Political Leadership and Socio-economic Development of Rivers State

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Abstract:
The paper examined the role of political leadership on socio-economic development of Rivers State. The study raised two research questions and two corresponding objectives. Elite theory was adopted as the theoretical frame work. Both primary and secondary data were utilized. The population for this study is 7,303,924 based on 2022 city projected population. A sample of 400 respondents was drawn with the aid of Taro Yamene formula. The study adopted stratified sampling and purposive sampling technique to administer the research instrument to the respondents. The study generated data from primary and secondary sources. A questionnaire instrument was used in this study titled; "Role of Political Leadership on Socio-economic Development Questionnaire (RPLSEDQ)". The study employed the test-re-test method. This method allowed the researcher to assess the survey instrument by applying two separate measurements on the same elements at different times with the same methods. The outcome of the pilot survey was compared with that of the final survey to confirm if the results are the same. The data generated were analyzed with Mean and Standard Deviation through the aid of SPSS version 25. The criterion mean was 2.5 which implied that any item found equal or above 2.5 was accounted as Agreed, while item means lesser than 2.5 were interpreted to be disagreed.

The study found that the political leaders encourage educational development of the people, however, they have not made significant effort in financial empowerment, skill development, and employment opportunities for the citizens of Rivers State. The challenges militating against political leadership in socio-economic development in Rivers State are corruption, lack of vision, selfishness, wrong value-system, greediness, and ethnic interest. The study therefore advice that the Rivers State political leaders should be very sensitive to the cries and desperations of the average man in the society as to improve the socio-economic development of the state and also enforce and mobilize the appropriate anti-graft institutions or agencies with the necessary materials needed to apprehend and recover looted public funds from corrupt public officials.

I. INTRODUCTION

The major challenge confronting Nigeria and other developing countries in Africa is leadership. The issue of getting the right leadership to propel good governance has been a recurring challenge in Nigeria and most developing countries in general. The present and past leaders of Nigeria seem to have failed to provide quality leadership capable of addressing numerous challenges confronting the country. Governments are unable to set in place transparent and accountable institutions capable of securing economic progress, governing effectively, and protecting their citizens. This lack of capacity is amplified by recourse to authoritarianism and repression, dramatic economic decline precipitated by indiscriminate corruption, and the adoption of exclusive (ethnic) policies to assure self-succession tendencies. Inefficiency in governance has further deteriorated the Nigerian economy. Political instability and lack of proper accountability in the country have severely impeded the ability of successive governments to implement economic policies for the common good of the people, thus creating a lack of basic amenities for the people in the country (Ejimabo, 2013). The solution for addressing Nigeria's problems and consolidating democratic governance in the federal republic lies in having a government or leadership that works on the principles of good governance and is, most importantly, accountable to the Nigerian people. Good governance in Nigeria is essential to its stability, growth and development.

Adejimi (2005) citied in Ejimabo (2013) indicated that in Nigeria, most of the policy makers as well as those involved in decision making are engaged in bribery, egoism, power, and trade liberalization. Fagbadebo (2007) stated that the Nigerian State is a victim of high-level corruption, bad governance, political instability, and a cyclical legitimacy crisis. The country's authoritarian leadership faced a legitimacy crisis, political intrigues, in an ethnically differentiated polity, where ethnic competition for resources drove much of the pervasive corruption, and profligacy.

The history of a great nation is linked to purposeful leadership. Such leaders have played significant roles in the socio-economic development and political emancipation of their nations. In Nigeria, leadership has failed to harness the resources and the ingenuity of the people for national development. The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. The nature of political leadership became a problem as most of them lacked control of effective leadership. This led to the scramble for state resources to suit their personal desires. Onodugo(2016) asserts that corruption and lack of vision among past and present leaders of Nigeria culminate to hamper any meaningful effort in the quest for good governance in the country. It is often said that no country can develop beyond the level of its leadership. Nigeria needs committed leaders who will govern with integrity and doggedly influence its human and natural resources toward the actualization of sustainable national

development. This paper focused on leadership challenges and development in Rivers State.

