Sustainable Development and Sustainable leadership in Nigeria: A critical Discourse of Two Sides of the Same Coin  

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Abstract

The performance of any nation in seeking to achieve its set goals to a large extent depends on its leadership. The importance of having a sustainable leadership in any society cannot be overemphasized. Development of any society is meant to enhance the living standard of citizens. Sustainable development is a major challenge in Nigeria due to lack of proper management of resources, corruption, and accountability of public officials arising from poor leadership. And where there are challenges, sustainable development is likely to be a tall order. This article establishes the linkage between sustainable leadership and sustainable development and demonstrates the importance of sustainable leadership as a pathway to sustainable development. With the analysis of data obtained from secondary sources, the study identified lack of accountability for sustainable development to include the challenges of leadership, unethical behavior, poor maintenance culture, poor management of resources, and corruption on the part of public officials, amongst others. In other words, the country will not achieve sustainable development if all the aforementioned factors are in place. The study recommends among others, the need for government to adopt a more practical approach to the promotion of accountability, a determined fight against corruption and unethical behavior, proper management of resources, and devotion of more funds to the execution of capital projects that could positively affect the lives of the people for improved standard of living.

Keywords: Sustainable development, Sustainable leadership

Introduction

It is not out of place to state that Nigeria since independence has failed to attain a level of development compared to the countries that achieved independence around the same time. After the exit of the country from military rule and the return to civilian rule on the 29th of May, 1999 the nation had great expectations of sustainable development. Unfortunately, several years later, it is safe to say that these expectations are yet to be achieved. The reasons for this shortfall can be safely placed at the door of poor leadership, bad governance and deteriorating state of development in Nigeria. According to Okoli (1990) under a democratic setting the state exists to ensure the overall welfare of its citizens. Thus, the state is a
natural design for promoting social good and public welfare

In 1987, the world recognized the need for the redirection of the pattern and outcomes of the global developmental drives, specifically towards more sustainable ventures in the approach and later the concept referred to as sustainable development.

Sustainable development in the Nigerian context seems like an impossible mountain to climb if one takes a critical look at the country’s past, current and prospects for the mid-future. Whilst not trying to paint a bleak picture of the country, the truth must be said that Nigeria in line with the principles of development, have barely put herself on the track to an actual sustainable development.

According to Ojo (2005p.8) “the democracy in the African context serves the interest of only the ruling class”. It is clear to see that Nigerian politicians are more concerned with looting public funds and ensuring their grip on power. Despite the constant government rhetoric in their policies for sustainable development, it has continued to shows ineptitude, poor political will, corruption and mismanagement. The development in Nigeria becomes more gripping in establishing the democratic ideals of sustainable development. Development of any society is meant to enhance the living standard of citizens. However, where there are challenges of accountability, development is more likely to be a mirage.

It is in the light of the foregoing that this study emphasizes the importance and effectiveness of sustainable leadership in the attainment of sustainable development in Nigeria. It further provided an overview of the leadership landscape in Nigeria by bring to bear how leadership is conceptualized and practiced in Nigeria. The study is organized into five parts. The first part is the introduction, literature review and theoretical framework is addressed in the second part; the third part looked at Sustainable Development and Sustainable Leadership within the Nigerian Political Terrain, section four examined the factors affecting sustainable development in Nigeria while section five is the conclusion, and references.

Conceptual Clarifications

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is the organizing principle for meeting human development goals while at the same time sustaining the ability of natural systems to provide the natural resources and ecosystem services upon which the economy and society depends. Sustainable development ties together concern for the carrying capacity of natural systems with the social, political, and economic challenges faced by humanity.

The most accepted definition of the concept remains the 1987 Bruntland Commission in its report (our common future) “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (United Nations General Assembly, 1987, p. 43).

Kenneth (1999) the concept of sustainable development has in the past encompassed three constituent parts: environmental sustainability, economic sustainability and socio-political sustainability. More recently, it has been suggested that a more consistent analytical breakdown is to distinguish four domains
of economic, ecological, political and cultural sustainability. This is consistent with the United City of Local Government (UCLG) move to make 'culture' the fourth domain of sustainability; other important sources refer to the fourth domain as 'institutional' or as 'good governance.

To Ojobo (2005) sustainable development refers to the continuous improvement in the living standard of citizens and the structural transformation/changes in the productive and distributive input and output systems of the economy. Furthermore, Adebayo (2010) argues that sustainable development is the efforts of government (federal, state, or local) to improve the environment and the living condition of the people in such a way as not to negatively affect generations to come.

