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**LEADERSHIP AND SELF - INTEREST IN INNOCENT ASOUZU:
ITS RELEVANCE TO THE NIGERIAN SITUATION**

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ABSTRACT

We are about to discuss the problem of leadership. Our philosophical lens will capture how this problem is applicable to our present day Nigerian society. This problem arises because our leaders fail to understand that human interest is ambivalent. It holds both individuals and societies to ransom because of its devastating effects. We will draw concrete examples from the real life situations of Nigeria.

We use self-interest interchangeably with selfishness. This enables one to be unable to perform those acts that make us exceptionally human. It is one the sources of injuries in our society. It seeks to explain why our leaders and people do those things, which do not seek to promote the good of all but their personal interests and good. Thus, one's actions are highly determined by the failure to understand this intrinsic ambivalence.

We shall proffer solutions on one of the principles of effective leadership as opined by Innocent Asouzu. Although this is open to further critical analysis and development, yet, if applied, this will help to create an atmosphere for good leadership and a better Nigeria for her citizens.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page-----	i
Certification-----	ii
Dedication-----	iii
Acknowledgement-----	iv
Abstract-----	vii

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

0.1	The Problem-----	xiii
0.2	The Aim-----	xiii
0.3	Methodology-----	xiv
0.4	Life and Works of Innocent Asouzu-----	xv

CHAPTER ONE

1.0	Clarification of Terms-----	1
1.1	Leadership-----	1
1.2	Self-Interest-----	3
1.3	Historical Background-----	5

CHAPTER TWO

2.0	Analysis of Innocent Asouzu's Concept of Leadership and Self-Interest-----	10
2.1	Leadership-----	10
2.1.1	Complementarism -----	12
2.1.2	The Special Position -----	14
2.2	Self- Interest-----	16
2.2.1	The Cognitive Dimension-----	19
2.2.2	The Consequences-----	22

CHAPTER THREE

3.0	The Nigerian Situation-----	24
3.1	The Socio-Political Scene-----	25
3.1.1	Corruption-----	25
3.1.2	The Constitution Question-----	29
3.2	The Religious Scene-----	33

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0	Evaluation and conclusion-----	38
4.1	Resumé-----	38
4.2	The critique of Asouzu’s concept of ‘the special Leadership position’-----	40
4.3	The critique of Asouzu’s concept of ‘Complementarism’-----	42
4.4	Asouzu’s Complementarism: Towards an authentic Leadership in Nigeria-----	44
4.5	Conclusion-----	46
	Bibliography-----	48

0.0 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The story can be told by all and sundry, even by a young child that for many years, Nigeria's case of leadership had witnessed a situation which can be compared with that of the tyrannical leader, Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire. This leader ruled Zaire for over three decades and corruptly amassed more wealth than his country.

In like manner, corruption, indiscipline and a lack of accountability are characteristics of many leaders in our society today. It is a big shame that some of our leaders are neck-deep in these nefarious acts. This has resulted in the country's achievements having received little recognition. Some of our leaders have embezzled several millions of naira, meant for the common good. Thus, one will not be far from the truth to say that a good number of Nigerian leaders do not know what authentic leadership is all about. No wonder many Nigerians are not bothered whatever comments are made regarding the qualities that are expected of their leaders.

In our country, the citizens live in despair and fear of what may happen the next moment. We can place this side by side with unemployment, socio-economic difficulties and lack of contentment, which manifests itself in the various nefarious practices, which are fast becoming the order of the day. This is synonymous with *virtue* in our modern society. All these spell out the consequences of our leaders' actions and their negative attitudes towards self-interest.

Of course, we know that self-interest is a basic law of nature. This accounts for the reason why the human individual naturally wants to struggle survival. But does this mean that in order to promote that which will enhance the continuous survival of the human person, one has to deprive others of the common good, or, common interest? How do we explain this? This is the task ahead of us in this essay.

This essay is set to reveal this heart-breaking incident in our country, Nigeria. Is it the case that our leaders often do those things, which will not satisfy the yearnings of the common people? Do they promote their personal good or interest? The problem seems to be that our leaders deliberately search for their own self-interest and consequently neglect the interest of the people. Thus, what is good is good for them alone, and whatever is not good, is not good for them but good for the people. While they enjoy the booty of their self-interest, they make all efforts to avoid the dire consequences it may bring to them.

Finally, we find recourse in one of the principles laid down by Innocent Asouzu for effective leadership and properly directed self-interest in Nigeria to promote the common good. This principle, if applied to our country, may further help us to harness our conflicting interests, resolve the danger of selfishness and, set us on course towards authentic co-existence. Hence, those among us who aspire at leadership positions will re-evaluate their self interest vis-à-vis their leadership campaign.

0.1 THE PROBLEM

Nigeria is a country where there is economic hardship, social injustice and political strife. Also, the rights of many are being trampled upon on daily basis. In addition, the people are weighed down with anxiety, insecurity, starvation and fraudulent practices of all kinds. But, how long are we going to wallow in this predicament?

The ills of our society as stated above are the socio-political problems that are brought about by bad leadership. No wonder Chinua Achebe stated, "*the trouble with*

*Nigeria is the failure of leadership.*¹ Thus, the task before us is the training of upright and good leaders. But, how do we get these good leaders? This is the problem our essay is set to tackle.

0.2 THE AIM

Our aim in this essay is to establish the fact that the goal of leadership is to help the society on the pursuit of the common good or common interest. And that self-interest of the leaders ought to be the satisfaction of the yearnings and aspirations of the vast majority, that is, the people. Thus, with Innocent Asouzu's view as a model, we will see to what extent his views can be relevant to the Nigeria situation of leadership and self-interest.

0.3 METHODOLOGY

Our work will be in four chapters and the approach will be expository. Chapter one is the Clarification of terms, which comprises of the meaning of Leadership and Self-interest with its historical background.

Chapter two will focus on Innocent Asouzu's view of Leadership, starting with his two principles of Leadership, which are; Complementarism and the Special positions. Also, we will consider his own meaning of Self-interest with its two facets, which are; the Cognitive dimensions and the Consequences.

Chapter three examines the Nigeria situation from the Socio-Political scene as highlighted by Corruption and the Constitutional question. Also, the religious scene will be analyzed.

The fourth chapter crowns our work. It is the Evaluation and the Conclusion. It comprises of the resumé, the critique of Asouzu's concept of the Special Leadership position, the critique of Asouzu's concept of Complementarism, and Asouzu's Complementarism: towards an authentic Leadership in Nigeria situation.

¹ C. Achebe, *The Trouble with Nigeria*, Oxford: Heinemann Publication, 1983, p.1

0.4 LIFE AND WORKS OF INNOCENT ASOUZU

Innocent Izuchukwu Asouzu was born into the family of a trader, Mazi Charles Ijoma Asouzu and Lolo Juliana Asouzu in the village of Ndiakunwan Uno Arondizuogu in Ideato North Local Government Area of Imo State. He is a Catholic Priest of Aba Diocese and a Professor who lectures presently at the University of Calabar, Nigeria.

He obtained his PhD in Philosophy and Sociology from Leopold Franzens University, Innsbruck in Austria. Professor Innocent Asouzu has contributed immensely in writing many works and authors a good number of scholarly journals. Many of these works are in the German language. He has raised several crucial issues in his works from a Complementary standpoint.

Among the fruits of his labour are:

- ✓ Effective Leadership and the Ambivalent of Human Interest (2003),
- ✓ The Nigerian Paradox in a Complementary Perspective (2003),
- ✓ The Method and Principles of Complementary Reflection in and beyond African Philosophy (2004).