Statement of the Problem

Rivers State is endowed with abundant human and natural resources such as petroleum, solid minerals, agricultural resources and water resources. The government generates huge amount of money from industries, internal revenue service and largely from the exploitation of petroleum resources. Despite these heart-warming realities, many people are still poor, and social development is not commensurate with revenue output. The higher the population grows, the higher the level of economic and social inequalities. The democratisation process has left more to be desired. This is due to the existence of bad leadership style, lack of political will and/or administrative ineptitude and the overwhelming effect of corruption (Stakeholder Democracy Network, SDN, 2013).

The major challenge confronting Rivers State and Nigeria at large is leadership. The issue of getting the right leadership to propel good governance has been a recurring challenge in Nigeria. The present and past leaders in Rivers State seem to have failed to provide quality leadership capable of addressing numerous challenges confronting the State. Government are unable to set in place transparent and accountable institutions capable of securing economic progress, governing effectively, and protecting their citizens. This lack of capacity is amplified by recourse to authoritarianism and repression, dramatic economic decline precipitated by indiscriminate corruption, and the adoption of exclusive (ethnic) policies to assure self-succession tendencies. Inefficiency in governance has further deteriorated the Rivers State economy (Ogunmilade, Nwoko, &Akhigbe, 2017, p.35).Political instability and lack of proper accountability in the Rivers State has severely impeded the ability of successive governments to implement economic policies for the common good of the people, thus creating a lack of basic amenities for the people in the State (Ejimabo, 2013).

Adejimi (2005) citied in Ejimabo (2013) indicated that most of the policy makers as well as those involved in decision making are engaged in bribery, egoism, power, and trade liberalization. Fagbadebo (2007) stated that the Rivers State is a victim of high-level corruption, bad governance, political instability, and a cyclical legitimacy crisis. The State's authoritarian leadership faced a legitimacy crisis, political intrigues, in an ethnically differentiated polity, where ethnic competition for resources drove much of the pervasive corruption, and profligacy.

Poor leadership is a major obstacle to development in Rivers State, particularly due to inadequate levels of accountability and transparency in the handling of public affairs. According to Akinkuotu (2011, pp. 16-17), this is so because most political leaders in Rivers State owe allegiance to 'godfathers' who sponsored them into political offices, so that they (the politicians) do everything possible to satisfy the 'godfathers' even to the detriment of the State's development.

According to Babawale (2007), one of the major challenges to development in Rivers State is that of bad leadership and 'politics of belly' that abound at all levels of governance in the State. He posits that "Nigeria lacks good quality leadership. To move forward as a nation, we need new breed of leaders that are sensitive, patriotic, and accountable and have demonstrable vision." For Yunusa (2009, pp.166-172), over the years, Nigeria's failure has been traced largely to a failure of leadership: most Nigerian leaders have come to power unprepared, and therefore unable to grapple with the modern world where democracy is the dominant ideology. Rivers State lacks effective leadership to harness its rich human and material resources for development (Daniel, 2021).

Ninalowo (2003) sees transparency as a process whereby public officials are open and honest in the performance of their functions. In a society where the culture of accountability is treated with contempt, the culture of unethical practices as a means of doing business, both in the public and private sectors, is bound to be enthroned. As a result, the funds that would have gone into development programmes are wasted by public officials. Thus there is a relationship between, on the one hand, authentic leadership that subscribes to proper accountability in the management of public resources and, on the other, development in a society. In this section, the discussion on the major obstacles to development in Nigeria is premised on the fact that there is poor leadership in government which manifests in two major areas, namely, poor management of resources by public officials, and corruption amongst leaders at various levels of government.

The history of a great nation is linked to purposeful leadership. Such leaders have played significant roles in the socio-economic development and political emancipation of their nations. In Rivers State, leadership has failed to harness the resources and the ingenuity of the people for national development. The trouble with Rivers State is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. The nature of political leadership became a problem as most of them lacked control of effective leadership skills. This led to the scramble for state resources to suit their personal desires.

Onodugo (2016) asserts that corruption and lack of vision among past and present leaders of Rivers State culminate to hamper meaningful effort in the quest for good governance in the State. It is often said that no country can develop beyond the level of its leadership. Rivers State needs committed leaders who will govern with integrity and doggedly influence its human and natural resources toward the actualization of sustainable development. This study focused on leadership challenges and socio-economic development in Rivers State. This paper seeks to conceptualized leadership and development, discuss and assess the leadership challenges in Rivers State and characteristics of good governance, lastly recommended a way out of these leadership challenges.