McKeown (2002) proffers that the central tenet of sustainable development reveals three distinct components: environment, society and economy that are intertwined and not separated. Thus, achieving sustainable development requires a more balanced relationship among the environment, society and economy in pursuit of development and improved quality of life. Solow (1986) summarizes the concept of sustainable development by suggesting that sustainability cannot be expressed by any means less than a sanction that preserves productive capacity for posterity.

Sharma, Sharma & Devi (2009) conducted a study that examined the constructs that affect sustainable development among Village Development and Security Committee members in Malaysia. The study revealed that leadership was perceived as imperative in promoting sustainable development by the rural community leaders. The study identified that effective leadership helped the villages to develop in times of peril the capacity to overcome the social and community challenges that confronted them and granted them the ability to meet the needs of the people. This points to the fact that it is important for leaders to be visionary and have a wider perspective of issues that confront them beyond their immediate environment to satisfy the tenets of sustainable development. The same could be said of effective and sustainable leadership if it is replicated at the national level. Effective leadership has the propensity to coordinate the resources of a country to promote sustainable development.

Leadership experienced in post-independence Nigeria, however, has manifested several instances of incompetence, ineffectiveness and unresponsiveness to the needs of present and even future generations.

Similarly, Mohammed (2013, p121) sees sustainable development as “the ability to preserve the existing resources of the state for collective use of citizens while conscious efforts are made to conserve the resources for the future generations” Sustainable development is, therefore, likely to manifest in a country where the leadership is innovative in approach and action. According to Okebukola (2014), innovation is very important to the extent that it galvanizes socioeconomic growth and development of societies.

The foregoing points to the fact that sustainable development is about continuous harnessing of resources to enhance the quality of life of citizens. This is in addition to putting in place adequate provision to cater for future generations. This implies that sustainable development
is able only if deliberate efforts are made by those who are entrusted to manage public resources in a competent manner and are willing to do so for the benefit of all in the society. It is based on this postulation that this article emphasizes a linkage between sustainable leadership and sustainable development by asserting that they are two sides of the same coin. In other words, achieving sustainable development will not be possible without having sustainable leadership which is an all-inclusive, collaborative and reflective process rooted in values and ethics.

**Sustainable Leadership**

Studies have pointed out the unique role of leadership in the promotion of enhanced performance in organizations and sustainable development of nations. In this regard, Stogdill (1950) sees leadership as the process (act) of influencing the activities of an organized group in its effort toward goal setting and goal achievement. In the same vein, Bryman (1992) argues that a leader either in an organization or nation has a unique role of steering members of that organization or nation toward a specified goal achievement of enhanced performance in terms of increased profitability or development for an improved standard of living.

According to Simanskiene & Zuperkiene (2013), Sustainable leadership means a kind of leadership undertaken with responsibility to individual people, groups, and organizations by assessing ecological, social, and economic principles of sustainability in the context of a group, organization, and community and by encouraging successful mastering of the ideas of sustainability, cooperation with the environment, successful learning and teaching based on the principles of sustainability, as well as people's self-expression. Sustainable leadership matters, spreads and lasts.

Therefore sustainable leaders are manager that take mindful actions and behaviors by embracing a global world-view to recognize the connection between the planet and humanity; thereby, through personal and organizational choices, effects positive environmental and social change while improving productivity of an organization.

This shows the importance of leadership as a catalyst for development. In any society, therefore, leadership is a vital factor without which any organization or nation cannot experience sustainable development for the benefits of organizational ownership or that of the citizens of any nation.

**Theoretical Framework: Transformational Leadership Theory**

This study adopts transformational leadership theory as a framework of analysis for sustainable development and challenges of leadership in Nigeria. Leadership at different levels in Nigeria (federal, state, and local governments) is faced with the challenge of the inability to command respect and trust of the citizens required for successful implementation of government policies for development. Adoption of this theory is based on the assumptions that transformational leaders with innovative ideas and free of corrupt tendencies, which is currently lacking in Nigeria, are needed to overcome poor resource management, lack of accountability, unethical behavior in governance, and formulation and implementation of policies by the political leadership both at the national and state levels to the detriment of the overall developmental goals. Furthermore, an
autocratic way of policy formulation without inputs from the people in a country like Nigeria would hinder sustainable development (Ejere & Abasilim, 2013; Ikelegbe, 2006; Imoke, 2014). It has been argued by some scholars like Cacioppe (1997), Armstrong (2012), Imoke (2014) that innovative leadership is about change for sustainable development in organizations or nations, “it seems reasonable that innovation may be related to transformational leadership qualities” (Imoke, 2014, p. 52). Therefore, transformational leadership in Nigeria is likely to bring about good followership support needed to successfully implement policies and programmes of government for sustainable development. According to Armstrong (2012 p.574) “transformational leaders are able, by their force of performance, to make significant changes in the behaviour of their followers in order to achieve the leader’s vision or goals.” In addition, Cacioppe (1997) argues that a leader is said to be transformational when he or she can inspire others to willingly contribute toward the good of the organization or nation. This implies that leaders who are transformational are likely to achieve the set goals and the value of the desired outcomes and provide ways of achieving the goals set, which is currently absent in the Nigeria’s political leadership at all levels.