In addition to his works, he is the founder and proponent of Complementary Reflection as a Philosophical Trend within Contemporary African Philosophy. This he has given lectures on, in Switzerland, Austria, USA etc.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 CLARIFICATION OF TERMS

Before we enter into the kernel of our work, we will start with the clarification of the two terms; Leadership and Self-interest and we shall then proceed to look into the historical background of both terms.

1.1 LEADERSHIP

We cannot understand the term leadership without first acknowledging the root word leader. It connotes a person guiding or directing a group of movement. There are various definition given by different scholars. George Kaitholil is of the view that leadership “is a process by which the action of an organized group is influence in their efforts to outline the group’s goal and to achieve them.”² Not like the situation whereby the tail wags the dog, which is a situation whereby the leader looks at the led to determine his leads but his attitude to leading not determined by the lead.

Again, one cannot talk of leadership without the concept *influence* into play. Hence, for a leader to be effective, the necessary condition is that, the leader in question must be influential. In line with this, Sandal Oswald defines leadership “as influence, the ability of the person to influence others.”³ Just like the picture of the ever presence of the parents to the life of a child will always be in his or her memory. The parents in question will be able to influence the actions of their children. In like manner, the leader should be able to influence the ideas of those he leads, thereby changing it, where necessary into good.

Without influence, one cannot lead. Influencing others means the capacity and will rally men and women to a common purpose and a character, which inspires confidence. Therefore, it is not out of place to point it out that one of the defining attributes of a leader

² G kaitholil, *Make Leadership Your Target*, Bombay: Better Yourself Books, 1991, p 20.

³ S. Oswald, *Spiritual Leadership*, Ibadan: Oluseyi press, 1987, p. 31.

is that he inspires sufficient confidence in his subordinates and should be willing to accept their views and carry out some of their viewpoints.

From another perspective, Pigors defines leadership as “a situation when a and personality is so placed in the environment that his will, feelings and insight directs controls others in the pursuit of common cause.”⁴ If we understand the meaning of Pigors’ definition and leadership in its entirety, we will know that it is neither power nor control over the led. Rather, it is that which is subsumed in humble service of love. However, a leader is then one to whom others in the group admire and look up to as the ideal.

There is yet another view in leadership which states that “it is the lifting up of man’s vision to higher sight, the raising up of man’s performance to higher standard, the building of a man’s responsibility beyond its limitations.”⁵ But this definition does not suffice within our society today. Our leaders are insulated from the reality of our time. They hardly feel what the people feel, especially as it relates to their anxiety. In a nutshell, when leaders perform their functions well, the needs and expectations of the people within the group are met. The fact that cannot be erase is that, the ability to lead a people and even guide both their energies and aspirations towards achieving their goal remains the hallmark of leadership. Nevertheless, it is tasking as well as exciting.

1.2 SELF INTEREST

Among the many questions that surround leadership positions, that of sacrificing oneself for the sake of the people remains a recurring decimal. Self-interest has been variously defined, also by different scholars. Nowell Smith states “self-interest is the action which is not done from the sense of duty but done from inclination.”⁶ He buttresses his point by stating that, if an action is done from *inclination* it is done in order to satisfy such inclination. Nowell, however, construed inclination in the way that Hobbes construes desires and aversions, as a sort of itch or craving that one wishes to satisfy. Thus, he stated that all actions, except that motivated by the sense of duty are really selfish.

The WorldNet Dictionary defines self-interest as “attempting to get personal recognition for yourself *especially by unacceptable means*. It further defines it as taking advantage of opportunities without regards for the consequences for others.”⁷ Man is never meant to be an island unto himself. Dependence comes naturally. But the contrary is what we observe in our society today. This further buttresses the definition above. Man seems to be a greedy, self-centered animal that is ever out to cheat or enslave, or, even dominate the others in thoughts, words and deeds.

The synonyms of self-interest are; egocentrism, egoism, expedience, self-centeredness, self-concern, opportunism and self-seeking while the antonyms as provided are; altruism and selflessness. Further buttressing on the meaning of self interest, we see that, it is the act of being indifferent or not showing concern for the welfare of others but only concern to promote one’s pleasure and minimize one’s pain. The views of the egoists as against the utilitarianists both under ethical

⁴ Pigors in P. Ovat, *Ethical revival In Nigeria: A Study on Moral Philosophy*, Lagos: GOGAPS Publishers, 2002 p. 12.

⁵ A. D’Souza, *Leadership*, India: Better Yourself Books, 1993, p. 52.

⁶ N. Smith, *A Pelican Original Ethics*, USA: Penguin Books Ltd, 1954, p.134

⁷ <http://WWW.hyperdictionary.com/dictionary/self-interest>.

hedonism, which seeks the utmost pleasure of all and the reduction of pain, cannot but be reckoned with here.

Self-interest, again, is “a disregard for the well being of others.”⁸ In line with this, we can say that this has eaten deep into the fabric of our society and it is fast limiting the possibility for our co-operation with others. Due to this, an authentic pursuit of good policies and development has become a mirage. Thus, the system produces leaders who are not interested in what to give the society but rather in what they can take from the society.

Also, Erich Fromm is of the opinion that self-interest is “the interest of man to preserve his existence which is the same as realizing his inherent potentialities”⁹. We know that self-interest is a desire in man. This desire drives man into action. More often than not, this action turns against the common good for the people but focuses on the good of certain persons or groups. No matter how this can be argued, each individual possesses this self-interest, just as the self-esteem. But, again, we should be able to transform our self-interest to enhance the collective interests. We must be selfless and not selfish. Our attitude as a leader of a people should move from the *I* and *me* to the *us* and *others*.

1.3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

From our study, we want to infer that leadership emerged as a solution to the conflict resulting from undue emphasis placed on self-interest. Prior to men coming together to organize themselves into a society, in his primitive state man was brutish, cruel and undeveloped. He chose that which satisfied him while and the communal spirit was absent. This could be traced back to antiquity. If we accept the assertion of Thomas Hobbes in his political inquiry, we find out that; man in the state of nature is essentially selfish; he is moved to action not by his intellect or reason, but by his appetite. Man living without any common set over them, a condition which is called warfare, such warfare is of everyman, against everyman – not a war in the organized sense but a perpetual struggle of all. The three causes being competition, love of glory and diffidence.¹⁰

It is pitiful to note that our leaders still followed how things were in this state of nature, prior to the organization of the society. They were never concerned in baking the National cake instead they eat up the cake all alone. Probably it has never dawned on them that the final test of leader is that he leaves behind in other men the conviction and the will to carry on.

From another source, Tom Sorell states that, Hobbes’ theory considers “man in an ungoverned condition. Man was self-interested and asked what good to themselves will be produced by any given outcome; they were vulnerable to one another and were essentially anxious.”¹¹ Relating Sorell’s view with the political set-up, we cannot but agree that the situation we find today is indeed historical. The leaders invariably act and lead irrationally.

⁸ Twelve Points of Unity for Politics of Meaning, <http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi-m1548/is-n4-v11/ai-18585137>

⁹ E. Fromm, *Man for Himself: An inquiry into the Psychology of Ethics*, New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston Ltd, 1947, p.133

¹⁰ “Thomas Hobbes” in A. Appadorai, *the Substance of Politics*, London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1978, p. 22.

¹¹ T. Sorell (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes*, USA: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996, p.219.

They are never conscious of the fact that they are called to serve and that the service they have embraced is a complex one for the group's interest. They fail to realize that they ought to portray special qualities to enable them perform effectively and efficiently in office. This accounts for the fact that our society is filled with wide spread social vices just because of bad leadership. This has brought about hardship, economic set back, clashes of all kinds, just to mention but a few. Just as it was in the state of nature, the sense of leadership has been sacrificed for some parochial and personal interest.