Research Questions

The following research questions are posed to guide this study:

1) What are the role of political leadership in socio-economic development of Rivers State?

2) What are the challenges militating against political leadership in socio-economic development in Rivers State?

Objectives of the study

The general objective of this study is to investigate the role of political leadership on socio-economic development of Rivers State. Specifically, the study seeksto:

i) To examine the role of political leadership towards socio-economic development of Rivers State.

ii) To examine the challenges militating against political leadership in socio-economic development in Rivers State

II . CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Leadership

The word "Leadership" has been defined in so many ways by different scholars and as a result, it is almost impossible to come up with a single definition that is acceptable to scholars of various divides. However, leadership may be defined as a body of people who lead and direct the activities of a group towards a shared goal. It also denotes the ability to lead, direct and organise a group. In line with this understanding, Norman Schwarzkopf (Reed, 2001) describes leadership as a potent combination of strategy and character and strongly emphasised that, of the two elements, character is the most preferred for leadership. John Gardener, on his part, explains leadership as the process of persuasion or example by which an individual induces a group to pursue objectives held by the leader or shared by the leader and his or her followers (Weekly Trust, 2004, p.11).

Consequently, leadership is a process of social influence by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organisation in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent (Chemers, 2002). A leader therefore is expected to demonstrate qualities, which embrace but not limited to good character, vision, tact, prudence, and ability to lead by example because people basically ascribe leadership to those who they feel can most enable them achieve important goals or objectives.

Leadership has been defined as a necessary phenomenon in political field. It is the capacity in a person or in a group of persons to inspire confidence and thereby regard for himself or themselves to guide and govern the followers (Okaneme, 2017). Leadership is the process through which one individual consistently exerts more influence than others in the pursuit of group behaviour (Ogunmilade, Nwoko&Akhigbe, 2017).

Ogbeidi, (2012) defines leadership "as a body of people who lead and direct the activities of a group towards a shared goal". This implies the ability to lead, direct and organize a group towards achieving a mutually shared goal. Ubegbe (1999, p. 282) defines "leadership as the process of creating the subordinates' identification with the group's mission and creating their desires to achieve the group's goal". In the light of this understanding, (Norman Schwarzkopf quoted in Ogbeidi, 2012) defines leadership as a potent combination of strategy and character and strongly stresses that, of the two elements, character is the most preferred for leadership. Leadership is a social influence process in which the leader seeks the voluntary participation of subordinates in an effort to achieve organizational goals (Graig, 2005). Similarly, John Gardener describes leadership as the process of persuasion or example by which an individual induces a group to pursue objectives held by the leader or shared by the leader and his or her followers (Weekly Trust, 2004, p. 11). Accordingly, leadership is a process of social influence by which a superior influences subordinates to accomplish an objective and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent (Chemers, cited in Ogbeidi, 2012). A leader therefore is expected to be visionary, selfless, tact, prudent, level-headed with good character, and must have ability to lead by example.

True leaders in any nation are the key to a new world. It is practically impossible for any nation to improve, change, and develop without true leadership. True leaders are selfless, they think more of the next generation. If Nigeria is going to be successful we need true leaders. Leadership is not measured by how many people serve you but how many people you serve and impacted positively. True leaders do not seek followers, but followers are attracted to true leaders. Leadership is not a right of the leader but a privilege given by the followers and the leader must respect the followers. Leadership success is measured by the success of your successor. No matter how great a leader may have been if he could

not produce a successor, he is a failure. This is true of a parent, a teacher and a politician. A true leader must be able to mentor those who will succeed him so that his legacy will not be destroyed. True leaders do not have seat-tight syndrome (Diri, 2021, p.79).

Development

Development is process of improving the quality of all human lives with three equally important aspects: these are (i) Raising peoples' living levels, i.e. incomes and consumption, levels of food, medical services, education through relevant growth processes, (ii) Creating conditions conducive to the growth of peoples' self-esteem through the establishment of social, political and economic systems and institutions which promote human dignity and respect and (iii) Increasing peoples' freedom to choose by enlarging the range of their choice variables.

