Poor Leadership and Underdevelopment in the African Subcontinent: An Evaluation of Selected Factors

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ABSTRACT

Africa is considered the poorest continent in the world, despite the fact that it is the richest in natural resources. Africa suffers from chronic maladministration and a lack of effective leadership. Governanceandpoor leadership are becoming the identities of the African subcontinent. Leadership issues in Africa are always viewed in the context of development. The lack of leadership is really a challenge in the 21st century, as the people of the African subcontinent must understand that honest leadership is very important for the socio-economic and political development of society. In this present paper, the study has been conducted based on the literature available on the reasons behind faulty leadership. Such faulty leadership is responsible for poverty and economic backwardness. In essence, the study is qualitatively oriented and mainly uses secondary data for analysis. This article primarily evaluated the factors responsible for poor leadership and the challenges related to it. The study also looked at the importance of democracy and attempted to find a link between healthy democracies, strong leadership, and African development crises.

Keywords: Poor Leadership, Underdevelopment, Africa, Democracy, Socio-political and Economic Crises.

Introduction

Responsibility for development largely depends on the nation's leaders. The role of a leader is often to unite a nation under a state constitution along with related laws, social unification, and most importantly, the value of social accountability. The leader's involvement in social affairs and work for people's interests determines the progress of any country

and its people. It's very clear from past historical incidents that the progress of any country depends on the vision of its leader and the support of its people. In this context, the most significant question arises: why do we need development? It shows the change involving the collective will and determination of the individual to improve the global situation, which presents the nation with a challenge for the social, economic, and political restructuring of its life. Therefore, the success of any country's progress depends on the degree of togetherness and equality among the social elements, as the instability resulting from improper socio-political and economic development of the society will certainly lead to a crisis situation in the country and for the people, which may end with nationwide conflict. A revolution against the government is the ultimate way to express the frustration and discontent of current leaders.

Public representation and activism are required in any revolution to express their dialogue and point of view in the general public's interest under the stout leadership of a visionary leader in the society and country. This can be an extreme movement to appeal to the government to take decisions in favor of people for development. Such mobilization may eventually lead to the dissolution of government. These are normally very common issues in Africa, where there are many cases of maladministration. These problems lead to underdevelopment in most African countries and make life difficult for the population. The continuation of this can be seen in many countries where people seem to be frustrated and eager to live a better life because they want to overthrow the government. Especially recently, there has been revolutionary mobilization in many countries, including several African countries, these kinds of activities certainly raise questions about leadership crises in Africa. This crisis leads to a problem for mankind as the country cannot develop in the lack of leadership. The effects of cultural and socio-political changes with no aim have no value in any developing society. Africa's situation is not an exception; there have been many civil wars in African countries because basic needs are scarce and people are suffering; at the same time, there were many government representatives who never participated in people's planning and were always focused on their own benefits, which eventually led to corruption; such a situation eventually leads to a social unrest. This

is often marked by a long period of frustration, which is unbearable for revolutionaries. This complete revolution represents what many scientists understand as a "massive change in government structures" (Cameron, 1970). Although this concept refers to concepts that imply a cyclical change in forms of government, in general, the revolution represents a fundamental departure from all previous historical models.

Any revolution is always considered a result of any social conflict due to lack of social facilities and social crises for common people and certainly challenges the government and political decisions; sometimes it replaces political agendas, which is very true. The issue of ineffectual leadership undoubtedly has an impact on the social and economic structure of society. If we consider political theories and social concepts, we can conclude that the revolution is caused by a failure of the society's fundamental moral ethics, as well as a general lack of belief in the system. These are many social and political scholars, such as Milson (1997), who states that public activism gives freedom of expression and freedom to live free in society, as per the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Act 1948, that freedom is the core of any development and social autonomy, auch autonomy is very important for humanity and raising awareness of human rights.

In fact, the revolution lays the foundation for social development and a rethinking of society's structure. These types of public activism aim to achieve the highest human desire: happiness, because of violent conflicts such as the coup, wars of dominance and oligarchies are not called revolutions. Marx (1978), in his Communist Manifesto, continues to show the purpose and importance of the revolution. He pointed out that effective leaders are required to initiate and execute revisions as the basis for a conflict-centered class struggle plan to use society's resources in constructive manners. It can also be considered that the ultimate goal of the conflict is to end social freedom and restrict people's development. There are numerous examples, as we have seen in the Arab Spring in countries such as Egypt, Tunisia, and Lebanon. A long period of political and social stiffness is a well-known feature of any revolutionary state; such stiffness, according to Britani (1997), is caused by the gradual destruction of social values and the social suppression of establishments, resulting in "a weakening of political power and

the government used all its power and force to suppress people and remain in power".

