

Political Leadership and Good Governance in Bayelsa State: An Assessment of Governor Henry Seriake Dickson's Administration, 2016-2024

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DOI: [10.56201/jpslr.vol.11.no11.2025.pg63.76](https://doi.org/10.56201/jpslr.vol.11.no11.2025.pg63.76)

Abstract

Leadership is a critical factor which determines the success or failure of governance in any state. Political leadership is therefore very important if a nation wants to develop and as well build sustainable structures in place which will guarantee the continuous growth and development of their society. This study looked at the political leadership of the Governor Henry Seriake Dickson's administration, 2016-2020 in a bid to examine the impact of his administration on governance in Bayelsa State. The study is guided by two research questions and two objectives. The study made use of secondary data gotten from textbooks, journals, seminar papers and newspapers amongst others. Transformational leadership theory was employed as a theoretical framework for the study while content analysis was used to examine the role of political leadership in good governance in Bayelsa State between 2016-2020. The findings, among others, proved that political leadership style of Governor Seriake Dickson made a positive difference in the State notwithstanding the challenges, and that political leadership in any society play a critical role in the advancement of such society. The study therefore recommends, among others, that the present administration should put in place mechanisms that will help sustain the legacies of the previous government and that political leaders at all levels of government should be sent for leadership training and retraining seminars as this will help get them ready for service.

Keywords: *Leadership, Political Leadership, Transformational Leadership and Good Governance.*

Introduction

Leadership and good governance are two key elements that can enthrone development in any society when properly managed. According to Akanbi (2004), good governance is the capability of a government to sustain social peace, guarantee law and order, promote conditions needed for generating economic growth while promoting social security. Societal development will be a mirage where good governance is lacking. This is because good governance is hinged on the capacity of political leadership to exercise power and to make sound decisions over a period with regards to the economic, social, and environmental aspects of any society. Furthermore, there are certain qualities which relate to good governance, and they are protection and respect for human

rights, justice and rule of law; strengthening democracy through public participation and pluralism; encouraging transparency, accountability, anti-corruption policies and practices and capacity in public administration (World Bank, 1989).

According to Kolade (2012), governance involves participation by both the leadership of a state and the governed (i.e. the leader and the follower) in the development of the society or the state. What this represents is that to get the expected governance in Nigeria in general and Bayelsa state in particular, those in leadership positions must provide practical leadership which further covers adequate service delivery, accountability, and curtailing the excesses of public service holders. Good governance has been an important subject in economic development discourse because of its connection to information dissemination which could improve resource allocation, enhance efficiency, and increase the prospects of economic growth provided it is made available on time and without being distorted. Hence, Ijaya and Ijaya (2004) are of the view that it (good governance) is a vital pre-requisite for the improvement of citizens wellbeing and state development. It is apt to note that there is a general agreement that good governance is indispensable for transforming a nation's economy and social development.

Arising from the above, it becomes clear that for any nation or state, including Bayelsa State, to attain development, the role of political leadership cannot be over emphasized. Little wonder Akanbi (2004) and World Bank (2005) opine that good governance is hinged on the ability of political leadership of a state or government to make sound decisions over a period with regards to putting down structures and modalities in place which can help in the socio-economic development of the state. It is a truism that the quality of leadership and overall governance in a country or state directly affects the level of political stability and development that such country enjoys whilst bad governance and poor leadership only result in underdevelopment and political instability (Ologbenla, 2007). It is on the recognition of the imperative of leadership and governance to a country that Nnabiife (2010) avers that the survival of a system rests with leadership. All things rise and fall on leadership because leadership effectiveness is a steering that drives a nation or any organisation to heights of development and productivity by the application of good governance (Robert, 2009).