Downton (1973) was the first to have coined the term ‘transformational leadership’ as a new form of leadership style. However, Burns (1978) in his book *leadership* argues that transformational leaders are those who seek to change existing thoughts, techniques and goals for better results and the greater good of all. In essence, the concern is on achieving in greater deal, the essential needs of the followers.

Transformational leaders are in contrast different with transactional leaders. While transformational leadership connotes transforming leadership as a process in which leaders and followers help each other to advance to a higher level of morale and motivation. Transactional leaders are more interested in a form of leadership style giving prominence to friendly exchanges between leaders and their followers.

Bolden, Gosling, Marturano, & Dennison (2003) point out that the goal of transformational leadership is to transform people and organisations in a literal sense to change them in mind and heart; enlarge vision, insight, and understanding; clarify purposes; make behaviour congruent with beliefs, principles, or values; and bring about changes that are permanent, self-perpetuating, and momentum building.

Transformational leadership becomes imperative in the management of public resources for sustainable development. Bass & Riggio (2006) point out that transformational leadership helps to develop followers to be better contributors toward the realization of overall organizational or societal goals. As a result, transformational leaders could be termed, effective leaders.

What is most important in this regard is the effectiveness of the leadership style. In addition, the “effective leadership exerts influence in a way that achieves organizational goals by enhancing the productivity, innovation, satisfaction, and commitment of the workforce” (Johns & Saks 2005, p.274). Leadership at different levels in Nigeria (federal, state, and local governments) is faced with the challenge
of the inability to command respect and trust of the citizens required for successful implementation of government policies for development.

In the words of Ejere&Abasilim, (2013) an autocratic way of policy formulation without inputs from the people in a country like Nigeria would hinder sustainable development

Adoption of this theory is based on the assumptions that transformational leaders with innovative ideas and free of corrupt tendencies, which is currently lacking in Nigeria, are needed to overcome poor resource management, lack of accountability, unethical behavior in governance, and formulation and implementation of parochial ethnic and religious policies by the political leadership both at the national and state levels to the detriment of the overall developmental goals. Therefore, transformational leadership is likely to bring about good followership support needed to successfully implement policies and programmes of government for sustainable development.

According to Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber (2009) the main challenge for transformational leadership is that despite being conceived as morally positive, the intentions of transformational leaders cannot be guaranteed which could lead to abuse of power in the hands of a skilled operator.

**Sustainable Development and Sustainable Leadership within the Nigerian Political Terrain**

The Federal Republic of Nigeria is a federation with a presidential system of government whose government operates as a representative democracy. Nigeria became a formally independent federation in 1960. It experienced a civil war from 1967 to 1970. It thereafter alternated between democratically elected civilian governments and military dictatorships until it achieved a stable democracy in 1999. There were high hopes for accelerated development since it was thought that the country will be ruled with the interest of the populace at the core of sustainable development actions and strategy. However, 20 years after and with an unstable political climate, we have been on a decline in all indices, with the country barely coming out of a recession and seem to be headed for another decline phase. Our leadership has been a major problem. Partially, as a result of the impact of colonialism and, to some extent, due to the non-readiness on the part of post-colonial political leaders to bring about lasting changes in the principles of governance, Diamond’s (1984 p.915) observation that “something is fundamentally wrong with politics in Nigeria” remains true till date. Regarding what is wrong with politics, Diamond’s position is that making the state the center for the accumulation of wealth and acquisition of resources is what is principally wrong with politics in Nigeria. This, essentially, for him, is responsible for the desperate struggle to capture and retain state power since “access to the state constitutes the chief instrument for the accumulation of capital by the dominant class”. As a result, Ake (1989 p.1162) observes that, “we are intoxicated with politics. The premium on political power is so high that we are prone to take the most extreme measures in order to win and maintain political power, our energy tends to be channelled into the struggle for power to the detriment of economically productive effort.” Ake (1996 p. 7) further posits that: much of
what is uniquely negative about politics in Africa arises from the character of the state, particularly its lack of autonomy, the immensity of its power, its proneness to abuse and the lack of immunity against it.

