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Article

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A RE-EVALUATION OF PLATO'S CONCEPT OF LEADERSHIP AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR NIGERIA'S POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This study examined Plato's leadership model, and its implication for Nigeria political development. The concern for a peaceful social and political life motivated Plato to undertake a speculative formation of an ideal state raised on justice as a guaranteeing factor for its peace and stability. In this state, Plato formed his notion of leadership. The ideal form of leadership for Plato is aristocratic leadership (i.e. leadership of the philosopher-kings) which is justified by their ability to grasp the absolute truth (Form of good) of what is just for the state. The main aim of this study is to investigate, if Plato's choice of leadership can be used as a panacea for Nigerian political advancement. Using the philosophical tools of analysis, criticism, and speculation, this paper seeks to examine Plato's leadership model in respect to the attainment of his aim in Nigeria. It is the position of this paper that Plato's proposal undermines basic fundamental political right of citizenship, individual's freedom, and equality and therefore not an appropriate means to the intended end. The paper submit that, if leadership is woven around democratic ideals, it seems that the desired peace and stability which Plato envisaged would be more guaranteed than aristocratic leadership would. Plato's leadership concept would as such serve as a panacea to the ongoing political instability in Nigeria for National progress. The major challenges of Nigeria political system is in her leadership. It is obvious that Nigeria leaders lacks the qualities of true leadership as expounded by Plato in his concept of the philosopher King. This study conclude that the Nigerian political system needs urgent attention as regards her bad leadership pattern which has to a great extent mitigated political, financial and social advancement of Nigeria.

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Keywords: Plato, Leadership, Nigeria, Political Development.

Introduction

The success of man's existence is tied to certain requisites, one of which is living socially. Plato is of the view that it is only by living in the society that a man can be fulfilled. For this reason, Aristotle conceives man as a political animal. The implication of this conception is that man must necessarily live socially and politically. That is, for man to fulfill his life, he has to live with other men in the society, influence others and be influenced by them. Therefore, no single individual can be successful without the support of others (society). Perhaps, this is the reason why Aristotle concluded that any man who fully lives without others is either a God, or a beast. But the society which is a necessity for the success of man does itself require something also for its own continuity. It would seem no human society can successfully exist without a leader. Leadership, therefore, becomes a necessity for the sustenance of a society, and since the society is necessary for man's development, leadership becomes a necessity for human development. Social evils such as war, hunger, poverty, sickness and premature death, faced by man even in the apex of his civilization perhaps, arise from ineffective leadership. Plato experienced these in his days and foresaw the tendency of its continued existence; hence, being concerned about harmonious social existence, he systematically tackled this issue and expounded what an ideal leadership entails. He postulated answers to fundamental socio-political questions such as: Who ought to lead? Whose interest is supreme in the state? What is the best form of leadership? The continued search for answers suitable enough for these questions even in the 21st century informs our appraisal of Plato's proposals in order to ascertain their efficacy as the panacea for the overall peace and orderliness that is needed for human growth and development, in Nigeria.

Plato's Brief Profile

Plato was born in the year 428 BC in Greek-City-State of Athens. His father was a descendant of the last king of Athens and his mother, Perictione, was a descendant of Salon, the aristocratic reformer, who is said to have written the Constitution which established Athenian democracy. Later in his life, he came in contact with Socrates-a philosopher and joined the circle of young men under the tutelage of Socrates. Plato loved and respected Socrates very much for his wisdom and moral standards. As an expression of this affection and respect for his master, Plato is quoted by John (259) to have always said, "I thank God I was born Greek and not Barbarian, freeman and not slave, man and not a woman, but above all, I was born in the age of Socrates". Idang affirms these in the following words:

Plato, born around 428 BC, came from a distinguished family in Athens. As a young man, he stood high among the Socratics at the age of 20, and had a profound affection and respect for him. He loved and regarded Socrates as the wisest and most excellent of men in his time. The death of Socrates was very painful and indeed, a disaster for Plato (162-3).