To Iyoha *et al.* (2015), political leadership is very critical to providing good governance; it advances societal development, as it is a process of influencing the activities of an organised or structured group towards the setting and attainment of goals. Lindauer (2023) avers that there are different leadership styles out of which political leaders at different levels can adopt and they are transactional leadership, transformational leadership, servant leadership, democratic leadership, autocratic leadership, bureaucratic leadership, laissez-faire leadership, and charismatic leadership. Consequently, underscoring the issue of effective political leadership in modern societies is the way politics is played as well as what the people who seek power use it for that eventually shapes the outcomes of governance and development in that nation or state. In Nigeria, Akase (2003) opines that often, political parties are organized along ethnic affinity. Hence, the desire for self-replication and seizure of power leads to appointment of less qualified and incompetent political leaders, who continue to service their godfather(s), while neglecting the problems of the people by depriving them good governance. In most cases, some leaders abandon the projects of previous government that is those that are not completed before their exit from office while in other cases, states with charismatic or democratic leaders build on existing projects bearing in mind their promise to the masses during their campaigns to provide them good governance when voted into office.

Historically, Bayelsa is a State in the Southern part of Nigeria which is in the Niger Delta region

and sharing boundary with Delta State and Rivers State, with its capital situated in Yenagoa (Nimizigha *et al.*, 2019). Bayelsa State was created from Rivers State on 1st October, 1996 by the late General Sani Abacha's military administration. The name "Bayelsa" was formed from the names of major local government areas at that time, namely: Brass L.G.A (BAL), Yenagoa (YEL), and Sagbama (SA). Since 1999 when the state transitioned to democratic government, she has had nine governors either appointed, elected or in acting capacity with Seriake Dickson of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) as the eight elected governor of the state who came into power on February 11, 2012 after defeating other party candidates during the governorship elections. He later got reelected for a second term.

Governance refers to the emergence and recognition of principles, norms, rules, and procedures that both provide standards of acceptable public behaviour, and that are followed sufficiently to produce behavioural regularities (Keohane, 2010). Governance put in place arrangements that ensure orderliness, acceptable standard of allocation of resources (both human and material) and a legal framework within which national behaviours are shaped and controlled while ensuring the delivery of high-quality political goods to citizens by governments of all kinds.

However, the post-independence Nigeria continues to grapple with the monster of bad leadership and governance which have been the bane of political instability and poor state of development in the country. With the available mineral and human resources which the country has, it is expected that Nigeria should soar high like other economic giants of the world. Paradoxically, Shanum (2013) reveals that, Nigeria, who is referred to as the giant of Africa, wallows in socio-economic, political, and infrastructural decadence. This is hinged on the inability of some of its leadership to harness the nation's vast resources and reserves towards socio-economic development of the state. In line with the above, Uzodike and Whetho (2011) avers that there seems to be a total collapse of ethical governance with the abuse of every moral norm of administration and a loss of conscience towards 'rightness' and objectivism in polity.

To this end, it becomes a wonder if Nigeria can ever rise out of leadership decadence and her impoverished state if those that are meant to drive the steering towards the nation's emancipation lack the morality and sanity to do so. Pathetically, scholars such as Nyeswusira and Nweke (2014) and Iyoha *et al.* (2015) all noted in their separate studies bothering on development that the human and infrastructural development curve of Nigeria is on the downward drift, despite the increase in oil revenue over the past three decades. Obviously, the actions of economic and political managers who are highly dependent on oil lease have exposed the Nigerian State to oil resource spell.

Nigeria has seen several ineffective governments with various leaders disappointing the people at different point and stages in time. The people have no say over how they are governed and/how accountable their government should be to them. For instance, Omolayo (2005) notes that the military rule relegated democratic institutions, culture of accountability and transparency and was characterized by the absence of citizen participation in the governance process of the state.

Omolayo, buttressing further stated that under the democratic government, the imperatives of good governance have been scuttled; the imperative of politics and administration of representation, using the ballot box, is being compromised all of which affect the development of the state. Hence people's wishes and desires regarding electing their representatives and consequently revealing their preferences for the character of government is taken away from them. In this condition, good governance becomes a rare commodity. The result has been diminished economic development, reduced social cohesion, heightened level of corruption and high state of insecurity, all of which undermine political stability and development.

There is therefore an agreement among development scholars, and institutions that the wealth of a nation has strong relationship with its type of governance, leadership, and social policy framework (Omoyibo, 2013). This is because leadership is important to demonstrating better-quality governance, which enhances societal development, hence it is a process which influences the actions of a structured group towards the setting and attainment of goals.