Development is therefore realisation of increased self-esteem and self-reliance. People should be capacitated to have power to influence and control their own future. i.e this concept does not only mean capacity building for socio-economic achievement, but also political empowerment so that people have power to influence their future (Wetmore & Theron, 1997).

The word "development" according to Schumpeter cited in Jhingan (2003), is defined as the discontinuous and spontaneous change in the stationery state which forever alters and displaces the equilibrium state previously existing. Rodney (1972) opined that development in human society is a many-sided process that occurs at three levels, namely the individual, social group and the society. At individual level, it deals with increase in skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being. Development progresses from collection of individual to a cohesion group works for a common goal. Development at social group refers to positive change in the lives of individuals reflected in their various social groups. To the society development, it refers to improvement in the society's economic and social conditions, improvement in the way of managing both natural and human resources to achieve optimally in all areas. The process by which a society changes from one low level at a particular stage to a higher level in which there is a positive gain (Alo, 2014).

Ake (1976) posited that development is the process by which people create and recreate themselves and their circumstances to realize higher level of civilization in accordance with their own choices and value. It is something people must do for themselves although it can be facilitated by the help of others. Ake (1976) identified the following as factors responsible for lack of development in Africa, which include, colonial legacy, social pluralism, corruption, poor planning, incompetent management, limited inflow of foreign capital and low level of saving and investment. Nnolin (1981) agreed that development shares the following things.

(1) Human-centered rather than artifact-centre

(2) Dynamic process rather that static

(3) Involves a complex interactive relationship between individuals and the society.

(4) Predicated essentially on production rather than consumption.

Nnolin (1982) posited that development is a dialectical phenomenon in which the individual and society interact with the physical, biological and inter human environment transforming them for their own betterment and being transformed in the process. The lesson and experience gained in the process are passed on to future generation enabling them to improve their capability to make further valuable

changes in their inter human relations and their ability to transform nature. Sen (1998) argued that freedom is the primary objectives of development and principal means of development, that development is the process of expanding human freedom, the enhancement of freedom that allow people to lead lives that they have reach to live. He further stated that development involves reducing deprivation or broadening choice as deprivation represent a multidimensional view which includes hunger, illiteracy, poor health, powerlessness, voicelessness, insecurity, limitation, and lack of basic infrastructure. In a similar view Seers (1979) averred that the purpose of development is to reduce poverty, inequality and unemployment Onabanjo and M'bayo (2009) posited that development should be man-centered and not institution oriented; while Naomi (1995) posited that development involves economic growth, notion of equitable distribution, provision of health care, education, housing and other essential services all with a view to improving the individual and the larger society.

Chrisman (1984) viewed development to be a process of societal advancement, where improvement in the wellbeing of people are generated through strong partnership between all sectors, corporate bodies and other groups in the society. Gboyega (2003) viewed development as an idea that embodies all attempts to improve the condition of human existence in all ramifications. Umezurike (2005) advanced that development connotes transformation of the living condition of man as a consequence of his earlier confrontation of the constraints posed by his environment (political, economic, socio-cultural etc).

Todaro and Smith (2015) stated that development is the uplifting and improving the level of living standard of the masses of the people redefining it in terms of poverty reduction, elimination of inequality, and unemployment within the context of a growing economy. That development is a multidimensional process involving major changes in social structures, popular attitude and national institutions, as well as acceleration of economic growth, reduction of inequality and eradication of poverty. The above objectives are not visible in the Niger Delta region since the discovery of oilin 1956. Nevertheless, Bassey (2016) stated that the Niger Delta region produce, account for 80 percent of government revenue and 90 percent of foreign exchange earnings.

Economic development

Economic development can be referred to as the quantitative and qualitative changes in an existing economy. Economic development involves development of human capital, increasing the literacy ratio, improve important infrastructure, improvement of health and safety, and other areas that aims at increasing the general welfare of the citizens. Economic development is can also be seen as an increase in living conditions, improvement of the self-esteem needs and a free and just society. He suggests that the most accurate method of measuring economic development is Human Development index which takes into account the literacy rate which in turn has outright impact on productivity and could lead to economic growth (Todaro, 2016).