If sustainable development means the insurance of the future generations on progress and evolution, then the relationship between leadership and sustainable development is a sine qua non, because there is no development without leadership especially in the social, human and cultural dimension.

Our leadership style of governance in Nigeria is not one that aligns with sustainability but rather a dictatorship styled and controlling one fronted as a supposed democracy. This is not surprising looking at the political bigwigs in the country. They are mostly retired military officers that have just switched from uniforms to civilian dressing.

Adejumobi, S. and Kehinde, M. (2007) Another issue is the fact that the quest for political power in Nigeria is aimed at having some form of perpetual hold on the country. Office holders want to be there forever for selfish gains and never towards continuity of development. Till date, some members have been in the senate since 1999 and have barely effected any changes in the constituency they represent. The tone of governance in the country is poor by the presidency and as such, everyone capable has followed suit in executing duties below expected standards. Many appointments have been based on sentiments and nepotism rather than competence, capability and performance. Many wrong actions and elements of governance have combined to have massive effect towards releasing a sustainable development of the country. The urgency of targets is inversely related to the degree of power held by those responsible for implementing them.

Ayodele (2006) the quest for sustainable development is not feasible without alleviating poverty drastically, empowering the youths, encouraging entrepreneurship education for effective self-reliance and empowerment. While successive governments have implemented one program or the other to address lingering issues and foster development (some are white elephant projects), implementation and follow through are lacking is some good initiatives.

In John (2008) analysis, Rwanda for instance, has come out of an aging genocide crisis and ethnic wars to become one of the fastest rising African economies today. This has been a function of the leadership to focus on sustainable development and push through the obstacles. The country is not yet in the perfect state, but they are on track. The point of this is that there is still the possibility that the Nigerian trend will be reversed from a negative to a positive one about development, if there is a corresponding leadership that is sustainability-inclined; unbiased, unselfish and progress focused to combine all these elements and drive them towards making sustainable development for the nation a reality.

Awosusi&Jegede, (2013) posits that nature provides man with resources, such as land, water, and air, which need to be harnessed, developed, and sustained for meaningful living in the society. In a bid to achieve sustainable development in any society, projects are put in place as a strategy to realize the developmental goals of government. In a situation where these projects are not properly executed, either
by reason of corruption on the part of public employees, poor maintenance culture of infrastructure, weak governmental institutions, inadequate funds to execute projects, poor management of public resources, high cost of governance, or a combination of these factors listed above among others, no doubt, a society, affected by these factors, is likely to experience the challenges of development.

In this regard, Okebukola (2014) argues that no matter how endowed a country is, the harnessing of the natural resources for meaningful development is dependent upon the volume of the available brain power of the leaders and citizens. Therefore, brain power on the part of leadership and the citizens is identified as the propeller of societal development. Research has shown that societies which subscribe to proper ethical behavior and transformational leadership that focus on innovative ideas are more likely to experience sustainable development.

Challenges of sustainable development in Nigeria have become a thing of major concern to scholars and the citizens alike. This is particularly so, considering the enormous resources in both human and material at the disposal of government since political independence in 1960. (Kwanashie, 2007) It is imperative at this juncture to examine some of challenges militating against the achievement of sustainable development in Nigeria.

Factors Affecting Sustainable Development in Nigeria

Scholars have attributed different reasons for the nation’s inability to experience sustainable development to include the following:

a. Poor Leadership: Poor leadership at the various levels of government has been identified in Nigeria as a major hindrance to sustainable development. Studies have shown that successive political leadership in Nigeria either military or civilians lacked the capacity to perform, which manifest in low moral character, poor judgment, and knowledge of the society, lack of expertise in the management of resources available, and their inability to innovate. According to Obadan and Edo (2007) these leaders flagrantly disregard the tenets of good government, public accountability, transparency, the predictability of government behavior, and observance of the rule of law, which are the major factors that propel sustainable development in any society. Olaopa, (2016) argued that poor countries like Nigeria are poor because of poor decisions made by their leaders.