However, the search for a viable and development-oriented political leadership (government) by the people of Bayelsa State since the creation of the State according to some authorities has been elusive, tortuous, chequered and far-fetched because the people are yet to see the institutionalization of the process of good governance and attainment of democracy. It is against this backdrop that this paper assessed the political leadership style of Henry Seriake Dickson led government from 2016-2020 in a bid to identify its impact on the citizens of Bayelsa state. In attempting to achieve this objective, the paper sets for itself the following questions: What is the relationship between political leadership and good governance in Bayelsa state between 2016-2020? And what are the challenges affecting political leadership and good governance in Nigeria? Data for this study was collected through secondary sources and reviewed via content analysis.

Conceptual Framework

The concept of leadership

The concept of leadership is one with many interpretations and meaning. While some see leadership as an adhesive that binds a work group together, others see leadership as the catalyst that triggers group motivation, thereby having major influence on organisational or general group performance. To Omolayo (2005) leadership is an essential oil that keeps the wheel of government working without any difficulty. According to him, leadership makes the difference between success and failure in any organisation, government, or country. It involves giving direction to citizens who are the critical assets of the country. Leaders can influence their followers or subordinates, in addition to being able to give their followers legitimate directions. Leaders not only can tell their subordinates what to do but also can influence how or in what manner the subordinates carry out the leadership instructions (Richardson, 2010).

Furthermore, Osuntokun (1987), defined leadership in terms of direction and example provided by any person or group of persons who are chosen or who by an accident of history find themselves at the helm of affairs. In this case, it can be in a country, state, department, or institution desired for governance for the purpose of overall development and good governance of the said establishment. Leadership, therefore, embraces not only political direction but direction in economic, administrative, military, and educational sphere of life. Hence, leaders can influence their followers or subordinates, in addition to being able to give their followers legitimate directions. Leadership is therefore a reflection of characters, which include but not limited to knowledge, vision, courage, openness accountability, determination, transparency, uprightness, motivation and patriotism put in place by office holders to lead their people and/ followers as to achieve reasonable and positive societal development. Profound changes need committed leadership exemplified in transformational polices. This is why Okadigbo cited in Daniel *et al.* (2022) opines that leadership involves both a personality phenomenon and a social process concerning a number of persons in mental contact in which one person assumes dominance over the power of the others and organises their activities to move in a specific direction, changes their attitudes and beliefs and at every stage the followers exert influence, often a changing counter-influence, upon the leader.

Political leadership

Arising from the different definitions of leadership above, we can say that political leadership involves the making and directing of the policies of the state over time. Political leadership is both a relation and a process. According to Chemers (2002), political leadership is that which exist between persons who are enthroned as state leaders or managers and those who voted them into power, in some cooperative activity or set of activities to achieve a common goal of the state. It is a social influence by which the achievement of an output is pursued through the effect of many people by one person. Very importantly, political leaders essentially direct the workings of the collective actions towards attaining a jointly shared development in the state. It requires explicit organisational ability, strategic thinking and character mixed with vision and goodwill. It is therefore important to state that those with political leadership obligations must possess traits of tact, vision, charisma, character, and goodwill to positively determine how the goal of the state is achieved.

Adegbami and Uche (2015) see political leadership as the ruling class that bears the obligation of running the affairs and resources of a political unit by setting and influencing policy priorities affecting the territory through different decision-making structures and institutions created for the orderly development of the territory. Such territory is usually the political state. It is the people, usually the elite that operates the machineries of government on behalf of an organised territory. Such elite has the power to influence the conduct of public affairs from behind the scenes. Political leadership can also be seen as democratic leadership which constitutes a shared leadership pattern where group members participate as everyone is given opportunity to participate and ideas are exchanged freely, and discussion is encouraged. Political leadership is an essential aspect that explains the actions of the political class, who are saddled with the task of conducting the operations and machineries of a political system, through the choice of policy decisions that impacts on institutions and structures of the state for the purpose of developing the state. It further implies the group of people that administers the public affairs of a state. Political leaders make public policies for public good. These include people who hold decision-making positions in government, and people enforce the policies.

