

**EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: AN  
ASSESSMENT OF UNITED NATION SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (UN-SDG)  
IN NORTH EASTERN NIGERIA.**

By

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***Abstract***

*Effective leadership is one of the major attributes of development in any given society. A society that does not properly utilize both human and material resources may not prosper. Development is a change from a stage of need to a fulfilled stage. Two terms are hitherto, interrelated. This and many more are the core indices that facilitate and sustain development. The study considers transformational leadership theory by (Burns, M.J 1978) as the leadership approach that will bring changes in any given society. For the purpose of this study, the qualitative approach will be used in order to gather and analyze information with the aid of both primary and secondary sources of data. The target audiences of this study are the concerned Nigerians that are living in north-eastern part of Nigeria. The output of the study reveals that sustainable development will provide a brighter future for Nigerians; it will aid in utilizing our resources and facilitate economic growth. The major course of Nigeria's underdevelopment is basically attributed to poor leadership and illiteracy. To achieve sustainable development there's need to have a zealous and passionate leaders that are determined to bring development while the populace should embrace technological knowhow. People need to be liberated from illiteracy; equity in gender should also be put in place as a way of engendering economic prosperity.*

***Keywords: Development, Leadership, Goals, Sustainability, United Nations.***

## **Introduction**

Leadership is the process whereby one individual influences other group members toward the attainment of defined group, or organizational goals. Leadership is a one way process, in which followers passively respond to what a leader does, or what a leader is, which tend to over simplify the processes at work. Basically, development is majorly seen as a change from a state of need to a desired state of prosperity. Certainly, development may emanate from the grass root level to gradually an advance level. The United Nation sustainable development goals came into effect in January 2016, and they will continue to guide UNDP policy and funding until 2030. As the lead UN development agency, UNDP is uniquely placed to help implement the Goals. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), otherwise known as the Global Goals, are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. World Bank development report 2018

Sustainable development should enable people to realize their full potential, building self-confidence, dignity and fulfillment. It should liberate people from the ills of want, ignorance, deprivation and exploitation; and correct existing imbalances and injustices in the society. This people-driven approach of development involves the judicious as well as full utilization of all available resources and the full participation of the people in community development. The need for the inclusive participation of the people emanates from the experience which depicts that there is a greater chance of success if institutions provide for popular participation, local leadership and decentralization of authority (World Bank, 2003). Likewise, the local communities cannot count on the central government to meet all their needs, in that, the efficient delivery of services to rural communities must depend on effective organization at the community level in order to have meaningful interaction with the delivery agencies in the establishment of priorities. Record has it that the Federal Government of Nigeria applied a top-down (supply driven)

approach to planning and management of rural development programs resulting in the marginalization of the grassroots beneficiary communities. This has resulted in the under-development of the rural communities; thereby, forcing more qualified people to migrate from the rural communities to the major towns and cities where, as most people say, 'it is happening'. Consequently, most highly qualified professionals at community level migrated to the urban areas, leaving only a handful behind. The overall impact of this dearth of professionals at the local level has compounded the problem, making development at that level an impossible task (Stephen and Moses, 2012).

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth. Today, the Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG) in the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) provides substantive support and capacity-building for the SDGs and their related thematic issues, including water, energy, climate, oceans, urbanization, transport, science and technology, the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR), partnerships and Small Island Developing States. DSDG plays a key role in the evaluation of UN system wide implementation of the 2030 Agenda and on advocacy and outreach activities relating to the SDGs. In order to make the 2030 Agenda a reality, broad ownership of the SDGs must translate into a strong commitment by all stakeholders to implement the global goals. DSDG aims to help facilitate this engagement. However, it has been debated that three main resources education, gender equity and poverty reduction are the determinant for sustainable development of every nation;

the improper utilization of leadership to perform optimally and effectively or to manage the other available resources for effective performance in Nigeria's sustainable development goals are the crux of this study. The manpower, which according to Stacey (1980) means human resource requirement for development needs should not only require requisite knowledge and skill, they must have to be sufficient in number, quality and in the right mix in order to be able to perform the onerous and varied functions and responsibilities entrusted on them by the constitution. It is against this backdrop, this study entitled: effective Leadership and sustainable development goal in Nigeria: An Assessment of UNSDGs in north eastern Nigeria' is to be carried out with the view to finding out how effective leadership will facilitate sustainable development in Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Research Problem**