There is yet another explanation on this subject matter. Joseph Omoregbe added that "Hobbes in his theory of the state of nature enunciates a state in which men lived prior to the setting up of organized society. In that state, according to him, there were no laws, no authority, no morality, and no sense of justice or injustice. Everybody simply pursued the satisfaction of his self-interest. There was no other rule of action than self-interest and its satisfaction. But in the course of pursuing the satisfaction of their self-interest, men came into conflicts with each other, quarreled with each other and fought with each other."¹²

As the whole idea of self-interest was practically evident among men, then, they resorted to the conclusion that the only way to transform their multiple interests into a single interest is to agree to come together under a common leadership. But, has this wiped the problem of self-interest, which has a deep psychological seat in man? If this has not been achieved, what remedy has it provided? For us, one of the ways this problem can be remedied is the need to embark on a new orientation in life. This entails the understanding that leadership is a gift from God to serve both God and humankind. It is a sacrifice beyond duty. It is a dignity and a sacrificial service. This idea of leadership could be traced back to how men came to organize themselves into a society through social contract.

Oakeshott explaining Hobbes's social contract states that, "it is that by which man avoids state of nature, which he regards as a state of anarchy and then enter into a civil society. It is an agreement among men to give up their right of governing themselves to one man or a group of men."¹³ But as this really achieved the aim? If not what is the effort so far in alleviating those situations of the state of nature to enable a forge ahead?

However, Enoch Stumpf on the origin of leadership wrote that; Having shown that in the state of nature, anarchy is the logical consequence of independent individual judgments, concluded that the only way to overcome such anarchy is to make a single body out of the several bodies of the citizens. The sovereign's single will and judgment represent the will and judgment of all the citizens. In effect, this is what the contract says when men agree to hand over their right to govern themselves.¹⁴

This marks the emergence of self-interest and leadership. Attempts to erase self-interest by bringing leaders to lead the people have added more to the already existing problem. We are today retarding to the state of nature, that is, the state where man seeks gratuitously to satisfy his own interest. Despite this effort against this act, the deep egoistic tendencies still resides in man particularly those who lead us. This is irrespective of the leaders status.

¹² "Thomas Hobbes" in J. Omoregbe, *A Simplified History of Western Philosophy*, vol. 2, Lagos: Joja Press Ltd., 1991, p. 43.

¹³ M. Oakeshott, *Hobbes's Leviathan*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell Inc, 1960, p. 100.

¹⁴ E. Stumpf, *Philosophy: History and Problems*, USA: McGraw – Hill Book Company, 1971, p. 246.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 ANALYSIS OF INNOCENT ASOUZU'S CONCEPT OF LEADERSHIP AND SELF – INTEREST

We have examined the views of some scholars on leadership and self-interest in the preceding chapter. Our task in this chapter is to examine the concept of Innocent Asouzu. We shall highlight two principles of Asouzu's concept on Leadership. These are; Complementarism and the Special position. On the aspect of Self-interest, we shall consider its Cognitive dimension and the Consequences.

2.1 LEADERSHIP

Leadership is a serious business in any institution. In fact, it entails making efforts to show a good sense of fairness and inculcating the attribute of personal example as a habit to those entrusted to their care. It is the act of being the custodian of the common good. It is on this note that Asouzu maintains that leaders are those “entrusted with the collection and distribution of wealth and resources.”¹⁵ This view of leadership is not workable because the leaders do not believe in the equality of the people and in their responsibility towards them.

Apart from not being responsible to the people, the leaders also will not render their duties to them properly. They fell that their words are authoritative and that the people cannot in any way attack them. This in turn prompts them to abuse the leadership entrusted to their care. Asouzu's view on leadership is closely linked with that of Claire Ellerton who opines, “leadership entails helping others to achieve their personal best. This involves setting high but realistic goals for oneself and others.”¹⁶

This view substantiates the fact that in any social institution, the leaders ought to have realistic performance goals for the people. The leader takes the initiative to have a bad situation rectified and brought under control. He sets the pace for others to follow. He is not supposed to fold his hands and watch things happening, rather he makes things happen. Asouzu adds that:

The good embedded in leadership must find expression somehow, and the best way of expressing that we are leaders is by employing and devoting ourselves fully to the service of our fellow men and women. For others to follow, they should be able to spot who the leader is. For the leader to distinguish himself, he has to be shining light and as such he should be in a position to break the retrogressive tendency that subsists in doing what one does not wish to do.¹⁷

From this, we can infer that the common good of the people is the basis of any effective leadership. If our leaders wish to be and remain relevant the people must be their focus and should be able to benefit from their entire struggles. A leader ought to be burning with the zeal of a new vision, proper direction and guidance, source of inspiration, able to communicate and instill confidence in members of his group.

¹⁵ I. Asouzu, *Effective Leadership and the Ambivalent of Human Interest*, Calabar: Univ. of Calabar Press, 2003, p. 42

¹⁶ C. Ellerton (ed.), *Managing for Excellence*, New York: (DK) Publishing Inc., 2001, p. 11

¹⁷ I. Asouzu, *Effective Leadership*, p. 66

The whole notion of service is very central to leadership. This ought to be imbibed in leadership. Therefore, situating this into the context of leadership, Asouzu opines, “as leaders, we are servants, privileged unworthy servants. In service, the ground work has been laid for the otherness.”¹⁸ It is quite obvious that our leaders today are rarely servants. Rather, fate has turned it to the point whereby we serve them. This is made abundantly clear in the fact that for a long time dating back to antiquity, the people had continuously been led by dishonest leaders.

Perhaps the failure of our leaders and the series of unjust actions that are perpetuated by them is glaring especially now that the concern for the wellbeing of the people has been pushed aside. To further analyze the nature of service our leaders had rendered to the people, we can raise the following unavoidable questions. What has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? Why the so inequality among the people in these days?

2.1.1 COMPLEMENTARISM

This is one of the principles of leadership as enunciated by Asouzu. He opines that, “complementarism is more about those actions we can take to make the system work or about those things that bring good and positive changes in the lives of individuals and society.”¹⁹ From this view, it is only a reminder that for positive changes in society, all hands ought to be on deck. We should consider the fact that from the various spheres of life, every person has some unique to offer. A good leader will be able to achieve something good when he is able to put all these qualities together or complement them.

Asouzu noted that someone could speak out boldly against injustice and exploitation while many others speak and act authoritatively in matters that are important. The truth of the matter is that when all these qualities are conglomerated or complemented well, wonderful result are achieved. These wonderful results are achieved because to live successfully, is living within the goodness that sustains our being.

Hence, we cannot achieve *complementarism* rather; we harmoniously complement this goodness while doing more than we talk about it. The complement of an entity, the root word of *complementarism* as opined by Asouzu, is that with which a given entity makes up a whole. This means that when these unique qualities are complemented, they form a whole. This is a whole leadership within the understanding of Asouzu’s view. He further expounds that:

Complementation offers the framework for mutual enrichment towards ushering in systemic transformation. This harmonious mutual dependence enables the diverse components of the system to be stimulated towards the optimal realization of their potentialities.²⁰

Hence, if we understand what Asouzu had opined here, we will say without mincing words that complementarism offers the social structure of leadership a proper building of a system one can admire. A system where the worth of the human

¹⁸I. Asouzu, *Ibid*, p. 106

¹⁹ *Ibid*. p. 68

²⁰ *Ibid*.

person is held at high esteem by the other. Therefore, one does conceive of the other as object of exploitation. Rather, complementation enhances leadership position.

Thus, effective leadership cannot be conceived of, if the leaders themselves fail to create an environment for mutual dependency both in words and in actions. This is to make the system work. This harmonious complementarism, a philosophical principle proposed by Asouzu bridges the divisions among competitors of various interests. It conscientiously seeks to banish the tendencies of individualism and all manners of selfishness.