Good governance

Governance is one concept which has diverse definition and interpretation globally, however, governance has evidently become a key standard to judge a nation's credibility and political growth. To Nyewusira (2007) governance is seen as the different ways through which the social life of a society is coordinated and developed. The provision of physical safety and national security are prime examples. Modern nation-states deliver political goods to persons within their designed borders. It is according to their performance in governance realm that states succeed or fail. Stronger states are distinguished from weak states according to the levels of their effective delivery of political goods and governance. Iyoha, *et al.* (2015) sees governance as a process of social engagement between the rulers and the ruled in the society which implies that governance is predicated on the relationship between the ruling class and the ruled class in the society.

Good governance on its own refers to broad reform strategy and a particular set of initiatives to strengthen the institutions of civil society with the objective of making government more accountable, more open, and transparent and more democratic (Minogue, 1997). What this means is that the ability of political leadership in Bayelsa state to be transparent and accountable to the masses who voted them in to political positions. To Sharman (2007) good governance is linked to "the extent which a government is perceived and accepted as legitimate, committed to

improving the public welfare and responsive to the needs of its citizens, competent to assure law and order and deliver public services, able to create an enabling policy environment for productive activities and equitable in its conduct.” Thus, Dickson (2011) explaining further, posits that good governance in relation to a popular democracy does not call for ordinary type of leadership, but it requires tolerance, breadth of outlook, intellectual comprehension, hard work, selfless devotion, statesmanship, a burning sense of mission, etc. to make a success.

Theoretical framework

Transformational Leadership Theory

The transformational leadership theory was propounded by Macgregor in 1978, however many scholars have contributed immensely to improving the contents and assumptions of the theory. Jung and Sobik (2002) avers that the theory was however popularised by B.M Bass and J. B. Avolio both of whom avers that a leader is a person who initiates and inspires followers to achieve extra-ordinary outcome. The theory postulates that transformational leadership style enhances the motivation, morale, and performance of followers through a variety of state mechanisms and structure. These involves connecting the follower’s sense of identity of the state; being a role model for followers that inspire them and makes them interested; challenging followers to take greater ownership for their work, and understanding the strengths and weakness of followers, so the leader can align followers with task that enhance their performance (Odumeru & Ififaniyi, 2013). The transformational leadership theory further avers that a true leader must possess some qualities such as charisma, inspiration, motivation, and intellectual stimulation amongst others.

In applying this theory to the study, it becomes clear that the Governor Henry Seriake Dickson’s Administration, 2016-2020 was transformative in nature. This is in view of the visible developments strides and achievements which were all seen or witnessed in the state during his tenure as the governor of the state. Political leadership is an opportunity for leaders at the helm of affairs to provide development packages to their people and not for personal benefits. Hence, it is the position of this study that the Governor Henry Seriake Dickson’s Administration, 2016-2020 was transformative in nature. This is in line with Epelle (2023, p 71) who avers that transformational leadership distinguishes itself on the bases of its alignment to the greater good and its involvement of followers in processes or activities which leads to development and good governance.

Conclusively, for development and good governance to be witnessed in a state, it is necessary that the political leadership be transformative and charismatic in nature to help the state, or the organisation achieve set out objectives and targets. Hence, Bayelsa state within the period under review enjoyed the transformative leadership qualities of Governor Henry Seriake Dickson.

Data presentation and analysis

Effects of political leadership on governance in Bayelsa state: An assessment of the Governor Henry Seriake Dickson’s Administration, 2016-2020

Leadership is setting aside personal short term vested interests and working for the national and public interest instead. It is doing the right thing for the country and for all the people. There is a wise African saying that, “a leader is he who tells his people what they must hear, not what they want to hear”. For a precise understanding of leadership, it represents the driving-wheel of any organisation or forum. Leadership is concerned with fostering change and is inherently value-based. Leadership is all about godliness, proper planning and getting the right people to execute