Leadership is one the most effective tools in ensuring good governance in any organization, effective leadership plays a crucial role in the overall functioning of a given society as a vehicle for sustainable development. Odiya and Omofonmwan (2007) state that education in Nigeria is besieged by colossal problems such as poor funding, educational infrastructure including inadequate classrooms, unqualified teachers and polluted learning environment which were attributed by lack of effective leadership.

The study seeks to identify a gap within which effective leadership will address issues related to education, poverty and gender inequality. However, the common factor is the inability of leaders to lead or to build a team that will attract, develop and retain top talent.

In the same vein, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals of 2030, is still unable to address the issues of poverty in Nigeria where majority of the populace live below one dollar in a day. Perhaps, 86.9 million Nigerians now live in the extreme poverty which represents nearly 43.5% of its estimated

210 million populations. It also culminates in the area of poor educational system in Nigeria where there is a significant number of school dropout and the level of illiteracy is becoming a concern to all particularly in the north eastern Nigeria. Where there is one in every five of the worlds out of school children in Nigeria. Even though primary education is officially free and compulsory, about 10.5 million of the Nigeria's children aged between 5-14 years are not in school. Gender inequalities also create an artificial set back to the entire region.

Without effective leadership, the said anomalies are likely to continue which in turn retards the development at all levels of government. Therefore, there is a need to investigate the relationship between effective leadership and sustainable development in accordance with United Nation Sustainable Development Goals with particular emphasis on better education, poverty reduction and gender inequality.

### **Research Questions**

The study will seek to address the following research questions.

1. How will effective leadership address issues of education in north eastern Nigeria?
2. What can effective leadership help to address the problem of poverty in north eastern Nigeria?
3. Why is effective leadership necessary in addressing the problem of Gender inequality in north eastern Nigeria?

### **Objectives of the study**

The broad objective of this study is to examine the nexus between effective leadership and sustainable development in Nigeria. While the specific objectives are as follows;

1. To find out the nexus between leadership and quality education in north eastern Nigeria.
2. To examine the role of leadership on poverty reduction in line with universal best practices in Nigeria.
3. To proffer feasible recommendations that will bring about gender equality in Nigeria.

### **Research Hypotheses**

This study is based on the following hypothetical propositions:

1. Ho: There is no significant relationship between effective leadership and sustainable development goal in Nigeria.

### **Scope of the study**

The scope of this study covers the leadership aspect for sustainable development in Nigeria with specific emphasis on poverty reduction, education and gender differences in north eastern Nigeria, namely Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe states. This is to restrict the broadness of the study to avert complexity and clumsy research findings. Thus, doing so would at the end, yield better research outcomes.

### **Contributions of the research**

The study will be of tremendous benefit to policy makers in making the right policy that will attract sustainable development which will hence accelerate stability for present and the future generation. It will also contribute to the existing body of literatures on policies as it relates to national development. The rationalization for this study is derived from the need to promote efficiency in local leadership. Therefore, in examining effectiveness of leadership for sustainable development in Nigeria - the role of

leadership as it relates to United Nations Sustainable Development goals is usually the focus. This is done to enhance delivery of UN targeted policies at the lowest level of government.

In this connection, findings of the research will add to the knowledge and understanding of the subject matter. It will generate greater awareness among leader's functionaries on the importance of having a proper and practical management of resources as a vehicle to good governance. It will also Provide useful knowledge on factors that might have impacted and contributed to the national development or otherwise; and it will also Support and enrich theory and model of leadership particularly in Africa.

In addition, this research will be useful to corporate bodies, research bodies, institutions, policy makers, researchers and students alike. Above all, this study is germane to all nook and cranny of the economy (Nigeria).