Obadan and Edo (2007 p. 38) argue that “corruption, lack of accountability and bad governance provided avenues for misappropriation of public resources at the expense of the poor masses of the people” Furthermore, Imhonopi and Urim (2014) argue that the lack of long-term perspective of development goals of leadership in successive governments over the years has made it almost impossible for industrial development to take place in Nigeria. This implies that where poor leadership prevails, innovative ideas for development are likely to be absent, and the outcome is underdevelopment, resulting in the lack of adequate housing, clean water, good roads, hospitals, food, and electricity power supply for meaningful living in such a society.

b. Poor Resource Management: In a bid for the government to enhance the living standard of the people, Public Enterprises (PEs) were established in
Nigeria. Unfortunately, the poor management of public resources has not allowed the people to enjoy the benefits the PEs should offer citizens. For instance, between 1999 and 2002, the total liabilities of 39 PEs were in excess of NGN1.1 trillion or US$6.87 billion, with accumulated losses of NGN92.3 billion or US$5.77 billion. In addition, these 39 PEs “consumed an average of USD3 billion annually in subsidies” (Chigbue, 2007, p. 427). Also, an investigation into the activities of the Bureau for Public Enterprises (BPEs) due to poor performance by the Nigerian Senate (Upper Legislative Chamber) in 2011 revealed that the Aluminum Smelter Company of Nigeria built by the Federal Government in 1997 at the cost of US$3.2 billion was valued by the Bureau of Public Enterprises in-house consultants for just US$250 million and was eventually sold to a Russian company for only US$130 million in 2010 (Gb erevbie et al., 2013; Philips, 2011).

In the same vein, Okoh and Attama (2015) argue that it was the poor management of public enterprises by government officials that led to the formulation and implementation of public policy of commercialization and privatization of public enterprises to free government from the burden of financing nonperforming public ventures and make funds available for development by some past governments in Nigeria. The data presented above support the view that poor management of public resources has drained the country of the needed funds and infrastructure to attain the goals of sustainable development.

c. Poor Maintenance Culture of Infrastructure: Studies have shown that poor maintenance culture of infrastructure has contributed to lack of sustainable development in Nigeria. In the electricity power sector, for instance, research has shown that the nation’s power generation capacity is very low due to a combination of inadequate funds to build modern power generating stations and poor maintenance culture (Abiodun, 2014; Ayanruoh, 2013). According to Awosope (2014 p. 25), poor maintenance culture in the electricity power sector in Nigeria “has hampered the industry from meeting the statutory obligation of providing a cheap, clean and efficient source of energy . . . thus, national development has been seriously slowed down” (p. 25). For instance, the electricity generation capacity in 1998 (just before the military handed over political power to civilians) was 4,548.5 MW and rose to 6,130 MW in 2004, which however declined in 2005 to 2,687.1 MW. This nonetheless increased to 8,644 MW in 2013 but can only produce 3,718 MW, which insufficiently caters for the electricity need of over 160 million people in Nigeria due to poor maintenance culture (Abiodun, 2014; Ayanruoh, 2013; Central Bank of Nigeria [CBN], 2005, 2006). As a result of the shortfall of electricity power supply, it has been estimated that manufacturing companies (small, medium, and large scale industries) “spend an average of NGN2 billion or USD12 million per week on self-power generation” (Ayanruoh, 2013, p. 1). It has been observed that South Africa with a population of 52 million has an installed electricity generation capacity of over 52,000MW. On a per capita consumption basis, Nigeria is ranked a distant 178th with 106.21 KWh per head, and a capacity electricity generation of 8,644MW, but only produces 3,718MW—well behind Gabon (900.00); Ghana (283.65); Cameroun (176.01; and Kenya (124.68).
Furthermore, research has shown that there is “a strong link between the per capita consumption of electrical power and the state of physical advancement of a nation” (Awosope, 2014, p. 5). Consequently, development is more likely to elude Nigeria with electricity power supply situation, arising from inadequate funding of the sector and the prevailing state of poor infrastructural maintenance culture.