2.1.2 THE SPECIAL POSITION

This is the second principle of leadership as enunciated by Asouzu. He construed this position as that “which must be clearly differentiated between the leadership quality seen in us as people with special leadership mandate and that seen in others.”²¹ In line with this, we must buttress the fact that under normal circumstances, people take those leaders that possess special qualities very seriously. This is the case when such qualities are backed by education, which has been acquired, putting it into practice for things to work out for the greater good. It is for this reason that people are somehow more inclined to taking their religious leaders more seriously than the political leaders. The people take their leaders seriously when they stand out of the crowd.

Perhaps the summary of leadership characteristics as presented by Neil Wiseman will further buttress Asouzu’s stand on special leadership position. “The world needs leaders who cannot be bought; whose word is their bond; who put character above wealth; who possess opinions and a will; who are larger than their vocations; who do not hesitate to take chances; who will not lose their individuality in the crowd; who will be honest in small and in great things; whose ambitions are not confined to their own selfish desires.”²² In consonance with this view, we must admit that special leadership position is that which one cannot afford to toy with. This special leadership position has inherent in it, that which sets to promote the good and welfare of all the led to its apogee. Asouzu stated of those who constitute this position:

Only such men worthy to handle very important matters. Men of honour who are likely never to compromise their position if it entails sharing certain goods with others. Thus, men of honour, and honest men who would rather die than steal or be dishonest in matters that pertains to the common good.²³

Looking at the expectations of leadership in the special position as spelt out by Asouzu, we cannot but accept the fact that, it is indeed very tasking. One common feature is that, this position makes one distinguish oneself from others. It is so because of the remarkable character, which we have mentioned above, that is observable. This is what brings out of leadership character, the special position.

All the same, they pursued the common interest and ask themselves as leaders, if they are actually contributing enough to the proper building of a true society for the people.

²¹ *Ibid.* p. 64

²² N. Wiseman, *Leadership: A Leadership Development Strategy Manual for Church Growth*, Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1979, p. 47

²³ I. Asouzu, *Effective Leadership*, p. 110

Therefore, they promote those elements that build a good society. In reality, the product of a good society stems from a good leadership. Not until this is achieved, we cannot say with much conviction that this is commensurable with the meaning of special “not ordinary or usual but different from what is normal”²⁴

2.2 SELF- INTEREST

It is obvious that, the way we think provides us with the disposition for carrying out an action. This is evident in our daily life. Many a time, the disposition for the person in question doing such a thing may be to the satisfaction of that person. Asouzu noted that, this is self-interest.

Self-interest is the disposition always in all situations to desire undue advantage for and solely for the person or persons involved in total disregard for the common good.²⁵

The implication of this is that in our daily life, we stylishly seek for that which will promote our individual interest alone. This attitude we exhibit, is evident in politics, religion, economy and all other aspects of life. We cannot make progress, if we continue to seek our self-interest alone. The truth of the matter is that our leaders and even the people who wait to collect the baton as leaders to do the same have failed to realize that the dream of building a strong, united and a progressive society cannot be achieved now or in the future, if the people continue to exist in isolation of their selfish tendencies.

Buttressing further, Asouzu maintains that “self-interest in the pathological sense, thus foes far beyond the legitimate drive to seek what is one’s due; it rather connotes the tendency always to seek one’s due at any given opportunity and to turn every instance to an opportunity to seek thoroughly one’s due.”²⁶ One will always want to grab everything for oneself only. In this act, a person places himself always before and above others and thus, regards his interest as supreme.

This is the concern for one’s own interest or personal advantage. The person regards his interest as supreme at the expense of others. Asouzu noted that, he habitually and in some cases arrogantly does this, because of the firm belief that he deserves it more than others do.

When this happens, the problem of self-interest arises as an issue. This problem embraces also the fact of such persons thinking of what is good as good only for him and those nearest to him. The reason been accounted for, based on the role the person plays. This is one of the fundamental parts of human nature. It is to some extent inseparable. It dovetails into leadership as Innocent Asouzu had explained where he maintained that because of the role the person plays. But as this juncture, we should note that self-interest is not taking what is one’s due in all fairness and justice.

²⁴ S. Wehmeier (ed.), *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2000.

²⁵ I. Asouzu, *Effective Leadership*, p. 20

²⁶ I. Asouzu, *The Method and Principles of Complementary Reflection in and Beyond African Philosophy*, Calabar: Univ. of Calabar Press, 2004, p. 65

Asouzu contends that. “Self-interest connotes the tendency always to seek one’s interest at any given opportunity and in the event of doing so, injustice ensues.”²⁷ Such injustice ensues because there is a shift of paradigm and a total disregard of the others. The obvious fact reckoned with here is that this inflicts pains on the commoners. It is due to the fact that the interest of that individual surpasses that of the people. It suffices to say within the length and breadth of this argument as a truism that self-interest, no matter how one tries or attempts to defend it, except one uses it as a *tool* to promote the common good, cannot promote social justice and equality.

Still concerning the question of fairness and injustice as it relates to self-interest as enunciated by Asouzu, Nowell Smith states, “it is fundamentally one being indifferent to the welfare of others and concerned only to promote one’s own pleasure and minimize one own pain.”²⁸ This Asouzu had already proved that when we placed too much of emphasis on the pursuit of our self-interest, our interest loses its focus and this becomes opposed to the common good.

2.2.1 THE COGNITIVE DIMENSION

Cognition is the process by which knowledge and understanding are developed in the mind. We can infer from this that cognition is a process of knowing or arriving at knowledge. To begin, we ask ourselves this question. Can we say with all certainty that one has an interest in an act without first knowing or recognizing the act? Asouzu states that:

The level of commitment will bring towards a situation depends largely on our level of awareness we bring to the interests connected with the thing in question. In this way, one can say that our ability to respond to the situation of things depends largely on our knowledge concerning the nature of our interests. In this case, if we are able to identify the authentic nature of our interests, we likely also take the correct decision on how to go about realizing them.²⁹

We cannot but agree with the fact that one’s commitment towards a situation depends largely on the level of awareness. Therefore, this same level of one’s awareness should actually contribute to the proper and genuine building of a responsible leadership. The leader should work towards promoting those elements that enhance the interest of the people. We should not shy from this fact because as a people we actually have failed to ponder on this facts. This has affected leadership skills in the past and at present.

In contrast to the view raised by Asouzu, one can identify the real nature of his interest without likely taking the correct decisions on how to go about realizing them. It is a shameful phenomenon that we see most leaders not taking time to analyze correct decisions to realize their interests. This had made some of our people today suffer many pains because the little interest due to them is taken over by their leaders.

²⁷ I. Asouzu, *Effective Leadership*, p. 21

²⁸ N. Smith, *A Pelican Original Ethics*, USA: Penguin Books Ltd, 1954, p. 134

²⁹ I. Asouzu, *Effective Leadership*, p. 33

Expounding further on the role of cognition in interest, Anselm Ekhelar, states, “both are close and complex in their relationship. Their closeness and interdependence is such that it could be assumed that what is essentially an act of interest may be generated or affected by cognition, and what an act of cognition is occasioned and determined by interest. One cannot deny for instance, that knowing something and being interested in it are two different things.”³⁰

These are two concepts, which for us go *pari-passu*. It is indeed interrelated. But, again, there is a semblance of one in the other. One can only develop interest in what one knows or had already known. Also, in like manner, one only knows that which he has interest in. As one interest develops, the cognitive organs draw one closer to it.