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Elite Theory

The paper is hinged on elite theory. The theory was propounded in the 1930s, by Vilfredo Pareto (1935) and Gaetano Mosca (1939). The main thrust of elite theory is that elite controls and exploits the non-elite by the virtue of its position in the society. According to Pareto (1935), society is divided between lower stratum and higher stratum. The lower stratum is made up of the non-elite, while the

higher stratum is made up of the elite. The elite class is further divided into governing elite and non-governing elite. The governing elite which are from the higher stratum dominate and occupy all important political appointments and influence major political decisions. Elites and non-elites are not stable, and they are subject to change. New elites rise and take old elite's place. This change is called the law of circulation of elites by Pareto. He says "elites" or aristocrats do not last. They live or take position in a certain time. "History", he says, "is a graveyard of aristocracies" (Pareto 1935). He went further to say that the elite class is usually the richest. There is no doubt that there are two classes of people in every society – a class that rules and a class that is ruled. The former contains a few number of people and possess all political power and privileges whereas the latter consists of large number of people who are subjected to rule of the former and provide essential instruments for political organization (Mosca, 1939).

According to Mbah (2014), Elite theory formed an essential part of the political doctrine which was critical of modern democracy and hostile to modern socialism. The elite are those people who have some qualities that differentiated them from the general mass of people. Hence, democratic systems must rely on the wisdom, loyalty and skill of their political leaders, not on the population at large.

The elite class is the richest and the most successful in every sphere of life; the elite controls and exploits the non-elite by the virtue of its position in the society. Governing elite, which is the first in the class of two in the elite class, establishes its control over the subject class by using force and providing great wealth. Bargaining, concessions, and deceit are the kind of policies used by the political leadership. Economic prosperity not only keeps the ruling class in power and makes it easier to govern society than periods of depression, but also affects the type of political regimes (Pareto, 1935).

It is a truism to say that political leadership in Nigeria, which is the governing group of the elite, exploits the people (masses) they are supposed to serve, as the Nigeria National Anthem implies. Again, it is equally worthy of note to say that the oath taken by political leadership of Nigeria, the pledge to build a nation where peace and justice shall reign, is far from being followed; rather, it is only the elite that get justice at the detriment of the people (masses).

The extent of success or failure of any human society or organization has its root in leadership at all levels. Great empires, kingdoms, nation-states and organizations have risen and fallen due to effective or ineffective leadership. People have been enslaved and liberated due to leadership. The influence of Othman Danfodio's Jihad conquest and leadership has transcended generations and still subsists today in modern day Nigeria and Africa south of the Sahara, thus expanding the frontiers of Islamic civilization.

The unity and integration for greater progress that political leadership ought to exhibit is far from it. Mandela sought to prove a point in unity and integration for greater progress, observes, "I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities" (Mandela, 1964). Harmony and equal opportunities can be attained in a nation with effective leadership. To this end, the extent of any society's political, economic and social development will be anchored on leadership tied to followership in every ramification.

Discounting the problems and tendencies created by colonial rule, perhaps no other factor is as implicated in the human condition and the generally deplorable state of affairs in postcolonial Nigeria as the failure, or indeed the lack, of leadership - by comparison countries like Malaysia and Singapore, through the vision and hard work of their leaders, and against all odds, have transformed their

countries. India, another country in Asia, which was subject to colonial rule like Nigeria, has similarly recorded major achievements in the face of overwhelming challenges, including runaway population. Even in Africa, Botswana, Ghana and Senegal, among former colonies are, making significant progress in nation building. What, then, is the problem with the Nigerian Political Leadership?