the plan. It is also judicious management of available resources, and the leadership must be exemplary and transparent. The question with regards to our study now is: did the political leadership of the Henry Seriake Dickson's administration make any impact on the people of Bayelsa from 2016-2020? In answering this pertinent question, this study takes a look at the achievement of the Dickson led administration with regards to health sector development, educational development, infrastructural development and human capacity development in Bayelsa state within the period under review. Henry Dickson was inaugurated as the fifth executive governor of Bayelsa State on February 14, 2012. On assumption to power, he was determined to turn around the fortunes of the state for good with his transformational political leadership style. Wilson (2023) avers that political leadership is central in the governance process of any state, this is because, it distinguishes the citizens demands and the state provisions, thereby creating a platform for public accountability in the state. Hence, it is noted both locally and internationally in the management of state affairs that political leadership play a critical role in the development of any state. For Bayelsa state, no doubt the Dickson's administration didn't cover all areas however, the "country-man governor" as he was fondly called, brought about some transformative and developmental strides to the state which made his people to appreciate and applaud his leadership style. Ewepu (2015), reported how the then Bayelsa State, coordinator of the Bayelsa Youth Leaders Forum, (BYLF), Hon Ben Bara Ogidi, applauded his leadership style and the governor's performance in various sectors, with particularly reference to the peace they enjoyed and also exercising of their fundamental human rights.

Educationally, Thisday (2021) newspaper report revealed how the Dickson's administration elevated the standard of education in Bayelsa state, with the state rising from perennial 32nd position in federal examinations, to being rated among the top six during his tenure as governor. Education is the building block of any society, hence when a leader establishes good educational infrastructure and plans for her people, such a state or nation is bound to excel. The report further revealed how his transformational leadership style revolutionized education by introducing the free compulsory education from primary to tertiary institutions and employment of Masters and PhD holders from the state to lecture in the schools. More so, as part of his educational strides, policy, and achievement in the state of Bayelsa, Oyadongha (2017) and Segun (2019) revealed how the governor constituted the state's Higher Institution Students Loan Board in 2019 and the Education Development Trust Fund as part of administration's robust educational policy for the students of the state. Students in the state enjoyed educational loan scheme; part of which helped solve the needs and challenges of the indigent students in the state. Folaranmi (2021) further reports how the then Executive Secretary of Bayelsa State Higher Education Students Loan Board, Dr Michael Amaegberi, disclosed the achievement of the board when he revealed that the state government spent over N900million as loans to pay school fees of more than 4000 Bayelsans at different levels of education while others got their bursary payment swiftly as part of the vision of the scheme. The governor while in office ensured that government schoolteachers and workers were active at their places of assignment which led to the suspension of some teachers for dereliction of duty. Premium Times (2013) in a newspaper report, revealed how Governor Seriake Dickson of Bayelsa suspended nine teachers in Community Secondary School, Aleibiri, Ekeremor Local Government Area, for dereliction of duty. The suspended teachers were not at their duty posts when the governor paid an unscheduled visit to the school thereby leading to their suspension. The governor is said to have a penchant for efficient public service delivery and productivity.

More so, as part of his desire to bring about infrastructural development projects to the people of

Bayelsa, his political leadership style saw him building different classroom blocks, roads hospitals and markets for the people of Bayelsa in different local government areas within the state. Daniel (2013) in a Vanguard newspaper report stated that the Dickson administration did not just focus on infrastructural development but on social infrastructural development and then the investment infrastructural development. The administration was able to construct the following; the Outer Ring Road, which essence was to decongest the Yenagoa City Centre so that people are not held up unnecessarily, the six-sided profiled roads; which was christened Road 24, Road 30, Road 38, Road 21, Road 27c, Road 31 and Road 28 and the Isaac Boro Road, which was dualized into the outer ring road so as to promote economic and commercial benefits for the state while decongesting traffic as well.

The 'Kontriman' Governor as he was fondly called, was recorded to have performed excellently with regards to infrastructural development. As part of his administrative initiative, Thisday (2024) reports that the charismatic and transformative leadership style of the governor saw him constructing the Onopa Bridge, which leads to the New Yenagoa City, the Opume Bridge in Ogbia Local Government Area and the Harold Dappa-Biriye Conference Centre in Onopa. Other projects include the high-profile road by the Nigerian Airforce Mobility Command, the Kpansia Market Road and the Yenizue-Gene New GRA main access road, the Bayelsa Palm and the old Assembly Quarters roads, which were completed and are now in use. In a related development, Daniel (2013) revealed that the Dickson's administration also reduced the insecurity challenges witnessed within and around the state. In a bid to achieve development and peace, his administration consciously built the Integrated Security and Command Centre, which enables the concerned agencies and commissions to monitor security activities within the state with the use of Closed-Circuit Television Cameras in all strategic places within the state.