Thus, as a result of Socrates death in the hands of Athenian politicians, Plato who had over the years planned to become a politician, gave up his dream and redirected his interest towards philosophy to lead them out of the ignorance in which their political decisions, actions and judgements, especially the killing of Socrates, were based. Corroborating this, Esikot (18) asserts "... and the subsequent killing of Socrates, whom he had much respect for, caused him to turn away from politics and consequently developed hatred for Athenian democratic institutions".

What is Leadership?

The term 'leadership' is differently conceptualized by scholars, and as such it does not have a universally acceptable definition. In view of this, the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (672) defines leadership as, "the ability to be a leader or the qualities a good leader should have". Leadership is again conceptualized as "the action of leading a group of people or an organization, or the ability to do things", (online). On the other hand, Irish Ullman conceives leadership extensively as:

A relational operation system within a political system, characterized by people interrelated by power who, on a basis of selected cooperation but in a context of competition and conflict, take public actions (lead) in order to provoke additional actions (followers) to realize common to correlating goals resulting in further differentiation between system and environment and measurable effect on system environment (online).

This conception is corroborated by Joshua when he posits in Uduigwomen and Ogbinaka that "Leadership derives from the verb "to lead" or to direct, as by persuasion or influence, to a course of action or thought. It also means to show the way, to direct the course of, to conduct in a certain direction, or to be the head (369)". Lisa Cash does not seem to differ with this view as she defined leadership as "the ability to guide others without force into a direction or decision that leaves them still feeling empowered", (online). Based on the different conceptualisations, we want to speak of leadership as an act of directing the affairs of a society for the attainment of peace and overall development of the entire citizens/dwellers.

Analytical Exposition of Plato's Leadership Model

Plato's Leadership Model: Plato is concerned with the prescription of an ideal state. For him, such state is founded on the principle of justice. Since no human society can continue to exist successfully without leadership, it seems therefore that for Plato, the end of leadership is to make justice prevail in the state. The much desired peace and order in the society that would guarantee human development is then tied to the existence of justice in the society. Thus, Plato is of the view that if we understand how the society originates, we would be able to understand how justice grows and operates in the society, hence, he asks, "If then we were to trace in thought the gradual formation of a city, should we see the growth of its justice or injustices?" (Republic 369a-d).

For Plato, the state (society) is the product of insufficiency of individual's ability. He contends that no man can solely produce all that is needed for his survival and thus, no man can fulfill his purpose in life by living in solitude but only through cooperation and mutual sharing of the individuals' skills that life is made meaningful. Thus, to make meaning out of life, men must necessarily come together and form a society, hence, Plato asserts:

Thus it is, then that owing to our many wants, and because each seeks the aid of others to supply his various requirements we gather many associates and helpers into one dwelling-place, and give to this joint dwelling the name of city (369a-d).

Therefore, for Plato, the society is made of individuals each with special skill with which the conglomeration of all is able to solve all the needs of the society. Thus, for him, the optimum goal of the society (state) is to satisfy the citizens' needs. Perhaps for this understanding, Esikot (22) maintains that "without fear of contradiction, Plato can rightly be regarded as the founder of the organic theory of the state". In considering the state to be organic in nature,

Esikot seems to mean that the state is naturally constituted by various parts and that it has a will or purpose of its own. An ideal state for Plato, is one in which members are grouped into three classes based on area of specialization and the need which each will solve in the society. According to Plato, these classes and their preoccupations include the artisans class whose duty it is to provide the material needs that the state has, the class of auxiliaries with the responsibility of defending the whole state both from internal and external aggression and, the guardian class whose duty it is to lead the entire state. For him, these classes should consist of both men and women with the same skill. It seems these classes in the society are made in line with the conception of the human psychology in his time. For him, the human soul is constituted by three elements viz, the appetitive element, the spirited element and, the rational element. According to Plato, like the classes in the state, these elements have their own separate duties of possessing a virtue.