Hence, let us summarize the cognitive dimension of our self-interest, Asouzu assertion that; “there is no leadership, where there is no harmony existing between the intentions establishing leadership and the actions of the leader himself.”³¹ The intentions of the leaders are always there, we cannot deny this. Probably let us call this the knowledge while the actions of the leader we say are the interests.

Therefore, the intrinsic and existing harmony between these actions and the intentions are the product of cognition and the interest. This forms the cognitive dimension of the self-interest. Although, often times, one may wish to know a thing as it is in a particular way, but the same thing may be projected to one in the opposite way. This justifies Asouzu’s position that a thing can present itself to someone in a very different manner.

2.2.2 THE CONSEQUENCES

Asouzu had opined that whenever we act, without taking time to understand fully the implications of the congealed content of our sub consciousness, we are likely to make mistakes about our choices.” Perhaps, this will stimulates our understanding of the consequences of self-interest. Therefore, we note that the consequences of self-interest are the failure in understanding the antecedent, which for us is, its cognitive dimension. Consequence is a result or an effect of something else. Hence, some of the consequences of self-interest as enumerated by Asouzu are:

How many businesses both private and co-operate have folded today because those entrusted with responsibilities have turned these to their own advantages and personal interest? There are many certainly. We talk of bad roads, irregular water supply, erratic electricity, dilapidated structures, in fact of near non-nearest of social services etc.³²

There is no gainsaying the fact that one of the greatest problems and dilemmas of any socio-political system are the failure of leadership. Many of our leaders in this regard have failed woefully to lead by example. The shameful scandalous stories as regards the evil they perpetrate while in office, as we read in papers and even the ones we see on the

³⁰ A. Ekhelar, *The Philosophy of Values of Ralph Barton Perry in Rome*, Unpub. PhD. Dissertation, Pontifical Urban Univ., 1999, p. 87

³¹ I. Asouzu, *Effective Leadership*, p. 67

³² I. Asouzu, *Ibid.* p. 13

television do not shock them at all. They have failed to acknowledge their guilt and recognize their wickedness.

To further affirm this, we must note again that when everyone pursue his or her own self-interest without a simple pause to show concern to others, the consequences among the others include the squander of resources and the unjust exploitation of the proletariats.

In summary, Asouzu pointed out that when we place so much emphasis on our self-interest and overlook the fact that others can equally chase their own interest first, this leads to the survival of the fittest and even the struggle of the opposites. A situation then arises, whereby everybody continues to live in perpetual fear of his neighbour whose next actions cannot be predicted. This is in fact retrogression to the state of nature.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 THE NIGERIAN SITUATION

In our present day Nigeria, it is obvious that one of the motivating and determining factors in decision-making of many of our leaders is self-interest. Not only is it found among leaders, it, also, plays an important role in the life of the entire populace. The strength of its influence and effect in everyday activity of Nigerians can compel one to call it *the Nigerians way of life*.

According to Chinua Achebe “since Nigeria’s independence, our leaders have been motivated by their self interest. And that Nigerians are what they are only because their leaders are not what they should be.”³³ It is quite pitiable a country endowed with so many resources like Nigeria still wallows in poverty. Once a leader gets to power, the issue of the common good is often cast aside for personal self- aggrandizement.

This accounts for the collapsing social-economic structure and the apparent stagnation. It is on this note that we are set in this chapter to examine the Nigeria situation. We will limit our study to some of the blatant nefarious activities regards to leadership and self-interest found within the socio political and religious domains.

3.1 SOCIO-POLITICAL SCENE

The socio-political scene in Nigeria is such, which is characterized by the so-called bandwagon of leaders who would not allow the greatest happiness of the greatest numbers. Instead as we have it, they take the necessities from the many and give luxuries to the few. This is a result of the fact that the *invisible hands of self-interest* have paved its way within, thereby infringing on the interest due to all. In line with this, our facts will revolve round corruption and constitutional question.

3.1.1 CORRUPTION

If we are able to read the handwriting on the wall from the happenings within our society, we will deduce that corruption when juxtaposed with the Nigerian society and our leaders can be seen as something like birds of the same feather. This means that Nigeria and corruption are inseparable. How do we explain the fact that some funds and materials placed under the custody of some leaders sometimes all embezzled? Why should such an

³³ C. Achebe, *The Trouble with Nigeria*, Oxford: Heinemann Publishers; 1983, p.10

attitude be found among community of humans that are rational? These and many more will be exposed as we proceed in this chapter.

Corruption according to Ovat's definition "is the pervasion of integrity or state of affairs through bribery, favour, or moral depravity. He listed five major types of corruption namely; political corruption, economic corruption, bureaucratic corruption, judicial corruption and moral corruption."³⁴

Ojakaminor analyzing the depreciating situation of Nigeria states that "at the time of Independence one of the prides of Nigeria was the famous groundnut pyramids in Northern Nigeria piled up for exportation. Indeed, Nigeria was the world's fourth largest producer of groundnuts. It was the world largest producer of oil palm produce and the world's second largest producer of cocoa. Nigeria was the world's fifth largest producer of rubber and Africa's third largest producer of cotton. It was also a country blessed with mineral resources."³⁵

Even after forty-four years when the British colonial masters had all gone, today, Nigeria is still a land of desolation. In fact, a country which had lost its political pride. Corruption has formed part of the traits of successive Nigerian leaders. For some that are desperate they are ready to come into the scene preferably via the barrel of the gun or speak with a messianic fervour that will liberate the oppressed. A typical Nigerian leader comes to the scene by hook or by crook as was manifested during the 2003 election.

Still on corruption in high places, Ojakaminor borrowed an idea from an inspired Jewish scribe that "their deeds are corrupt, depraved. Not a good man is among them. They have all left the right path; depraved every one of them. There is not a good man left among them. No, not even one. Will these pseudo leaders not understand? They eat up the *Nigerian* people as though they were eating bread."³⁶ As a result of this ugly scenario, which is spreading like a wildfire, the Catholic Bishop Conference of Nigeria (C. B. C. N) expressed in a prayer, which promulgated against the backdrop of this endemic disease ravaging the nation in the *prayer against Bribery and Corruption in Nigeria*.

Nigerians have been reciting this prayer for years now. It was stated, "if care is not taken, corruption will lead to the death of both the individuals and the nation."³⁷ It is a known fact that, our leaders are unable to carry out their obligations to the country because of their dishonest acts, which mostly preoccupy their minds rather than the good of the Nation.

In situation as that stated above, it becomes very hard, if not impossible for them to really act as they should. Even when some of our people are being accused of corruption, our leaders do not have the moral probity to prosecute such persons since they also are of the same category.

The words of Ehusani clearly summarizes this picture of the disability on the part of our leaders that "those at the helm of affairs, in as much as they lack credibility, legitimacy and moral authority, can only rule by coercion. They have indeed attempted to hold the country together by brute force."³⁸

³⁴ P. Ovat, *Ethical Revival in Nigeria; A Study On Moral Philosophy*, Lagos: GOGAPS Pub, 2002, p.42.

³⁵ E. Ojakaminor, *Nigeria we hailed Thee!! A Look at Our Immediate Past*, Iperu-Remo: The Ambassador Pub, 2000, p.8.

³⁶ E. Ojakaminor, *Nigeria we Hailed Thee!! Ibid* p.79

³⁷ D. Igwilo, *The Role of the Church in a Corrupt Nigeria* in *The Sage Magazine*, Vol.17, 2004-2005,p.27

³⁸ G. Ehusani, *Nigeria; Years Eaten by the Locusts*, Ibadan: Kraft Books Ltd., 2002, p.6

According to Dare Babarinsa “for many years, Transparency International has listed Nigeria as one of the most corrupt countries in the world. One man who contributed to this, perhaps more than any other leader in recent history has been the *evil one* Sanni Abacha.”³⁹ What seems to be most disheartening in this abnormal situation is that while corruption is being perpetuated in the socio-political scene, those affected only sit back awaiting when they too would get hold of the baton of power so as to be the same.