In such situations, the role of the leader is critical, and Africa is always a focal point for social crises and civil wars, as it is well known that Africa is always lacking in effective leaders and its influence on power is beginning to wane. At the moment, more and more forces are gathering around the various forces of the opposition to the government. Furthermore, African independence arose as a result of many revolutions or liberation movements. African independence is the result of numerous good leaders with strong anti-capitalist views, but the problem arose when African society severely lacked such leaders in the current era. The crisis of African leadership is mainly due to the fact that most of the leaders are not visionaries and are not thinking about the interests of the people but rather their own narrow, selfish interests. Most researchers agree that the root causes of underdevelopment in Africa are poor leadership, a lack of their social commitment, and a *shortage* of basic skills. This article is intended to analyze the causes of mismanagement and its relation to poor leadership, which ultimately explains the underdevelopment of Africa after independence.

Theoretical Framework

The leadership crisis in Africa is mainly due to political setbacks and crises. The political leadership was always shown to be incapable of serving the people due to their self-interest and selfish behavior. Most of the researchers pointed out that in Africa the management of people's facilities, planning, and social strategy is very poor and not at all up to the mark. Also, the knowledge of social management is not adequate. The present article presents a view on the reasons for the lack of leadership in Africa and poor management since independence. This article sought to comprehend the lack of political will and the causes of Africa's underdevelopment and social backwardness. The development of Africa is always undermined as the country has never taken it seriously, and undoubtedly, this is also due to the lack of an honest approach by the political leaders. Many African leaders become wealthy and never consider social issues, putting overall economic development at risk. According to Cheeseman, Collord, and Reintiens (2018: 05), they mentioned in their papers that there were some political leaders who

took care of common people, never benefited economically, and always valued the benefit of others, but unfortunately none of them survived, such as T. Sankara, Julius Nyerere, and Nelson Mandela.

In fact, it's a great fact that in the African context, the leaders are considered great because they have a great influence on the people's lives, opinion formation and development. The leaders who were in power since independence didn't have any plans or defective plans to change the socio-economic status of Africa. Mostly African leaders and political advisers didn't move in the right direction. The leaders never represented the interests of the common people, but the point of consideration was very economic and self-centred. The facts remain that the African leadership was very clueless about the people's development. True leaders who worked very hard for independence were really thoughtful about people's progress and economic development. The research from many scholars evidently pointed out that the majority of the African leaders were clueless on the future development plans of Africa, and in a real sense, they were enjoying the position for self-benefits as there was no plan. Political corruption and the selfish nature of leaders are to blame for the blockage of African development and economies.

Research Methodology and Objectives of the Study

The nature of present research paper is qualitative and based on literature available on poor leadership in Africa. In this study, a secondary research method was chosen, which also known as computer-assisted research (Kothari, 2004). The advantage of the secondary research method is that information and information are easily accessible. Secondary search is faster because information is available. This study used research articles, and world forum report and report based on African poor governance. This study evaluated the factors responsible for the poor leadership in African Sub-continent.

The objective of this study is to understand and evaluate the reasons behind the poor leadership in African subcontinents and their relation to democratic values. The paper also has the objective of identifying challenges and underdevelopment in relation to ineffective leadership in Africa.

Crises of leadership in Africa

Leadership and governance have always been intertwined. The leaders are closely associated with public service and considered to represent the people's interests. The crisis of African leaders is not a new issue in Africa. There is an extreme lack of a quality representative who can motivate, influence, and control people's actions to get the desired goal for social interest (Idike 1996). Every individual in society and at the social level is influenced by leadership. This means that leaders have an impact on people and groups of communities because they are the primary representatives of issues affecting people in society. The primary responsibility of leaders is to form strong bonds with the people and represent them before the government in order to solve their problems to develop social structure. Leadership regulates the overall socio-economic expansion of a society and social agencies. Poor leadership leads to poor management of resources, which usually leads to malfunction. Therefore, people who try to bridge the gap between their ideas and the establishments can never succeed because of the lack of commitment and social will on the part of the leader, which give rise to social conflict and, as a result, increases and continues social crimes. This is actually a condition of Africa and the reason behind the underdevelopment of African society. It can be deliberated that this is due to the lack of quality governance in many African communities and countries. Because of corruption, the leaders have put the people in a bad economic situation and a sad state that they are forced to fight for their survival, disillusioned with the political activities of these selfish and visionary leaders. Many people seem to blame the colonizers' negative priorities for the problems of underdevelopment and mismanagement. Of course, colonialism had a great negative impact on Africans, making them increasingly inferior. In this context, it is also very important to state here that the West has plundered Africa's natural resources, used all local assets, but never tried to help them in any way as there were no effective leaders who could represent African needs. It became an advantage for western rulers who destroyed the system of African society. African leaders severely impoverish the African continent. It's also a fact that some leaders are very rich, have no attachments to local people, and have never taken initiatives to solve some of our economic problems, as

evidenced by the example of Mobutu Sese Seko Kuku Ngbeduvazabanga from Zaire.