Plato contends that there are four cardinal virtues namely; temperance, courage, wisdom and justice. In the human soul temperance is possessed by the appetitive element, courage by the spirited element and wisdom is possessed by the rational element. The fourth virtue-justice arises when the other two elements submit to the control of the rational element. In the same way, he argues, in the state the class of artisans possesses temperance, the auxiliary class possesses courage, while members of the class of guardians possess wisdom, and as in the soul, justice arises when the artisans and the auxiliaries focus on the areas of their specialization and the members of guardian class left with the sole responsibility of leading the state, that is, when there is no interference. It is based on this conception of the similarity between the constitution of the human soul and the state that Lavine (56) posit "Plato tell us that if you want to have a clearer picture of morality for the individual person, we must turn to the state, he says it is 'writ large' for us to see". But who are the people that constitute the guardian class such that the state is safe in their hands? To this question, Plato's answer is that:

Unless it happens that either philosophers acquire the kingly power in state, or that those who are called kings, and potentates be imbued with a sufficient measure of genuine philosophy that is to say, unless political power and philosophy be united in the same person, most of those minds at present pursue one to the exclusion of other being peremptorily declared from either-there will be no deliverance,... for cities, nor yet, I believe, for the human race... (4736-474a).

The answer given by Plato implies that not all which is said to be philosophy is philosophy; consequently not all who claim to be philosophers are philosophers. Expounding those he regards as true philosophers and what characterizes them, Plato rhetorically asked:

...since those who are able to apprehend the eternal and immutable are philosophers, while those who are incapable to this and who wander in the region of change and multiformity are not philosophers, which of the two, tell me, ought to be governors of a state? (484 a-d).

This seems to imply that even though some people claiming to be philosophers but who, in the true sense are counterfeit, man the position of leadership, the state will still suffer. However, talking about eternal and immutable, Plato means everlasting and unchangeable truth. Thus, the philosopher-kings are justified in their exercise of the state power by their ability to understand and acquire the unchanging and absolute truth (form of good) of what is just for the state. Thus, for Plato, leadership is based on the knowledge of the good.

Knowledge then is for Plato the fundamental requirement or prerequisite for the position of leadership. Accordingly he maintains:

Then the constitution par excellence, the only constitution worthy of the name, must be the one in which the rulers are not men making show of political cleverness, but men really possessed of scientific understanding of the art of government. Then, we must not take into consideration on any sound principle of judgement whether their rule be by law or without them over willing or unwilling subjects or whether they themselves be rich or poor men (293c).

It seems what Plato meant here is that the best form of leadership is one which the leaders show that they have the knowledge of what it means to lead, and that they must lead whether their followers (citizens) be willing or unwilling, and whether they are guided or backed-up by the constitution or not. But do such people not have personal desires and needs which might conflict with societal goals? If they do, whose need is just for the leaders to embark upon, is it that of the entire community which conflict with those of the leaders, or those of the leaders which is against the common good? One of the answers given by others especially the sophists is that justice entails that the desires or needs of the leaders who are the stronger party be pursued. Thrasymachus who, on this issue, represents the sophists posits that:

...each government has its laws framed to suit its own interest; a democracy making democratic laws, an autocrat despotic laws and so on. Now by this procedure these governments have pronounced that what is for the interest of them is just for their subjects, and whoever deviates from this is chastised by them as guilty of illegality and injustice (338b-339a).

But Plato maintains a contrary ground. He argued that leadership is rather not acting in the interest of the leaders, but in the interest of the followers. Expressing his view, Plato opines:

...all who are in any place of command, insofar as they are rulers, neither consider nor enjoin their own interest, but that of the subjects for whom they exercise their craft; and in all that they do or say they act in an exclusive view of them, and to what is good and proper for them (342b-343a).

For him, there are two things that likely happen to a state under the leaders. It is either the leaders in line with the sophists' conception of what leadership demand, seek that the will of the stronger party (leaders) prevail and, the will of the people suffers, or the will of the entire state is allowed by the leaders to prevail over theirs. When the will of the leaders prevail, the result is that the people suffer, but when the general will is allowed to prevail, the whole state is made happy. Thus, whatever befall the people are in the hands of the leaders. In this respect, Plato asserts thus:

...And when I call the rulers servants or ministers of the laws, I give them this name not for the sake of novelty, but because I certainly believe that upon such service or ministry depends the wellbeing or ill-being of the state (715).

