving the Nigerian economy on crude oil has not done the country any good. Unfortunately, efforts of government to successfully diversify the economy of the country has been unsuccessful and discouraging. This has hampered the harvest of economic and investment potentials from other sectors of the country.

Leadership Crises: Achebe (1983) succinctly argue that the problem with Nigeria is that of leadership. There is nothing wrong with the constitution, climate and topography of the country.

Nigeria's predicament is the inability of the country to produce the foresighted and transformational leadership to resolve its inherent challenges like nepotism, tribalism, social injustice, indiscipline, corruption, religious crisis and the cult of mediocrity. Nigerian leaders over the years have failed the country, putting about 133 million Nigerians in multidimensional poverty. The country's national, state and local levels political processes have failed to produce the leadership essential to transform the visions of the founders of the country into reality. Political leadership has been misinterpreted to mean opportunity for personal aggrandizement and wealth accumulation for family members and friends. The benefits associated with political and elective offices are so attractive financially and commands influence in social status. This explain the reason why politicians are so desperate to win elections by all means including manipulating the electoral process among which is votes and delegates buying and bribing their way through the process.

Public Debt: One of the major characteristics of the last eight years of democratic rule in Nigeria is the heavy dependence on foreign and domestic loans to fund national and state budgets and programmes. In the third quarter of 2022, the country's public debt stood at 44.6 trillion Naira. Such a huge public debt has affected the development of the country and some have argued that the public managers of the country's public resources are mortgaging the future of unborn generations to satisfy personal interest. In 2023, the Federal Government of Nigeria budgeted N6.55trn for debt servicing and the government intends to fund N10trn deficit by borrowing (Busari, December 29, 2022). The culture of resorting to borrowing to fund national and state budgets is a wrong approach to public management. There is absence of public accountability and prudence of loans borrowed. In our thinking, what the country generates internally from taxes, duties, sales of crude oil, and other channels should be enough to fund our budgets and meet the demands of public spendings. For instance, the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) generated 5.07 trillion in 2012, 3.7 trillion in 2015, 5.3 trillion in 2018, 6.40 trillion in 2021 (FIRS, 2022). The FIRS also generated into the coffers of the federal government of Nigeria 10.1 trillion in 2022 (Premium Times, January 23, 2023). This revenue statistics is from one source and depicts among others that the Federal has no business borrowing to fund the yearly budget of the country. Revenue from other agencies of the government further shows the need not to borrow. For example, the Nigerian Custom Service generated 2.3 trillion Naira in the Federation account in 2021 (Guardian Nigeria, December 20, 2021), 1.293 trillion Naira between January and June in 2022 (TheCable, August 17, 2022). It is estimated that that Nigerian Customs generated a total of 13.169 trillion Naira in 12 years -2010 to 2021. Nigeria has a known challenge of the prudent deployment of financial resources generated by government agencies for the development of the country. When Gowon declared forty years ago that money was not a problem to Nigeria, but how to spend it, he was making a point and statement worthy of consideration.

Unemployment: Unemployment rate among Nigerians is on the increase-10.44 per cent in 2015, 14.23% in 2016, 20.42% in 2017, 23.13% in 2018, 32.5% in 2020 and 33 per cent in 2021 (Statista, 2023). The country has now been described in some fora as the "sleeping giant that has become the poverty capital of the world" and "a failed state" (for failing in its social contract responsibilities and obligations to the citizens). This is not unconnected with the country's increasing public debt profile, corruption, institutional and policy failure, mounting insecurity challenges, kidnapping, banditry, unstable business climate and alarming unemployment among youths. The Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG) projected that the unemployment rate in Nigeria will hit 37 percent in 2023 while inflation rate will average 20.5 per cent in 2023 (Izuaka, January 19, 2023).

5. Reversing the Trend and the Trajectory of Failure: Towards Building a New Nigeria Where Things Work - Meritocracy, Pragmatism and Honesty Principles as Mode of Analysis and Prescription (MoAP)

From the wrong pillars and problems confronting the country, there is urgent need to take concerted steps aimed at reversing trend, changing the narrative and a paradigm shift from the present status-quo. This paper proposes that reversing the trend and trajectory of failure in the management of state affairs, the principles of meritocracy, pragmatism, and honesty must be enthroned in the political, administrative, economic and social life of Nigeria. We shall devote time to discuss and explain how these principles can be deployed to bail the country from the woods.

Enthroning the Principle of Meritocracy as a condition for building a New Nigeria: The principle of meritocracy emphasizes the need to base appointments of persons into public and political offices on the grounds of merit, competence, qualification, integrity, and ability to deliver assigned tasks. This has been absent in the conduct of government business. Public managers of the country's affairs need to cultivate the culture of meritocracy. Awards of contracts, public procurements, and handling official matters should be based on the merit of cases. It is important that the political processes that produces political appointees should be transparent and tailored to produce competent personnel who have the mind to serve and lead for the good of the masses. The process should be organized to produce servant leaders.