These issues with African leaders and leadership make development impossible. Hence, Africa is still seen as underdeveloped and in crisis. The inappropriate actions of African leaders cause confusion and disorder among African nations. Most African countries were integrated into democratic governments after independence and subsequent military intervention. However, if power shifts from military to civilian rulers, these countries are threatened with a kind of civilian dictatorship or "democratization" (a situation in which civilian rulers are authoritarian), according to Agbai (1990). These civilian dictators are blind and powerful, and as they are away from the common people's interests, their access is questionable. The people cannot choose their leaders; for this reason, these leaders, usurping power, intimidate the people and clearly demonstrate that they do not belong to the people. Such dictatorship and their erroneous calculations are primarily to blame for the damage done to Africa because they destroy the unity that would exist if these leaders adopted a social discourse that allows for people's representation in the nation.

Discussion and Evaluation

Based on the available literature and the facts taken into consideration, in the modern era, African leaders do not represent the interests of ordinary people but rather the interests of the capitalist class, which has always dominated the system. The leadership mechanism has become a tool for looting the country. So, the people are using this leadership position for their benefit and making money out of it; there is no sense of social service or communal welfare. The ineffectual leadership issue in Africa is very common, but unfortunately, it is hampering the growth of society, especially on the economic front. In this article, the author has identified some indicators that are mainly responsible for the leadership crisis in African subcontinent. The following indicators are taken into consideration to find out the objective of this paper, indicators are mentioned below:

1. Lack of leadership quality and poor control of resources

The representation of leaders is very different in real-life situations. There is a severe lack of ethical values in the leadership's behavior. The leaders' image in the media and in public is very different, and their moral presentation lacks credibility; the leaders have looted African funds and the trust of the people. The lack of responsibility for society and accountability towards government were badly compromised, and leaders were mainly thinking about their pockets and financial benefits; in fact, there were no innovative and strategic plans for social upliftment. The leaders never planned properly to use their natural resources for economic benefits and development.

2. Poverty and job crisis in Africa

Africa's countries are rich in resources and natural wealth, but the situation of the continent's employment generations, particularly youth employment, is dire. Africa's average youth unemployment rate is 55.75%; this itself shows the inability of African leaders to support the development of the African economy. Skill development is insufficient, and there is a severe shortage of skilled workers. This itself shows the weakness in the education infrastructure and academic vision of the country. Many of the reports also indicated that the majority of the positions are held by older members of the society and that they won't contribute much. The labor market requires graduates to have many years of work experience if they have just graduated from university. African leaders don't want young people to succeed because they use them in their political battles. Poverty and a lack of jobs among Africa's youth force young people to put powerful and wealthy politicians in their pockets.

3. Lack of skill development and strategic management

The social structure of Africa is very traditional, and its thinking is very orthodox. The innovations of ideas is lacking because people still believe in the traditional way of living and have never stressed the development of social agencies, their relations, or the strategic planning of socio-economic and political progress. Traditional muscle struggles and tribal populations are still one way to dominate society and become

leaders. In this context, the World Forum has clearly pointed out that approximately 50 percent of the people in Africa accept that they need to grow and upgrade their skills to fill the gap in the labor market. The research also pointed out that the gap in skill development and poor skill development plans are mainly a big barrier for the counties' development, and these are certainly unable to attract foreign investment and many multinational companies (WEF;Sept2019).

4. *Political Malfunctioning and lack of socio-political Vision*

The lack of socio-political vision is well marked in African development. It's not true that they don't have a plan, but the problem is with the implementation and proper plan of execution, which directly have an adverse impact on the African economy. The political malfunction is equally responsible for this poor execution. The plans and visions are only used to manipulate the voters at the time of elections. There are many such examples where the leaders have given very attractive future plans but, on the ground, nothing has been implemented and all that remains is rhetoric. The World Economic Forum made it abundantly clear that Africa does not require charity, but rather good leadership capable of planning and executing. The case of Nigeria is well-known here, in which there are no leaders with a vision for developed nations because the leaders lack leadership skills and a vision for their country. Actually, this is a problem for most of the African countries and clearly shows that leadership culture exists on the continent, but unfortunately, such incompetent leaders are in political positions.