But men are seeing to be naturally egocentric. That is, they think only about themselves and not about other people's need or want. In view of this, how can the philosopher-kings be checked from pursuing their goals at the detriment of the general will? In other word, how can egocentrism be checked among the leaders? Plato's belief is that it is out of ignorance that men allow their ego to motivate their actions without considering their moral values

and the effects of such actions on others. Egoism among the leaders, for Plato, is detrimental to the growth of a state, hence, the leaders have to be led out of this ignorance. Thus, he recommended educational training that would take care of the moral and physical; status of the leaders. He introduces a thirty-five year educational program for the would-be-leaders which include training in gymnastic, music and dialectics. It seems these subjects did not have the same meaning as they are understood nowadays. However, Nwankwor capture their significance according to today conception thus:

Physical test was necessary because Plato believed that ruling imposes severe physical strength upon men and that physical health was a prerequisite for mental health. Moral test was important because if a man cannot withstand moral temptation, he was likely to sacrifice the interests of the society at the altars of his own interest and morbid desires. Needless to say that intellectual test was necessary because he who should rule must be able to grasp the 'particulars' and the 'universals', 'the abstract' and, the 'mundane' (156).

For Plato, this is the first way/means of checking egoistic propensity among the philosopher-kings. In addition, he proposes communism for the leaders. Garnsey (69) asserted that '[communism is] the belief that society should be organized without private property, all productive property being held communally, publicly or in common". Garnsey seems to be right as Plato further maintains:

In the first place, no one should possess private property, if it can possibly be avoided. Secondly, no one should have a dwelling or storehouse into which all who please may not enter; whatever necessities are require by temperate and courageous men who are trained to war, they should receive by regular appointment from their fellow-citizens, as wages for their services, and the amount should be so as to leave neither a surplus on the year's consumption nor a deficit; and they should attend common messes and live together as men do in camp (416e).

But the platonic from of communism is not limited to material property, it rather include that of family – wives and children – as Plato further asserted that:

These women shall be, without exception, the common wives of these men, and that no one shall have a wife of his own: likewise that the children shall be common, and that the parent will not know his child nor the child his parent. (457a-d).

The leadership form in which the leaders are so trained, live and own things, wives, and children in common, and are the wisest set in the state (the philosopher-kings) according to the Plato, is the closest and the best of all the imitations that participate in the Form or Ideal leadership which only exist in the World of Forms. Plato maintain that such form of leadership could be called by two names depending on the number of people who excel others in knowledge. Thus, if it is one person that excels all others in knowledge, Plato maintain that such shall be called kingdom. But if it is more than one person that excels the rest, it shall be addressed, according to Plato, as aristocracy. Perhaps, it is baded on this, that Appadorai (134) opine that "Aristocracy is literally government by the best citizens". However, Plato contends that there are other levels of imitation of the Forms of leadership that stand at variant degree from the 'real'. According to Plato, next to aristocracy is

oligarchic form of leadership. Oligarchic leadership is for him, "A constitution grounded upon property qualification... 550c).

Close to Oligarchic form of leadership is democratic form of leadership. Plato conceives of democratic form of leadership simply as, "the rule of the many" (Statesman 303a). He argues that democracy allows freedom for all citizens and also divides the sovereign authority among all members. These, according to Plato, enable all the citizens to live their lives as it suit their pleasure, thus, leading to diversity of character in the same society. For him, democracy is not a good form of leadership. Comparing democracy and the above forms of leadership, Plato argues that "...if therefore all three constitutions are law-abiding, democracy is the worst of the three, but if all flout the laws, democracy is the best of them" (Laws 303a-d). The last form of leadership for Plato is despotic/tyrannical form of leadership. For him, despotic form of leadership is "One man's rule defiant to the laws" (Statesman 3016-c). This is the only form of leadership according to Plato, which democracy is somehow better than. Thus, he concludes that "... indeed it is clear to everybody that a city govern by a tyrant is the most miserable of cities, whereas a city under kingly rule is the happiest of cities" (Republic 576d-7c). In the final analysis of Plator's leadership model, it would not be out of place to say that, for Plato, a state led by one man from his own dictate and not guided by the constitution, the citizens suffer the worst form of injustice. Whereas, a state led by a few best intellectuals, life is most bearable. Let us at this juncture critically evaluate these proposals.