At a time when millions of Nigerians had no roof over their heads, our leaders keep on building flamboyant mansions to show their insensitivity and insult to millions of hard working Nigerians. They get the money to build these houses by stealing everything from the nation’s coffers. Indeed, about more than half of our wealth, our leaders had deposited outside the country.

It was reported that by Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (E.F.C.C.) that “about twenty billion US dollars, that is 2.8 trillion naira is being realized every year from money stolen from the Federal Government. The statement was made on how hundred thousand barrels or four percentages of our oil exports are stolen everyday in Nigeria by our leaders.”⁴⁰ Our leaders will finish us, and later leave us, when we can no longer put food on our tables.

Examination malpractice is not left out of corrupt practices as students perfect strategies each year. It is indeed pitiful, as was noted by John Adeniyi “most holders of certificates could hardly defend them. This clearly is what obtains in our society as parents and teachers are not left out of the scene. The government of the day does not help matters, as teachers hawk question papers in order to survive because salaries and allowances are not paid.”⁴¹ Even when they are eventually paid, it is done months later than when due. Some parents buy question papers and even follow their children to the examination hall. On the part of students, they have jettisoned adequate preparation due to the assurance of leakages of examination papers, which usually comes with answers.

3.1.2 THE CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTION

Our focus in this section is to consider the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It is pertinent to note quickly that this Constitution was drafted during the Military leadership and not during a democratic dispensation. As such, there was no room for input from the National Assembly. Rather it was a constitution, which was imposed on the people.

Before we examine how this so called Constitution serves the self-interest of some leaders, it would be proper to have an idea of what constitution stands for. A Constitution according to Ben Nwabueze “is a formal document having the force of law, by which a society organizes government for itself, defines and limits its powers and prescribes the reactions of its various organs interests and with the citizens.”⁴²

Therefore, understanding Constitution shows that it is a political agreement between the leaders in government and the people, which is the led. It enunciates the characteristics of the leaders as in government, which promotes the activities of the state, analyses their functions, duties and rights of the people.

³⁹ D. Babarinsa, *The True Meaning Of Corruption* in Tell Magazine, no 10, March 6, 2000, p.3.

⁴⁰ Daily Independent (A Voice of Your Own), December 27, 2004,p.1

⁴¹ J. Adeniyi, *The Source of Examination Malpractices* in Saturday PUNCH, Feb 12, 2005, p.14

⁴² B. Nwabueze, *Constitutionalism in the Emergent States*, New York: C. Hugh and Company, 1993, p.2

Looking at the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria briefly, it is stated that:

we the people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; *having* firmly and solemnly resolved: *to live* in unity and harmony as one indivisible and indissoluble sovereign nation under God dedicated to the promotion of inter-African solidarity, world peace, international co-operation and understanding: *and to provide* for a constitution for the purpose of promoting the good government and welfare of all persons in our country on the principles of freedom, equality and justice, and for the purpose of consolidating the unity of our people.⁴³

There are movements in some quarters to further review some discrepancies in the *imperfect document*, so as to reach one that can best describe the *real life* situation of Nigeria. Nevertheless, the question is, can this be genuine? Will it be fully participatory? Or, can it give adequate consideration to the yearnings and aspirations of the people?

In contrast to the claims of the Constitution, most Nigerians concur with the opinion of Chinua Achebe as follows “we are different peoples forced together by the exigencies of colonial history. As such, Nigeria is a mere geographical expression.”⁴⁴ Hence, the Constitution in its present form had really suffered a lot of criticisms.

Tokunbo Abdul-Mumuni, analyzing the preamble to the Constitution said that the phrase “*we the people* of Nigeria, is a lie contained in the Constitution. He added that the people never participated in the formulations of the Constitution. Rather it was fabricated by the military and their apologists to satisfy their political objective.”⁴⁵ This reveals the fact that the constitution like many even before it was a dispensable gift of dictators. These dictators most especially the military regime under the Abacha junta, structured it in a manner that suggest their desire to remain in power till their early existence terminates.

Buttressing on what Tokunbo Abdul-Mumuni had emphasized, we should note that in the constitution in all material respects, ought to be the will of the people. It is only the people in their corporate sovereign capacity that can have a final say on it.

Sunday Edeko told us that “although some persons were nominated to represent the Esan West constituency, but we cannot say their views were followed, since the leaders are always after their own interest.”⁴⁶ Hence, it cannot be said that the Constitution reflects the people’s views. This substantiates how the self-interest motives of our leaders rears its ugly head again. Is it not a manifestation of some personal motives? Can the will of a person or a group replaces the will of the people.

It was stated in the Constitution, *chapter two, subsection sixteen*, that it will promote the good government and welfare of all persons. But to a large extent, this has not been the case. Reacting to this, Abdulah states, “the non-incorporation of legally enforceable economic and social rights in the Constitution is a big shame to the country. It continues that it is simply unacceptable because other countries including Mali, Ghana and Uganda that are not as rich as Nigeria have incorporated some economic and social rights in their Constitution.”⁴⁷ Where then are the good governance and even the welfare of all persons? They have succeeded in making mockery of themselves and the constitution.

⁴³ 1999 Constitution of the FRN, no 24, A869

⁴⁴ C. Achebe, *The Trouble with Nigeria*, Oxford: Heinemann Publishers, 1983, p.377

⁴⁵ Wahab Abdulah, *Flaws of the 1999 Constitution* in Vanguard, Friday February 18, 2005, p.37

⁴⁶ Sunday Edeko, *To what extent can we say the Constitution is a grundnorm when it satisfies the Leaders’ selfish motives*, An Oral Interview, Uhiele, 21st May, 2005.

⁴⁷ Wahad Abdulah, *Flaws* in Vanguard, Friday February 18, 2005.

Conclusively, it has been emphasized, “the 1999 Constitution is seriously flawed because the voices and opinions of Nigerians were not heard and reflected at the preparatory and drafting stages. The Constitution drafting process ought to be guided by principles of inclusivity diversity, participation, transparency, openness, accountability, and even legitimacy.”⁴⁸ This is where the problem lies. It is the onus of the leaders to ensure the above. When Constitution does not proceed from the people, there is bound to be a legion of problems as we are already facing today.

3.2 RELIGIOUS SCENE

A quick look at the religious scene today explains how religion as been profaned purely on selfish grounds. Various immoralities are coming into the scene even in the different religions. There is a shift of paradigm, that is, the true worship of God to the pursuit of mundane realities. Our aim in this part of the chapter is to examine how religion today is been commercialized due to the selfish motives of some religious leaders.

Recent events in the Church seem to remind us of how Martin Luther (1483 - 1546) battled against the Catholic Church. This happened when John Tetzel in 1517 reduced indulgences into symbols that were bought. Hence, the faithful were cajoled into buying this and contributing to the building of Cathedrals. People got the idea that when they do this, the souls of their loved ones will be liberated from Purgatory, that is, the intermediate stage between Hell and Heaven. Thus, Luther saw in this exploitation and preached against it.

But, what is happening today is very disgusting and far more terrifying than that which had happened at that point in history. Today, we see in the Church trading, commercialization and privatization. All these are done in the name of serving God. Fidelis Obiora began that “there is a market value for everything under the sun. He noted that there is the tendency today that religion is fast coming into its own as the food basket of the Nation ballooning into a flourishing agro-allied industrial complex.”⁴⁹ This is a shift from the pursuit of God’s grace to material gains and its satisfaction.