Servant Leadership is a theory of leadership by Robert Greenleaf and it contends that the most effective and profitable leaders are servants of the masses/people. Servant leaders contribute to organisational growth and performance, societal stability and development through whole-hearted attention and devotion to followers and they deploy public, organisational and personal resources to meet the needs of their followers. Servant leaders are able to deliver the dividends of democracy based on their attachment to "collaboration, trust, empathy, and ethics" (Burkus, 2010, paragraph 1). They demonstrate the ten features of servant leadership outlined by Larry Spears, namely, listening, healing, empathy, persuasion, awareness, foresight, conceptualization, stewardship, commitment to the growth of others, and building community (Burkus, 2010). A leader that demonstrates the above leadership qualities will gain support, collaboration, solidarity, and engagement from the masses.

The principle of meritocracy is enshrined in Plato's *Republic*, where he advocated for a society in which each individual belongs to one of three classes—rulers (philosophers), guardians (soldiers), and producers (farmers and craftsmen)—based on their natural talent, effort and abilities (Costa, 2023). It aptly assumed that when people occupied positions of influence, authority and power on the basis of their abilities, competence, integrity, knowledge and experience, it will translate to high performance for the benefit of the people, society and organization. We want to see this applied in Nigeria to promote the culture of quality assurance in the political, economic, educational, agricultural and banking sectors of the country. Appointment should not be based on party affiliation but on one's ability, integrity, achievement in past assignments, wealth of experience, competence, etc. The culture of Person-Job-Fit should be institutionalized and those make laws, public policies and implements them should occupy those positions on the bases of merit and not social status or family background.

Enthroning the Principle of Pragmatism as a means of building a New Nigeria: Nigeria must go beyond "paper centred governance" to "governance based on pragmatism". This implies that, leaders must show good examples and be involved in the governance processes that affect the people they are elected or appointed to serve. We must "mean what we say and say what we mean". Put

differently, people want governance marked with results and dividends of democracy. The report on completed public projects should agree with the reality on ground. Those who do business with government must “mean what they say and say what they mean”. Government should confront realities, and be practical in solving the problems confronting the citizens; than pay lips service to man’s problems. Closely related to the principle of pragmatism is what might be called governance/management by walking about. Public managers must be involved in the supervision of public projects and seek to inspect projects being executed at unscheduled time.

Enthroning the Principle of Honesty as a means of building a New Nigeria: In this paper, we consider honesty as an internalized personal quality and organizational culture grounded on the elements of morality and ethics. It is demonstrated in the discharge of one’s responsibilities and interpersonal relationships. It comprises truthfulness, openness, integrity, acceptance of blames for failure and the readiness to take corrections. Honesty can serve as one of the strong factors for the promotion of organizational culture and reputation. Truth, openness, transparency and integrity which are the hallmarks of honesty would serve as a tool for stimulating and strengthening democracy, good governance, public accountability and its associated values, efficiency and effectiveness in the conduct of government business. Nigerians want to see a new Nigerian built on the culture of honesty, participatory decision making, equity and justice, transparency and public accountability, responsiveness, inclusiveness, and impartiality.

Generational Leaders and Thinkers in all sectors of the country (Private and Public): Nigeria needs generational leaders and thinkers in all its sectors. Generational leaders and thinkers are described as cultured, well-trained, experienced and disciplined leaders who rule, plan and conserve resources to meet the needs of the present generation without depriving or compromising the possibility of meeting the needs of future generations. Nigeria needs such men in all the sectors of the economy- agriculture, banking and finance, oil, education, defence and security, politics, environment, etc. Public policies and programmes administered by generational leaders are designed to address present and future needs of the nation. To achieve this, Nigerians must vote the right candidates into power and the process of recruiting personnel in the public sector must be based on transparency and merit. Politics should be seen as a call to serve and not to amass wealth from government coffers. Generational leaders and thinkers will help stabilize the polity, combat corruption and stimulate efficient public management. Leadership is fundamental in building the capacity of public institutions to cope with emergencies and in tailoring their operational activities to deliver the dividends of democracy (Agba, Ocheni, Ocheni, Ettah, Abang, Paul, & Agba, 2022). Generational leaders are capable of making plans and taking measures to equip and train Nigerians to cope and be integrated into the world of remote work revolution (Agba, M. S., Agba, Agba, Ettah & Obera, 2022).

6. Concluding Remarks

What have we done in this paper? We have looked at the endowments of Nigeria in terms of human and mineral resources, topography and have demonstrated that these resources have not been deployed to the benefit of Nigerians and future generations. The country has not been fortunate to have the right kind of leaders and have been confronted by multifaceted challenges and administered on wrong pillars that have hampered its development. To bail the country from becoming a failed state and to rebuild a new Nigeria where things work, the paper advocated the enthronement of the culture of meritocracy, honesty, pragmatism and generational and transformational leadership style in the political, governmental, social, educational and economic space of the country. It is important

these principles be decentralized to cover all levels of governance (national, state and local governments) and public expenditure management (Ocheni & Agba, 2017). Nigeria has the capacity of solving its problem internally.

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