Implications of Plato's Concept of Leadership For Nigeria's Political Development Strengthening ethical/moral leadership in Nigeria

Leadership should be based on qualifications; this is why Onyeocha argues that:

He must be suitably qualified in age and ability: personal exposure and knowledge of contemporary issues: awareness of the law of the land and preparedness to abide by them, interest in fostering a law-abiding society; awareness of the rights of citizens and disposition to uphold them, sensitivity to the people's needs and disposition to meet them: ability to reassure the people and allay their fears, experience in public service; integrity of life. They must also be had fearing, sincere, fair, just and human in their dealings with people; the process itself must aim at nation-building, capacity to weld the people together rather than divide them (58).

The problem here remains that leaders in Nigeria, lack this qualification enumerated above. Thus efficient leadership cannot be possible. The present leadership system in Nigeria promotes the principle of end justifying the means; during election campaigns, these leaders makes empty promises to the people, but fails to keep to this promises immediately the gets into power. Nigerian leaders who supposed to be the frontiers of ethics and morality are now examples of corruption. No. wonder Odimegwu, insist that:

Virtually all human endeavours, be it in the home, corporate, religious and national settings, leadership is he pivot. Every leader has a primary jurisdiction. To the family head, it is his immediate environment. To the politician, it is those who voted him into office as a reaction of acceptance over his unfolding to the people his manifest of what he will do for the clergy, it is his parishioners that look up to him for moral and spiritual guidance(5).

The question remains, are our leaders actually responsible to us? are they accountable? The answer is “no”. Plato suggests that leaders must be morally mortally upright.

- i. **Strengthening the Rule of Law:** The principle of one rule of law states that “easy one is equal to be law. In contemporary societies like Nigeria, the law cannot be applied on some people .. is because they believe to immured to the rule that is why Omeregbe call them “the sacred cow”.
- ii. **Adopting Transparency and Competence:** In Nigerian leadership system. Plato’s concepts of leadership upholds that leadership should be based on capacity, competence, accountability and character rather than financial, ethnic, or religious conditions. This implies that leadership should be selected out of merit not sentiments. In Nigeria’s political system, the reverse is the case leaders and selected based on “Turn” system a leaders comes into power because he believe it’s now how turn to control power.
- iii. **A Reformed education system:** Plato emphasize on an intellectual preparation of the philosopher King from a certain age, if our institutions develop trainings similar to plato’s, for prospective leaders, it will be of benefit to the political development of Nigeria. Most leaders in Nigeria lack the intellectual capacity to carry a big country like Nigeria along. The is why Amadi and Nwuche posit that, “political leadership is an important tool for the promotion of national development and should not be left in the hands of ignorant, educated or semi-educated fellow” (2023). This implies that leadership should be left in the hands of University graduates, who can apply different dynamics to face life challenges. Leaders should not come into power for their personal benefit, but with the intent of rendering unconditional service to the messes.
- iv. **Civic Education for the Masses:** Plato emphasies on the intellectual training for all. In Nigeria societies majority of the masses are uneducated and sometimes cannot understand party symbols and manifestoes. Most Nigerian citizens are poor, and can be bought with gifts and promises, thereby instead of voting for ideology, they end up voting for sentiments.
- v. **Electoral Reforms:** There should be new electoral policies that will allow everyone to vote and be voted for. This reform should promote transparency and accountability to allow for free and fair election in Nigeria, to reduce electoral mal-practice and political violence. In present day Nigeria where the leadership structure faces loopholes such as corruption, bad governance and weak inflectional structure, Plato’s leadership concepts serves as a good example in addressing the contemporary failures in Nigeria’s politics. Thus Re-evaluating his leadership concept serves as a great insight on how a good political structure produce accountable governance for good political advancement. Even though Nigeria is practicing democracy, it is believed that Plato’s ideas can complement it to ensure accountability in governance and/or political development.