As part of his zeal to industrialize the state of Bayelsa, the Dickson's administration attracted but local and international investors and development experts to help in the development of the state. Again, Daniel (2013) revealed that his administration was able to build up the starch production plant at Ebedebiri and a Cassava farm, a banana farm, and green farm and an aquaculture farm for production and export while putting up over 50 houses in each of the Local Government Areas and major towns: with Yenagoa accommodating three major housing estates and the Golf Estate. Some of these projects he achieved with the help of local and foreign investors who were endeared by his administrative sagacity and commitment.

In order to boost qualitative health care service delivery to the people of the State, News diary (2013) reports that the Dickson's administration was able to construct five referral hospitals in parts of the State. The projects were cited in five Local Government Areas; Sagbama, Ogbia, Ekeremor, Southern-Ijaw and Kolokuma/Opokuma Council Areas. More so, because of the seriousness which the leadership of Henry Dickson attached to the welfare of workers, the State Government also constructed a 20-bed civil servants' clinic at the State secretariat complex. According to News diary (2013), the then commissioner of health further revealed how the governor was able to reduce the mortality rate in the state to near zero with the use of the state emergency ambulance during the years of floods in the State and setting up the HIV/AIDS Agency, a bold step that has helped in curbing the HIV/AIDS prevalent rate in the state.

With regards to sports, the Governor Seriake Dickson led administration, did not leave any stone unturned while ensuring the development of sports in the state. News diary (2013) reported that in preparations for the 2016 National Sports Festival, the Dickson's led administration provided flood lights and electronic score board, rehabilitation, and reconstruction of the swimming pool with the equipment building, the renovation of the hostels within the Samson Siasia stadium

complex, installation of seats and the renovation of the main bowl of the Complex. The governor did not overlook the aspect of human capacity development in Bayelsa state within the period under review this is as he was able to put in place different capacity development training and programmes for the people of the state. The Tide (2018) reports how the transformative and charismatic leadership style of the governor led him to the signing of the Bayelsa State Medical University Establishment Bill and two others to ensure training of medical personnel as part of his plan to improve capacity development in the state.

Deducing from the foregoing, we can state that the political leadership style of the Dickson led administration brought about good governance and development to the people of Bayelsa state, this can be seen in the visible legacies which the administration left in place. Hence, this study agrees that there is a relationship between political leadership and the provision of good governance in any state this is because development largely lies on the shoulders of leadership. It is on the recognition of the imperative of leadership and governance to a country or a state that Nnabiife (2010) avers that the survival of a system rests with leadership. All things rise and fall on leadership because leadership effectiveness is a steering that drives a nation or any state to heights of development and productivity by the application of good governance (Folarin, 2010).

The challenges of leadership and governance in Bayelsa State

Nigeria, a nation endowed with abundant national and human resources has democratic institutions, plural society, civil society organizations and critical mass media among others. These ingredients have the structure and capacity to make leadership and good governance thrive well in Nigeria. However, Imhonopi and Urim (2013) reveals that Nigeria's leadership and governance have remained incapable in the improvement of the socio-economic and the political development of the country since independence in 1960, particularly after the first republic. The political terrain has been unstable with lots of challenges militating against the genuine realization of the system. Some of the challenges posing a challenge to leadership and governance are:

i. **The use of political offices for settlement purposes:** Clientelism and settlement dispositions towards political and public offices whereby these esteemed offices requiring technocrats and professionals are used to pay back or settle political friends and loyalist, has grossly affected the provision of good governance which is the provision of the basic needs of the people and the development of the state in general. Political god fathers are seen imposing their anointed candidates on the people. During the 2011 governorship elections in Bayelsa state, Sahara Reporters (2011) reported how the Independent National Electoral Commission rejected former President Goodluck Jonathan's plan to force a governorship candidate on the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in Bayelsa State by rejecting the winner of the alleged fraudulent primary the party conducted. Political installation can affect the provision of good governance as the anointed candidate may not have the quality or charismatic leadership style that is needed at the time to drive the required development within the state.