By application leaders should exhibit behaviours (dedication, patriotism, commitment, high moral standards, etc.) capable of influencing the citizens to believe in their strategic vision for change, accept management decisions as well as inspire them to key into the various developmental programmes and policies initiated for growth and development. Aside that, every leader's major responsibility is to channel all resources towards the various functions that will lead to the total transformation of the political, cultural, economic as well as social environment for the wellbeing of members of the society through provisions of infrastructural facilities and basic social amenities that will in the long run increase the standard of living and reduce to cost of living to the barest minimum.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The study investigated the role of political leadership on socio-economic development of Rivers State. The researcher adopted a descriptive survey research design. The reason for descriptive survey research design is because it helps the researcher to examine the situation just as it is at the moment without manipulating any variable, also in doing so, the questionnaire is a very powerful tool for generating information from respondents. The population for this study is 7,303,924 drawn from the 2022 city population project. A sample of 400 respondents was drawn with the aid of Taro Yamene formula. The study adopted stratified sampling and purposive sampling technique to administer the research instrument to the respondents. The study generated data from primary and secondary sources. A questionnaire instrument was used in this study titled; "Role of Political Leadership on Socio-economic Development Questionnaire". The researcher gave the draft copy of the questionnaire to the supervisor for his vetting and input. The study employed the test-re-test method. This method allowed the researcher to assess the survey instrument by applying two separate measurements on the same elements at different times with the same methods. The outcome of the pilot survey was compared with that of the final survey to confirm if the results are the same. The data generated were analyzed with Mean and Standard Deviation through the aid of SPSS version 25. The criterion mean was 2.5 which implied that any item found equal or above 2.5 was accounted as Agreed, while item means lesser than 2.5 were interpreted to be disagreed.

V DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Demography of the study Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	224	56.9
	Female	170	43.1
Marital Status	Single	198	50.3
	Married	134	34.0
	Others	62	15.7
Age	15-24 years	162	41.1
	25-34 years	127	32.2
	35years and Above	105	26.6

Educational Qualification	O'level	58	14.7
	NCE/ND	157	39.8
	First Degree	119	30.2
	Post Graduates	60	15.2
	Total	**394**	**100.0**

Table 1 shows the demography of respondents of the study. By gender, 224 (56.9%) of the respondents were male while 170 (43.1%) were female. By marital status, 198 (50.3%) of the respondents were single, 134 (34%) were married, while 62% (15.7%) were in other types of marital status. By age, 162 (41.1%) of the respondents were within (15-24) years of age, 127 (32.2%) were within 25-34 years of age while 105 (26.6%) were within the age of 35 years and above. Lastly, by academic qualification, 58 (14.7%) have O-level qualification, 157 (39.8%) have NCE/ND qualification, 119 (30.2%) have first degree qualification, while 60 (15.2%) of the respondents have postgraduate qualification.

Research Question One: What are the role of political leaders in socio-economic development of Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean Responses for the role of political leaders in socio-economic development of Rivers State

N=394, Criterion Mean = 2.50

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std.	Remark
1.	The political leadership in the state encourages education	126	166	81	21	3.01	0.86	**Agreed**
2.	The political leadership in Rivers makes provision for several financial empowerment opportunities	31	31	305	27	2.17	0.66	**Disagreed**
3.	The leadership has made opportunities for several skill development	44	28	302	20	2.24	0.71	**Disagreed**
4	The leadership makes provision for several employment opportunities for its citizens.	25	33	--	336	2.21	0.54	**Disagreed**
5	The political leadership in the state gives equal opportunities to the citizenry	83	68	180	63	2.43	0.99	**Disagreed**
	Grand mean					**2.41**	**0.75**	**Disagreed**

Table 1 accounts for the role of political leadership in socio-economic development of Rivers State. The table showed that the political leadership encourages education (Mean=3.01, Std.=0.86). However, the table accounted that the leadership have no provision for several financial empowerment opportunities, have no much opportunities for skill development for the people, and has no much provisions for employment opportunities for its citizens, and also equal opportunities are provided to the citizenry.

Research Question Two: What are the challenges militating against political leadership in socio-

economic development in Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean Responses on the challenges militating against political leadership in socio-economic development in Rivers State

N=394, Criterion Mean = 2.50

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std.	Remark
6	Corruption	27	199	161	7	2.62	0.64	**Agreed**
7	Lack of vision	125	125	126	18	2.91	0.90	**Agreed**
8	Selfishness	168	126	41	59	3.02	1.06	**Agreed**
9	Wrong value-system	163	122	83	26	3.07	0.94	**Agreed**
10	Greediness	61	262	35	36	2.88	0.84	**Agreed**
11	Political party members' interest over citizens' interest	164	84	126	20	2.99	0.97	**Agreed**
12	Ethnic interest	109	53	213	19	2.64	0.94	**Agreed**
13	Embezzlement	22	272	56	44	2.69	0.74	**Agreed**
	Grand mean					**2.78**	**0.88**	**Agreed**