### **Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

Effective leadership requires a leader to adopt a style of behaviour that matches the conditions in which leadership is to be exercised. Leaders' behaviour and leaders styles are invariably categorized as somewhere between relationship oriented and task oriented. What is different about these ideas is that the situation itself is deemed to make one style more appropriate than another and no style is appropriate for all situations.

The study will examine the recent developments ideas about leadership which will acknowledge the importance of the context in which leadership is exercised; it gives a brief consideration of the implications of national cultures for the appropriateness of the leadership style.

As noted earlier, it is commonly assumed that a leader exert influence on the behavior of followers. The study will focus on the transformational leadership style by Burns J.M, (1978), which sees a

transformational leadership as the approach to leadership which is said to be the most appropriate in times of significant organizational change. Where organizational change is required, perhaps the environment is subject to fluctuations, a leader's task is to have a vision of what needs to be done to cope with the situation, the ability to communicate this vision to followers and the capability to energize or inspire them to change their current way of doing things.

The theory sets out four characteristics of a transformational leader namely; charisma, vision, intellectual stimulation of followers and an ability to take their emotional needs into account. Transformational leaders see their relationship with subordinate as interrelated part of a continuous developing story. They see the bigger picture, are more ambitious about long term goals and do not hesitate to share their vision with other people. Their eyes are on the hills. This approach seeks to offer narrative or vision, to instill a sense of purpose and direction. It coaches staff rather than telling them what to do, winning hearts and minds instead of controlling them.

Theoretically, effective leadership and sustainable development are the key concepts in this research work that require clarification to ensure proper understanding of their operational usage in the discourse. However, drawing on a wide range of literatures and ideas, frameworks of analysis have emerged that provide insights into the structure and working of local government vis-à-vis leadership style adopted. That is, several theoretical frameworks can be anchored to examine the issue of leadership and local governance. While other contending theories will be analyzed, this research work will be anchored on the effective local governance. Abutu cited in Odo (2014) views the concept of integrated rural development as that of total transformation of the lives of the rural populace. According to him, integrated rural development is that process of taking deliberate and concrete actions to ensure the positive transformation of the productive forces of the rural populace and the exploitation of local

resources for their common good. Hence it involves the mass mobilization of the rural populace in Policies that affect their lives, modernization of their productive techniques and abilities and equitable distribution of whatever benefits that result from processes among different families, communities and classes. Integrated rural development therefore has ‘social, political and economic dimensions’.

### **Research Methodology**

This section will discuss the method engaged in the conduct of the study, the technique and tools used in collecting and analyzing the data, the targeted population and method of sampling in order to achieve the desired objective of the study.

### **Research Design**

The researcher used both exploratory and descriptive research designs, an exploratory data analysis (EDA) as promoted by John turkey. EDA Approach is appropriate for both quantitative and qualitative data because it allows the researcher to summarize the important characteristics of good leaders ; it will provide insights into and comprehension of an issue or situation. This approach also allows the author and readers to gain insight into data in a clear and concise manner and extracts the most relevant data. The researcher believes EDA, is the best tool for the research topic.

It will help to determine the best research design, data collection method and selection of subjects to use. Data were collected from international and national data sources including: World Bank, Local Government Service Commission, National Planning Commission, rural transformation programs, state and local government joint account publications, Central Bank of Nigeria, United Nations etc. While descriptive research, also known as statistical research, describes data and characteristics about the population or phenomenon being studied. Descriptive research answers the questions who, what, where, when and how. Thus, on the basis of the above, the two research designs will be appropriate for the

proposed study as it will be important to gauge the various aspects of effective leadership and sustainable development in Nigeria in relation to united nation sustainable development goals.