5. *Ineffective plan for foreign investment in African subcontinent*

The world is increasingly recognizing that private capital plays an important role in economic development. African countries set out to liberalize the investment environment but did not receive a lot of foreign direct investment. Actually, Asian leaders have been unable to develop a constructive and visionary FDI strategy, and commercial factors have not been effectively applied to increased economic wealth. Many studies have stated that in countries like Tanzania and Uganda, FDI has significant positive effects. The multinational companies wanted to establish their branches in these countries and were really keen to connect with the global market, but they have pointed out some objections

related to foreign investment, government policies, and the lack of a favorable environment to execute FDIs. Therefore, African countries, which no longer attract FDI, cannot fully benefit from the potential of foreign capital to promote economic development and integration.

The indicators mentioned above are mainly responsible for the African crisis; these problems need to be effectively dealt with by African leaders to make social progress possible, but for that, the leaders need to be committed, honest, and understand human values with an effective vision and strategic plan, which are seriously lacking. As a result, Africa is still considered underdeveloped and in a deep socio-political and economic crisis. The inappropriate actions of African leaders are sowing confusion and unrest in African countries. The crisis related to human development is mainly due to factors related to economic investment in Africa, a strategic plan for education and skill development, and most importantly, a democratic sense of social progress. African people must identify and appreciate the effective way to choose leaders in a democratic system.

Leadership Failure

Strong leadership needs dedication and an approach toward social development. It is basically a very active and stable process to activate changes in society and for the development of a country. Leadership is a necessity in a developed society, as it influences others to participate in the development process and achieve goals by guiding the establishment to make it more valuable. Leaders must have strong ethical values and strong beliefs to develop and improve positive public opinion, knowledge, and social skills for the quality development of society and social agencies. In fact, the basic conception of leadership has gone through many changes over the decades. The primary goal of leadership is to support primary relationships in society. Leadership was no longer associated with static abilities, natural characteristics, or human qualities in the twentieth century. The leader must have a good relationship with the followers, which mainly depends on the trust and credibility of the leader and the respect of the followers. But the understanding of the problem and the issues behind people's mobilization makes leadership influential. So leadership varies depending on the situation. Thus, leadership is the link between meeting needs

and combining situational requirements. Overall, people's participation was low. Some scholars also argue that leadership is one of the most important factors in the world because it determines the developmental level of any nation. True leadership must be mature, bold, and have a definite vision that supports and understands human and social psychology and changes people's emotions for the development of society.

Leadership failure is mainly due to the lack of skills or an inability to mobilize public support. Normally, the wrong selection of people for leadership positions certainly paralyzes the entire system. This is a case involving African countries. In African countries, most of the leaders are not serious and totally unqualified. Poor leadership paralyzes development in Africa. Poor leadership was on display in Zimbabwe, where an unskilled, person held the position of director. It means-

One with no vision cannot lead those who can see; the unaware cannot lead towards awareness; and the incompetent cannot lead the sensible. And those who are deaf cannot be identified by the value of sounds. As elsewhere in the world, merit is rewarded in current institutions, and leadership skills are a crucial factor in any transformation. Leaders must always spread not only trust, but also potential and vision for growth. This actually determines not only the value of mankind but also the future of the nation.

The failure of leadership and the lack of nationalism among African leaders led to a leadership crisis and, as a result, to the Africa as poor Subcontinent. The burden of failure of African leaders is so great that its consequences have led to underdevelopment, dictatorship, poverty and economic stagnation, insecurity, corruption and loss of reputation in the eyes of the international community. After evaluation of all mentioned factors, it's very clear that the leadership crisis is a real issue in Africa which needs attention.

Leadership Challenges in the 21st Century

For Africa, in the 21st century, it is important to create strong and sustainable management institutions that can support the holistic development of the continent. This is very important because in many African countries there are no consistent, reliable, and long-term

institutions capable of solving all their issues and challenges effectively. The challenge in Africa is to produce quality and visionary leaders and potential leaders. Most of the rulers in Africa never protest the interests of Africa, neither economically nor regionally. No security for people and commodities leads to an unstable country. Rulers in Africa never tried to strengthen their agencies. It was a clear case of strategic failure and leadership breakdown (Konneh, 1998). The powers never got balanced in Africa as there was a severe lack of unity and trust among the people. It can be seen from the arguments mentioned above that strong leadership and administrative factors have badly contributed to the overall expansion of the country. Such administrative collapse results in the growth of malfunctioning, administrative incompetence, and social backwardness (Iliffe, 1995; Goodwin, 1957). Present-day leaders of state and government in Africa should see this as a challenge and an opportunity to fight for sustainable development and the growth of social agencies that can be used to strengthen social capital.