According to Michael Omojola,
Many seditious churches and miracle centres continue to spring up in every nook and cranny of the towns and villages. There, the weak are bamboozled, cajoled and exploited. He added that many Christians go to these miracle centers because the social services necessary for human development are not available. Hence, in this situation many Christians resort to prayers and miraculous intervention.⁵⁰

It is not strange to see churches teaching her members how to speak in tongue. To what extent can one then claim that speaking in tongue is a gift of the Holy Spirit. The word of God is often misinterpreted to suit the purpose of preachers, and to preach repentance is a taboo. All these are done simply because of the selfish interest of the churches that see religion has a profit-making venture.

It was reported by Bamidele Johnson of *THE TELL Magazine* “the axiom ‘Givers Never Lack’ and whatever one sows ‘as a seed’ is now a condition for God’s blessings on

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ F. Obiora, *The Divine Deceit: Business in Religion*, Enugu: Optimal Publishers, 1998, p. 57.

⁵⁰ M. Omojola, *Jesus Respond to the crowd in John 6:25-29: A Faith Challenge to Christians in Yorubaland, Nigeria*, Port-Harcourt, Unpub. Dissertation, CIWA, 1999, p.84

the lips of many church leaders. This made on of the members of Chris Oyakhilome's Christ Embassy; Gbenga Kehinde donated a ten million naira, from the fraud he perpetrated in his Eko International Bank".⁵¹ This was one of such donations emanating from the same act.

Offering rites in some churches today is tantamount to trading. Some church leaders carefully select words, which spur up the most miserly of persons to empty his or her pocket and even bank account. The truth of the matter is that this is often accompanied with some biblical promises of abundant divine recompense. According to Oguntokun Temitope, "the in-thing in churches is to ask members to stand up with their tithes and offerings raised in their hands above their heads. This apparently raises a feeling of inadequacy in people who may not have the opportunity to give."⁵² The puzzle in this display is that most times, this may not be used for the churches' upkeep, not for charity but sometimes to satisfy the selfish quest of these leaders who tend to rub shoulders with other wealthy men, socialites, and political figures.

One can ask, what are these religious leaders doing with jets? Fleets of cars? Vast plots of estate? Property worth several millions of Naira? Leadership and power tussle. Just to mention but a few. Thus, the materialistic tendencies and attachments need to be examined. Omojola noted "this crass materialism shows itself in forms of prayers offered and in some of the names given to some of the church like *Winners Chapel, Overcomers Church* etc. Also, sad enough to be mentioned is that many pastors in order to maintain a huge congregation have resorted to the use of juju and other occult powers".⁵³ The prayers, which the pastors had so made and beautified, bring to them, many returns.

However, let us highlight a little portion of the Islamic attitude and see how it relates to selfishness. The excitement of some fanatic religious leaders has led to killings on many occasions in the past. Some years back, a Nigerian journalist made a comment that if Mohammed was alive, he would have chosen one of those contestants for the beauty pageant as his wife. This was on the verge of the opening ceremony of Miss World Beauty pageant in Abuja amidst objections from some Moslems who kicked against the hosting in Nigeria, saying it promoted nudity and immorality. This resulted in a fracas in which many were killed and the contest eventually relocated to London.

A communiqué issued by the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN), as noted in the News Service of the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, admonished against some selfish motives of some religious leaders on religion. It stated, "being a good Christian or a good Muslim necessarily includes brotherly love, compassion, truth, justice, and equity in relationship with others. We condemn fanaticism or any ideological agenda that endangers our common welfare. We should refrain from any exploitation of religion for selfish interest and collaborate in various areas of service to humankind".⁵⁴

Finally, we cannot cease to reiterate the value of religion, which consist in the worship of the true God. This is achieved through our service to our neighbours. This out rightly denounces selfishness.

⁵¹ J. Bamidele, *Pastors of Thieves* in THE NEWS Magazine, Vol 20, No 23, June 9,2003, p.24

⁵² T. Oguntokun, *How Pastors 'charm' their Followers*, *Ibid*.

⁵³ M. Omojola, *Jesus' Response to the Crowd*, p. 87.

⁵⁴ "A Communiqué issued by the CBCN" in *The CSN NEWS magazine*, vol. 4, No 8, Jan. – April, 2004, p.8.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we will evaluate Innocent Asouzu's concept of leadership and self-interest. We will focus on his conception of *the special leadership position* and *the complementarism*. This will be analyzed vis-à-vis the views of other scholars so as to bring out the flaws in them. When this had been done, we will recommend his proposal that is, *the complementarism* as a backbone towards an authentic leadership status in Nigeria. But first we start with the resume.

4.1 RESUMÉ

We began this essay in chapter one with a clarification of terms. Like leadership which was conceived as the act of showing the way for others who may have difficulty in achieving it for themselves. Moreso, the term *influence* was considered as one of the ingredients for effective leadership. We mentioned also that parents ought to be first leaders to their children.

Hence, influence is one of the defining attributes a leader must possess to change the multiple ideas of his followers into good, when necessary. However, there is no gainsaying that the specified quality of leadership remains the ability to lead and guide the people until they achieve their set goals.

In this same chapter, the question of self-interest, which is synonymous with geocentricism, egoism, expedience, self-centeredness was exposed. Then, the historical background of leadership which emerged as a way of providing solution to conflict of undue emphasis placed on self-interest was stated. All these were considered in the light of the present leadership status.

The chapter two of our work focused on the exposition of Innocent Asouzu's view on leadership and self-interest. In this chapter, we examined two principles of Asouzu's view on leadership, which are; the complementarist position and the special position, and the cognitive dimension cum the consequences of self-interest.

For Asouzu, leadership is the act of being custodian of the common good. This common good was considered the basis of any effective leadership. Also, self-interest according to Asouzu is the disposition always in all situations to desire undue advantage for and solely for the person or persons involved. This is in total disregard of the common good.

The third chapter of this essay examined the Nigerian situation, in line with the present problems imposed by poor leadership. Thus, this stems from our leaders' self-interest and this we stated that is driving towards the collapse of the entire system. It is closely connected with the apparent dilapidation of the Nigeria socio-political structure due to the problematic issues of corruption and the constitutional question. The selfish motives of some religious leaders were not left out.

4.2 THE CRITIQUES OF ASOUZU'S CONCEPT OF THE SPECIAL LEADERSHIP POSITION

Leadership is easily the most important element in the development process. Its quality largely determines how a group, society or Nation grows and develops. In this wise, Asouzu subscribes to the fact that the special leadership position is that “which must be clearly differentiated between the leadership quality seen in us as a people with special leadership mandate and that seen in others.”⁵⁵ This is clear, but again he did not state or itemize the qualities. This is an enormous omission for the pursuit of effective leadership.

Some qualities necessarily needed to differentiate special leadership position from the others. Asouzu did not mention one but stated that there is leadership quality. Pantaleon Iroegbu enumerated some qualities of a good leader. They are; “deep knowledge, dynamism, membership, an initiator and originator of ideas, representation, an integrator, adaptability, apt organizer, an inspiration giver, recognition, confidence, clarity, one who respects other's views, resourceful and prolific, out-going and go-getter, humility, patient, one who has vision, wisdom and grace.”⁵⁶

Although, Asouzu opines that “such qualities are to be backed by education which has been acquired, putting it into practice for things to work out for the greater good”, he, nevertheless, went beyond espousing upon the kind of education a leader ought to acquire. Whether education in qualitative leadership which entails having a deep knowledge of the psychology of the people, the cultural and even that which can instill morals into the leader for the reinforcement of character formation.

The inconsistency in his thought became glaring when he at the same time requested for “education to put into practice for things to work”. One can, also, begin to imagine if he advocates what Plato had taught that no one else should rule but the philosopher because he is educated and above all a lover of wisdom.