d. Unethical Behavior of Public Officials:
The challenge among government officials in Nigeria bothers on behavior that is unethical, which is a common occurrence. Research has shown that one of the major challenges to sustainable development in Nigeria is the issue of unethical behavior among public officials in form of open abuse to rules and standards in the award of contracts for projects and their execution, over invoicing, inflation of contract costs, proliferation of White Elephant Projects, and diversion of public funds to private bank accounts through the manipulation of contracts award (Adebayo & Arawomo, 2008). In a society or nation where awarded contracts are manipulated to favor those in government and their collaborators, sustainable development is likely to be a mirage. Unethical behavior of public officials in Nigeria manifests in governmental agencies like the NNPC saddled with the responsibility to handle the computation for payment of subsidy on petroleum products in the country by the Federal Government, through the Federal Ministry of Petroleum Resources (Agbo, 2012). To ascertain the claims of Oil Marketers as to whether they truly supplied petroleum products to the market, the government ordered an audit investigation into the activities of NNPC, which was carried out by Klynveld Peat, Marwick and Goerdeler (KPMG). The investigation revealed that the cost of subsidy payment on petroleum products that was never consumed by end users due to losses from theft and even those not supplied between 2007 and 2009 stood at NGN11.8 billion or US$76.13 million (Agbo, 2012). The funds that would have gone into the development of infrastructure by the government in its quest to improve on the standard of living of the people continue to be diverted into private pockets and bank accounts of public officials, thereby hindering sustainable development in the country.

e. Weak Governmental Institutions:
Another major challenge to sustainable development in Nigeria is the issue of weak governmental institutions such as ministries and government departments. Oladoyin (2006) stated that the challenge is that those heading these institutions that ought to implement government policies and programmes for development are not competent for the position they hold, yet they see themselves as larger than the institutions they are meant to head and as such are not accountable for their actions. As a result, public officials capitalize on the weak governmental institutions to defraud the people by taking decisions that are not in line with developmental goals of government.

For instance, the Federal Minister of Agriculture in Nigeria, Adamu Bello, ripped off the nation through the inflated price of fertilizer at NGN3.5 billion or US$21.87 million from the award of NGN14 billion or US$87.5 million fertilizer contract to two companies belonging to an Indian in 2004. (Cited in Oladoyin 2006 p.127) Higher price for fertilizer means the higher farming cost for the ordinary farmer and higher cost of
farm produce to the citizens. The high cost of farm produce is more likely to discourage people from buying the required quantity per household, which is likely to affect the income of farmers who would have brought about development by their contribution in agricultural production and by so doing deny Nigeria of the needed development.

f. High Cost of Governance and Insufficient Funds to Execute Capital Projects: High cost of governance in Nigeria is seen as a hindrance to sustainable development. It has been observed that 70% of the country’s revenues are expended on less than 20% of the population (20% are members of the National Assembly, the executive arm of government, and other public sector workers) (Olaopa, 2016; Sanusi, 2012, cited in Iyoha, Gberevbie, Iruonagbe, &Egharevba, 2015). According to Awojobi (2014) on a yearly basis, it has been observed that the recurrent expenditure of the national budget of the nation keeps increasing while that of the capital expenditure meant for capital infrastructural development keeps decreasing.

g. Corruption and Mismanagement of Public Funds:
Corruption, basically involves deviation from standards of behavior either in the society at large or in the civil service. Studies have shown that corruption is endemic in Nigeria to the extent that government officials can no longer claim ignorance of its existence and devastating effect on the economy. It is a cankerworm that cuts across all sections of the country. And no part is left out, ranging from individuals, public servants, parastatals, ministries, governmental organizations and even the Aso Rock itself to mention a few. Corruption remains one of the fastest growing social problems in Nigeria. It is virtually becoming a way of life that permeates both private and public sectors of the economy. Over the years, this pervasive behavioral proclivity has earned the country the notorious status of one of the most corrupt nations in the world. Despite seemingly concerted efforts of past and present administrations to combat corruption, the problem remains persistently endemic with disastrous consequences for the Nigerian society.

In the words of Agbo, 2015; Awojobi, (2014).Corruption is a transcendent behavior that departs from established principles of leadership for personal gains which negates the general principles of leadership virtues and values of civilized societies. Today many top Government Ministers, Chief Executive Officers/Managing Directors of Banks are arraigned before Economic and Financial Crimes Commissions (EFCC) for corruption and bribery offences. These types of mess have contributed greatly to poor performance causing disequilibrium to most sectors of the economy and national development in general.

Conclusion
Sustainable development is the process of developing land, cities and communities, as well as business, which meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Sustainable leadership is fundamental if development and progress is to be attained in any country. It is fundamental to the survival and progress of any nation including Nigeria. Development is not an overnight achievement and it takes a continually
proactive, persistent and consistent state to achieve development let alone sustain it. Achieving this can be directly related to the type of leadership that drives the nation. This is just to point to the fact that sustainable development and sustainable leadership go hand in hand. As a country blessed with abundant resources and diversity, one would expect that these “gifts” would have been harnessed over time for continual growth of the whole nation. Hopefully the current government’s drive to diversify the economy while improving infrastructure and creating social welfare programs would improve the country.

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