### **Method of Data Collection**

For effective and flawless data collection, the research method entailed the use of both primary and secondary methods of data collection using both qualitative and quantitative ways as it will be a synergy of content analysis and survey design. Primary data were sourced through a perception survey that was conducted to measure variables using *structured questionnaire*, that is, a document of questions was circulated to the sample population for the purpose of collecting information. Questionnaire items may tap issues such as productivity and performance, organizational structure and effective leadership in line with global best practice. In addition, *interviews* were conducted within some selected parts of north eastern Nigeria, to solicit views from respondents based on *purposive random sampling* especially the top management staff. Secondary data were obtained from relevant literature (i.e. leadership, UN policy guide on SDGs, local government and other related/relevant textbooks), Local Councils' bulletins, relevant research and seminar papers, annual reports, magazines/newspapers, journals, statistical abstract, electronic material (i.e. internet was surfed extensively) etc. Thus, these methods will be widely used to extract the most relevant information that will help in better execution of the proposed research work.

### **Research Population**

The population of this study embraces all the six (6) states Government in north east (they are Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe) - Nigeria. This is to ensure uniformity and reduce prejudice as all local government areas in Nigeria are created and governed by the same constitution.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

The method of data analysis for this study is a combination of analytical modeling and empirical analysis. Therefore, the following multiple statistical tools will be used: frequency distribution tables, Chi-square statistical test tool was used to test the research hypotheses. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and regression models were employed in the analysis. That is, this study employed both Content Analysis and Gap Analysis (Discrepancy Analysis); the former entails the review, summary, and integration of various literature, documents and reports to provide an overall view of the subject matter. Analyzing previous reports and documents can result in an excellent understanding of the unit of analysis, while the latter embraces an examination of clearly defined gaps between actual practice and a performance standard. The premise is that any problem is a deviation from a performance standard, whether the standard is clearly stated or not. By focusing on the performance gap, the leaders and the planning team can determine the cause for the discrepancy and devise a solution, such as better education, gender equality and poverty reduction.

### **Discussion conclusion and Recommendation**

In the process of carrying out the research, a total number of 66 questionnaires were distributed within six states of north eastern Nigeria, out of which a number of 52 questionnaires were filled and returned which represent 78.8% of the respondent while a total number of 14 questionnaires are unable to retrieved which represent 21.8% of the questionnaire. Going further, out of the 52 questionnaires retrieved 31 respondents which stand for 59.6% are the holders of B.sc therefore, majority of the respondents are B.sc holders. On the effect of leadership style as a determinant for sustainable development 21 of the respondent representing 40% have strongly agree that leadership style is one of the determinant of sustainable development within the region. Moreover, 27 respondents which are 51%

are of the view that education is a catalyst for sustainable development in the north east. In the same vein, 16 of the respondent which represent 30.8% also emphasize that gender inequality have contributed negatively for the sustainable development of the region. In analyzing the variable a T test was used to examine the level of male and female participation in community development, however the result shows that the majority of the participants in community development are male counterpart. The p value is 0.05 while the gender value is 0.5. Therefore, there is a significant difference in gender inequality which was attributed to sole reliance on male at the expense of female's involvement in sustainable development. Conclusively, the null hypothesis which says there is no significant relationship between effective leadership and sustainable development in the north eastern Nigeria is therefore rejected.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals are globally accepted to facilitate growth not only in the developing states but globally. Many countries are trying to improve their wellbeing through sustainable development goals, it remains a prepared avenue for development such as; brighter future for all; foster economic growth, improved wellbeing (access to basic necessities of life), social cohesion, technological advancement, improved quality of human life and an increase in gross domestic product GDP among others.

Conclusively, no meaningful development will be achieved without effective leadership. The goals of United Nations can only be attained if there is a sound educational system, proper utilization of technology in all aspects of our life. While in the area of gender equality, women are vulnerable high risk of uncertainties, diseases and economic misfortune. If equality is ensured in gender, they (women), will have an unlimited access to development and increase resilience. Poverty reduction is another index of measuring the level of development for a particular country, African is said to be a leading poverty

hub in order to ameliorate these imbalances there is need for awareness on the effect of self-reliance, people need to be creative for the betterment of their life.

It is recommended that Nigeria should emphasize more in creating awareness and ensuring transparency and accountability in managing government business so that the general public may have confidence on the leaders. Encourages citizen participation in managing social differences, ensure proper utilization of available resources, application of technology at grass root level, consistency in addressing challenges peculiar to gender.

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