In the same view, Mokuwgo Okoye borrowing a leaf from Plato and states that “the philosopher in politics is well fitted to serve as a catalyst for change in society. From this kind emerges creative men who know how to transform the people's desires and to command other men to remake the society and serve its moral and material needs.”⁵⁷ Hence, the leader must be educated. This is good but must, also, be competent especially in leading the people. It is on this note, that, Asouzu's conception of education is not comprehensive enough as regard leadership.

In spite of this, he had made some sincere and commendable efforts to grapple with the situational problems of leadership and self-interest that have be-deviled the Nigerian Nation. Among his efforts are his suggesting that leadership position should be meant for *only men worthy to handle very important matters. Men of honour and honesty who would rather die than steal that which pertains to the common good.*

4.3 THE CRITIQUES OF ASOUZU'S CONCEPT OF COMPLEMENTARISM

Asouzu posits complementarism as that which “is more about those actions we can take to make the system work or about those actions that bring good and positive changes

⁵⁵ I. Asouzu, *Effective Leadership and the Ambivalence of Human Interest*, Calabar: Univ. of Calabar Press, 2003, p.64.

⁵⁶ P. Iroegbu, *Appropriate Ecclesiology*, Owerri: International Univ. Press, 1996, p.242.

⁵⁷ O. Mokuwgo, *Embattled Men: Profile in Social Adjustment*, Enugu: Forth Dimension Publishers, 1980, p.244.

in the lives of individuals and society.”⁵⁸ But we may ask, what are those actions that can bring good changes in the society? On this, he was never particular on how to achieve them.

Even, when he mentioned that “someone can speak out boldly against injustice and exploitation while many others can speak and act authoritatively in matters that are important,” but again, the fact is, concrete complementarity ought to be achieved by actions and not by mere words. By Asouzu’s definition of *complementarity*, it will not bring in to existence *complementarity*. This means that defining complementarity does not necessarily bring it into reality.

Complementarity is immediately observed in the War Against Indiscipline (WAI) by Buhari-Idiagbon leadership and the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) led by Nuhu Ribadu. Efforts like this should be supported and craved for. Also, vices noticeable in capitalism, which is a *glorification of self-interest*, should be avoided. This self-interest par excellence and, therefore, grossly antithetical to the spirit and values which complementarity espouse.

“In capitalism there are two classes, that is, the bourgeoisie and the proletariats. The proletariat is the main productive force from where the bourgeoisie exploits.”⁵⁹ The major characteristics of the capitalist society are a clash of self-interests. But when there is complementarity, there will be unity of interests and a pooling together of efforts. Thus, Asouzu opines, “Complementarity stimulates the optimal realization of potentials through harmonious mutual dependency.”⁶⁰

However, Asouzu had gained credence because ‘complementarity’ is better considered for the Nigerian Nation. The inability of Nigeria to make headway in matters of the socio-political realities is borne out of the rapid departure from the norms of our ancient traditional African Societies. The influx of Western civilization, which our leaders have imbibed, is incompatible with communalism, which was predominant in pre-colonial African traditional societies. Hence, we are where we are today.

4.4 ASOUZU’S COMPLEMENTARISM: TOWARDS AND AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP IN NIGERIA

It is important to remark that reality and situations are always changing. This affects the way things are done. It is on this note that we must mention that Asouzu’s views can stand as a paradigm for Nigerian situation. However, we shall also try to modify his views so that it may become relevant for our society.

Good leadership in Nigeria will surface when we as a people co-operate and adopt Asouzu’s *Complementarity*. By the time we adopt the principle of every individual living in the isolation of his self-interest, then, this becomes difficult to know the worth of leadership position. Thus, when there is complementation of each individual self-interest, there will be a shift from selfish desires.

Although, Thomas Hobbes describes “man’s attitudes in the state of nature as aggressive, selfish, cruel, lawless and war like animal.”⁶¹ This, which was also affirmed by Asouzu’s law of self-preservation as “a basic law of nature. According to this law,

⁵⁸ I. Asouzu, *Effective Leadership*, *Ibid.* p.68.

⁵⁹ *Karl Marx Historical Material Dialectism*, A Lecture given by Rev. Fr. Jimoh Anselm, in class, February, 2004.

⁶⁰ I. Asouzu, *Effective Leadership*, *Ibid.* p.68.

⁶¹ John Plamenatz (ed), *Hobbes’ Leviathan*, Glasgow: William Collins & Co., 1951, p.143.

living organisms would do everything possible to uphold those conditions that favour their continued existence.”⁶² Concrete complementarity promoted by morally upright and character form leaders enable them turn their self-interest into the pursuit of the good of the people first before their own private good. This is so, because when there is concrete actualization of complementarity, whatever affects some parts, affects the whole.

To further elucidate on this, “Asouzu’s principle of Complementarity is a fruit of the philosophy of *Ujamma*. This is a philosophy of Julius Nyerere that is targeted at re-awakening the consciousness of the African mind which centers on brotherhood.”⁶³ Our grandfather in the past, before the conquest of the colonial masters greatly expressed the concept of *brotherhood*. Then, it was an aberration to conceive selfishness. Hence, nobody including the leader was seen as a superhuman’. This is in conformity with complementarity that Asouzu had proposed. Justifying the above claim, John Mbiti puts it beautifully in the expression of the African dictum that “ I am because we are and since we are, therefore, I am.”⁶⁴

The wisdom depicted by the concrete actualization of complementarity is that the society gives the individuals self-definition and their proper place. This promotes the continuous existence of the people. Hence, Asouzu enunciate that: This is necessary because, within a complementary framework, pains, joys, happiness, blames and other attendant benefits are shared in line with the spirit of complementarity.⁶⁵

4.5 CONCLUSION

Selfishness and bad leadership are the tenets of our society today. This observation remains true whether leadership is in the hands of military dictators or political elites. On the one hand, while the leaders in our society live within the sea of affluence accruing from their selfish motives, majority of our people on the other hand, survive on abysmal poverty.

Given this situation, is there hope of survival for Nigeria, as a country? Sure, there is hope of survival. But this is on one condition, if and only if, we could live beyond the mess created by our past leaders and take solace in the words of Martin Luther (Jnr.) that “we must accept finite disappointment but not lose infinite hope.”⁶⁶

The leaders should imbibe the esteemed value of integrity, honesty and a readiness to undergo hardship and suffer deprivation for the populace. They should take as their role models, leaders who were truly committed to the interests of the people. They include; Patrice Lumumba of Congo, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Mummar Gaddafi of Libya, Nelson Mandela of South Africa, John Kennedy of the United States of America etc. The leaders mentioned above, actually left indelible marks on the sand of time, and their qualities ought to be emulated by Nigerian leaders and leaders in potency.

⁶² I. Asouzu, *The Method and Principles of Complementary Reflection in and Beyond African Philosophy*, Calabar: Univ. of Calabar Press, 2004, p.50.

⁶³ I. Asouzu, *African Philosophy: Complementary Reflection and The Hierarchy of Human Interest*, <http://www.frasouzu.com>

⁶⁴ “John Mbiti” in G. Ehusani, *Ozovehe: An Afro-Christian Vision*, Ogun State: The Ambassador Publication, 1991, p.42.

⁶⁵ I. Asouzu, *African Philosophy*, <http://www.frasouzu.com>

⁶⁶ M. Luther, *Strength to Love*, London: Fontana Books, 1963, p.92.

Can a leader in Nigeria confidently say or claim that he is fighting for the interests of the common good? Unless we are not sincere with ourselves, such Nigerians exist in every geo-political zones of the country. What remains is to identify and give them the change to lead us.

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