Evaluation of Plato’s Leadership Model

The main aim of Plato’s leadership model was to make postulations that would lead to the attainment of the much desired peace and order in the society, which in turn would engender human blossoming and sustenance. In view of this aim, our evaluation of Plato’s leadership model is going to be done by considering the possibility or otherwise of his proposals leading to the attainment of these goals. It would not be out of context if we maintain that Plato argues that the leaders should lead insofar they are knowledgeable whether the citizens are willing or unwilling. This seems to advocate for the use of force to coercively suppress and subdue the citizens against their will. But it seems man, naturally

wants to be in charge of affairs. He want to rule the world and also have control over himself for he feels nobody can understand his feelings better than himself. Reflecting on human desire, Thompson (7) maintain that “most young people are eager for independence, for the opportunity to take their own decisions and to control their own lives”. Hobbes confirm this when he writes in his Leviathan, “Every man sees his own wit at hand, and other men’s at a distance” (online). Thus, surrendering to the state and government for their necessities, it seems he still retains the right to be consulted by government and its agencies since their polices and programs are made about him. Perhaps it is for this reason that the natural-rights deontologists, according to Machivali (17), maintain that “no one ought to have political power over another unless the latter has consented to it”.

Such use of force and the neglect of consent, may lead to rebellion, for Bakuni (11) maintain that “man is endowed with two faculties- the power to think and the desire to rebel”. Therefore, reaction on the part of the citizens could lead to militancy, revolution, and/or rebellion which is also counterproductive to the existence of the state. On the other hand, if the citizens are willing to allow the status quo, it does not mean that it is something they desire nor that they like so, but might be lack of will to revolt or a humane instinct to make the society peaceful. Whichever way it goes, it is not in line with man desire. Therefore, the form of leadership that does not allow political participation by the citizens as proposed by Plato is not just and cannot guarantee peace. Again, it seems Plato denies the significance of equality to the attainment of the said peace in a state. It seems, peace can only be achieved when there is justice and, justice cannot be attained when equals are treated unequally. Thus justice does not go along with inequality perhaps, the reason for the popular saying that “He who goes to equity must go with clear hands”. Therefore, Plato’s attempt to secure peace through class-structure system in the state cannot guarantee the desired peace and order that lead to self fulfillment.

Finally, Plato justifies leadership of the philosopher-kings (aristocracy) in their exclusive ability to grasp absolute truth (merit). But are there absolute truths especially concerning moral and social issues? Are the philosopher kings the only one with the mental equipment to grabble-with the universal truth? Assuming there is such truth, Plato’s claim of the philosophers as the only purveyor of such truth could amounts to the suppression of all innovative criticism from the citizens which is also another way of contributing to the development of the society. This is evident in the operation of absolutist governments and churches as seen in the lives of Nicolaus Copernicus and Galileo Galilie who did not publish his findings for fear of authority and who was forced to deny his heliocentric view of the universe respectively. It was the belief to the possession of such knowledge of good that led Adolf Hitler to the massacre over six million Jews. These are evident that such position has only been able to lead to a violence gripped society. Plato’s proposal, therefore, seems to suppress two positive desires in man – the inclination to be free from being forced against his will when it is his right (freedom) and, the inclination to be treated equally especially in the allotment of fundamental rights (equality). The suppression of such natural desires stands against man’s yearning for a form of leadership that will allow his political participation either directly or indirectly. Thus, it seems, unlike Plato’s aristocratic leadership, democratic leadership is more a satisfactory form of leadership for man for it is built on the principles of freedom and equality and thus allows equal political participation either directly or indirectly. Perhaps it is based on this that Plato has been mostly criticized as being anti-democratic in his proposal.