To ensure that the country continues to function effectively and efficiently despite the current government's problems, it must create enormous value for the people and provide all support based on strategic and operational planning for improvement. Besides, there is no doubt that for the African subcontinent, maintaining leadership remains a huge challenge. Many potential leaders failed to establish a potential governance system and were unable to guarantee the proper functioning of their country long after their deaths, and certainly, the overall system couldn't manage to overcome such a breakdown. In Tanzania, for example, people and leaders commonly claim that we are still looking for the reason behind everything that Tanzania's first president, Mwalimu Julius, established and fought for but couldn't sustain and lost. This example clearly points out the incompetency of the Mwalimu administration, that they were not sufficiently capable to manage the effective governance that ensures the preservation and transfer of the good things, which is really required for socio-economic development of African sub continents. In this context, Mawere (2009) stated that many African political leaders were known for the fact that the African continent can produce quality leaders. He also pointed out that in the present era of the 21st century; it is time to correct the mistakes done

by previous generations in terms of understanding and presenting quality leaders.

In this paper, the researchers evaluated the factors and found that in the 21st century, the most important idea is to not only develop countries but also to develop the idea of democracy and people's participation in the decision-making process. A sense of political communication is also important for African citizens. Citizens must understand what democratic principles require for the best interests of their society. Citizens must consider the real culture of democracy and exercise it for responsible governance. The value of freedom of expression and the right to vote in decision-making, all of which are basic democratic values that everyone must accept and promote for the healthy development of human values in African society.

This research paper intends to argue that poor leadership is due to a lack of understanding of democracy and the power of decision-making. Effective leadership must value people, and for this, an effective democratic setup is required, as the people's rights and equality of social presentation are very crucial. This certainly means that leadership is a symptom and not a cause of development. Africa's prospects for democracy depend on the search for better leaders, and the leader must dedicate their work to the factors that can spread the ability to work together to ensure that the government serves the interests of the people. As a result, an effective leadership approach is critical to the spread or reduction of negative freedom, because democratic citizens cannot function without the ability to freely speak and act. Particularly, if the African subcontinent really wants to develop a strong leadership culture, leaders must consider constructive criticism. Only forward-looking and knowledge-based guidelines can identify and formulate objective alternatives to development policy. African leaders must avoid being suspicious of their opponents and brothers in the development arena.

Conclusion

In this paper, we have argued that the African leadership is going through a very critical phase and that poor leadership can never support the development of African countries. In fact, the tradition of African

governance clearly shows that the notion of visionary leaders is badly lacking in the continent's administration. Today, Africa is known for poverty, job issues, social crises, civil wars, and so many other social challenges, but on the other hand, the continent is very rich and blessed with unlimited natural resources. The reason for being poor and underdeveloped is mainly the lack of vision and skills, and of course, the lack of decision-makers. In fact, the stimulus behind the African crisis is the poor leadership; if, in any country, the leaders are self-centered, dictatorial, and corrupt, the country cannot be saved from corruption and backwardness. Although it is true that some African leaders did their best to develop people and social agencies, as well as to motivate all social capital to understand the importance of ethics in social development, they did not serve for long. The present paper also studied the selected reason for the poor leadership and pointed out that corruption and a lack of democratic setup and understanding are also reasons for the poor leadership, which ultimately give rise to corruption that was never dealt with properly. This paper mentioned the significance of democracy as one of the major challenges in Africa. It is clear that in Africa, the leaders have no value for democracy, and it is evident in their development approach that leaders are not able to ensure a strong democracy.

The study also suggests the following recommendations:

1. The educational campaign for better understanding of democracy

2. Foreign investment needs to be encouraged, and government policies need to be restructured.

3. Creating focused, mobilized, and active civil society organizations to empower African leaders

The concluding remark of this research paper is that, poor leadership is responsible for the long sufferings of Africa and African society. Based on the evaluation of selected factors and considering the people's point of view, strong leadership is always considered a basis for strong socio-political and economic setups, but this is critically lacking on the African continent. To ensure quality and skill-based sustainable growth in African society, African policymakers must continue to work on leadership development.

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