ii. **Negative Approach to Leadership:** Nigeria's fundamental approach to leadership is troublesome. According to Adeyemi (2012), in Nigeria the primary goal of assuming leadership position is self-enrichment. Whereas Nigerian leaders have the power to educate, inspire and provide the people with the resources to advocate for the causes they believe in, they have failed in their responsibilities to lead by good examples. According to Achebe (1998) in his work *the problem with Nigeria*, concludes that Nigeria's problem is bad leadership and evidence on ground has consistently shown that he is correct. Certainly, it is leaders and not the poor rural

dwellers that are responsible for Nigeria's underdevelopment. In every country, it is the responsibility of the leadership to protect the political, social, and economic interest of the citizens. When leaders do not care about the masses, the citizens suffer.

iii. **Lack of vision and mission:** Leading a country involves making policies and finding solutions to problems, ensuring stability of the polity, and guiding the society to prosperity. But a large number of the political leaders of Nigeria lack the vision, mission, the passion and the character to effectively govern the state and deal with the crumbling economy. They do not have a clear understanding of their responsibilities, as some of them are insensitive to the people's sufferings. Nigerians are tired of complaining to those who are leading without listening to them. As Bell and Smith (2002) opined "leaders can point to many reasons why they are not good listeners, but none of these reasons excuses them from the obligation to listen". Leaders who listen are however, known to respond well to criticisms and crisis, build more loyalty, and increase the morale of the followers. Listening is a way of showing that a leader understands the plight of the people and can possibly solve their numerous needs.

iv. **Corruption:** Corruption is a devastator that has greatly eroded the fundamental values of democracy and its essential principles. Corruption is a practical problem involving the outright theft, embezzlement of funds or other appropriation of state property, nepotism and granting of favours to personal acquaintance. It has been argued that corruption involves behaviours which deviate from the morale and constitutional requirements. Corruption in its popular concept is defined as the exploitation of public position, resources, and power for private or selfish gain. Hence, Muhammad (2013) defined corruption as "the betrayal of public trust for individual, group, or personal gain". In the same vein, Obayelu (2007) identifies it as "efforts to secure wealth or power through illegal means for private gain at public expense or a misuse of public power for private benefits". When this happens therefore, good governance which is an aspect of democracy remains grossly unstable and the future seems to be very bleak because of rampant bureaucratic and political difficulties. The consequences of political corruption can manifest in institutional decay, chronic economic problem, and unemployment, and above all general democratic volatility. Other areas of challenge to the leadership and good governance of this country include, the incumbency factor, the politics of godfatherism, disjointed information, lack of rule of law and absence of accountability and transparency, (Muhammad, 2013).

v.

Conclusion

Conclusively, this study establishes that there is a relationship between political leadership and the development of any state or nation. It therefore becomes apt for leaders at different level to imbibe good leadership qualities. In the words of Wilson (2023), political leadership values are important in governance of the state, as such values influence the actions and behaviours of the political leaders in making and implementing policies for good governance. This is because for any state to succeed, there must be sound and transformative leadership personalities driving the structures of the state. The Governor Henry Seriake Dickson's led Administration, 2016-2020 was discovered to have transformed Bayelsa State notwithstanding some challenges and bottle necks, the political leadership style of the governor largely benefitted the State.

Recommendations

Arising from the study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. There is need for leadership training, seminars and development for our political leaders in Bayelsa State as this will further prepare them for efficient service delivery

- when the attain state or national leadership positions.
- ii. The present leadership in Bayelsa State should put in place good mechanisms in place for the sustenance and maintenance of the different projects built by the Governor Henry Seriake Dickson's Administration. This is because leadership is a continuous process.
 - iii. Accountability should be given its proper place in Bayelsa State. Both past and present leaders should be made accountable by publicly declaring what they have been able to achieve in terms of performance as well as how much was expended in every sector of the state.
 - iv. Project, policies, and programmes should be equitably and evenly distributed across the entire Bayelsa State to avoid neglect and marginalization. Every part of the state should be carried along during development planning as this will promote merit and justice.

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