Crossman, according to Mukherjee and Ramaswamy (93) maintain that “Plato made the profoundest attack on the basic premises of liberal democracy, namely equality, freedom and self-government”. Popkin, et al, according to Nwankwor (158) claim that, “Plato’s philosophy leads, by natural steps, to an anti-democratic, authoritarian philosophy. It is government for the people, but not by the people”. Lawhead (61) opine that, “Plato’s... political philosophy is highly critical of democracy”. Popper, as captured by Mukherjee and Ramaswamy (94), accuses Plato as being ‘enemies of the open society’. Omoregbe (48) maintain that for Plato, “...democratic government would be an irrational government”. John (128) maintains that, “Plato’s political philosophy would lead naturally to an anti-democratic authoritarian philosophy”. Fite, according to Mukherjee and Ramaswamy, contend that, “Plato did not seek the happiness and self-development of the individuals, but to protect the few rulers”. Lavine (64) argues that, “Plato rejected individualism and democracy and argued for the subordination of the individual to the supremacy and power of the state”. Nwankwor (158) contends that the problem with aristocracy is that often the best intellectually are not the best morally or spiritually”. Nevertheless, Plato’s Notion of Leadership has a lot of contributions to the solution of issues arising from leadership. Plato therefore deserve applause for his consideration of women as citizens and for allotting them equal political right with their male counterparts. Based on their peaceful disposition, most women who are in positions of authority could be said to have acted in the way that guarantee peace than their male counterparts.

Plato, it would seem, is the first philosopher to have reflected on leadership. He pointed out the importance of leadership to the success of social/political existence. He redirected philosophers from the cosmic postulation to a thought on the relationship between governance and the nature of human beings i.e how one should govern given a specific abilities, inclinations, and dispositions on the part of the governed and the governing. Plato considered this as one of the most crucial thing to philosophize about. Thus Plato laid the foundation upon which others build on. Plato has successfully changed the course of leadership, for he has given a new direction which is that, in leadership, the interest of the citizens, that is the interest of the state as a whole and not the subjective interest of the leaders, should be pursued. Although it cannot be said that leadership is altogether free from the interest of the leaders, however, today leadership cannot also be said to be altogether the interest of the citizen. Plato’s recommendation of education, both moral and physical, for the leaders as well as for the citizens, it would seem, is the greatest innovation of all times. For sound and effective policies and decisions that would better the society to be made, the leaders have to be morally and rationally sound to be able to evaluate the implications, of the decisions they are about to take, and if the citizens must contribute to the growth of the state, they must know what rights are provided for them, their duties and obligation, then education is necessary.

Conclusion

Re-evaluating the concept of Plato’s leadership concept exposes the relevance of ethics and morality in leadership, promoting transparency, accountability, political enlightenment, leadership based on merit and strengthening the rule of law for political and national development. The examination of Plato’s leadership model has exposed the facts that for Plato, the leadership of the philosophy-kings (aristocracy) is the best because they (the philosopher-kings) have the potential to know what is good for the state. However, we have been confronted in the course of our examination of his proposal with what seem undeniable facts that Plato denied some of his citizens’ political rights, freedom, and equality

thus undermining their roles to the success of his mission. Nevertheless, Plato's success should not be weighed in what he has achieved but, according to Esikot (25) "...more on the fact that he identified problems militating against the existence of the state and set out to tackle them as best as he could". Thus we suggest that, since democracy appears to be more a satisfying form of leadership for men and in line with their desire, Plato's critics should rather focus on how to improve democracy, perhaps by applying those plausible prescriptions made by Plato like education, especially in logic, psychology and moral studies to the invigoration of our democratic ideals. It seems, until that is done, we shall not fully appreciate the work of this great philosopher on the issue of leadership.

Recommendations

- i. Plato's leadership concepts, encourages civic participation. In Nigeria, the people should be empowered and educated to enable them choose accountable leaders through their wise votes, making sure that leaders are competent and educated like Plato's philosopher Kings.
- ii. There should be promotion of ethical standards among leaders. This can be achieved if only individuals, who have been tested and trusted, that is, individuals with prove of having virtues of honesty, integrity, accountability and those who understands the common good, be entrusted with political responsibilities.
- iii. The electoral system should be reformed to ensure that leaders emerge after every election based on merit, competence capacity and accountability and not on God fatherism, materialism (money politics/bribery), ethnicity and rigging.
- iv. The leadership structure of Nigeria, should be institutionalized. This enables leaders, go through formal training to get prepared for political responsibility.

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