Table 2 showed the challenges militating against political leadership in socio-economic development in Rivers State. The table accounted that corruption (Mean=2.62, Std.=0.64), lack of vision (Mean=2.91, Std.=0.90), selfishness (Mean=3.02, Std.=1.06), wrong value-system (Mean=3.07, Std.=0.94), greediness (Mean=2.88, Std.=0.84), political party members' interest over citizens' interest (Mean=2.99, Std.=0.97), ethnic interest (Mean=2.64, Std.=0.94), and embezzlement (Mean=2.69, Std.=0.74) are the challenges militating against political leadership in socio-economic development in Rivers State.

VI. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Research question one examined the role of political leaders in socio-economic development of Rivers State. It was found that the political leaders encourages educational development of the people, however, the leaders have not made significant effort in financial empowerment, skill development, and employment opportunities for the citizens of Rivers State.

The history of a great nation is linked to purposeful leadership. Such leaders have played significant roles in the socio-economic development and political emancipation of their nations. In Nigeria, leadership has failed to harness the resources and the ingenuity of the people for national development. The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. The nature of political leadership became a problem as most of them lacked control of effective leadership. This led to the scramble for state resources to suit their personal desires. Hence, the study is consistent with Dike (2014) findings which showed that the political leaders have failed to adequately fund education and strengthen the infrastructure and institutions that would drive the economy and create employment for the teeming population. Both the new-breed politicians, like the old politicians before them, are promising to transform the nation into an industrialized society and the people cannot hold their expectations.

Research question two examined the challenges militating against political leadership in socio-economic development in Rivers State. It was found that corruption, lack of vision, selfishness, wrong

value-system, greediness, ethnic interest, and embezzlement are the challenges militating against political leadership in socio-economic development in Rivers State.Onodugo (2016) asserts that corruption and lack of vision among past and present leaders of Nigeria culminate to hamper any meaningful effort in the quest for good governance in the country. It is often said that no country can develop beyond the level of its leadership. Rivers State needs committed leaders who will govern with integrity and doggedly influence its human and natural resources toward the actualization of sustainable national development. Adejimi (2005) citied in Ejimabo (2013) indicated that in Nigeria, most of the policy makers engaged in bribery, egoism, power, and trade liberalization. Fagbadebo (2007) stated that the Nigerian State is a victim of high-level corruption, bad governance, political instability, and a cyclical legitimacy crisis. The country's authoritarian leadership faced a legitimacy crisis, political intrigues, in an ethnically differentiated polity, where ethnic competition for resources drove much of the pervasive corruption, and profligacy. This study is in agreement with Chukwuka and Ananaba (2016) which found that some factors such as corruption, wrong value-system, greed and selfishness, patriotism, ethnicity to name but a few, hinder leaders in developing countries from raising the standard of living of the citizens.

VII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The major challenge confronting Nigeria and other developing countries in Africa is leadership. The issue of getting the right leadership to propel good governance has been a recurring challenge in Nigeria and most developing countries in general. The present and past leaders of Nigeria seem to have failed to provide quality leadership capable of addressing numerous challenges confronting the country. Governments are unable to set in place transparent and accountable institutions capable of securing economic progress, governing effectively, and protecting their citizens. This lack of capacity is amplified by recourse to authoritarianism and repression, dramatic economic decline precipitated by indiscriminate corruption, and the adoption of exclusive (ethnic) policies to assure self-succession tendencies.

It is often said that no country can develop beyond the level of its leadership. In Rivers State, the leadership has failed to harness the resources and the ingenuity of the people for national development. The trouble with Rivers State is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. The nature of political leadership became a problem as most of them lacked control of effective leadership skills. This led to the scramble for state resources to suit their personal desires. Thus, the study investigated the role of the political leadership in the socio-economic development of Rivers State. It was found that the political leadership only play some extent of active role in the educational sector, while there are no adequate support for skill development, financial empowerment, employment opportunities, and no provision of equal opportunities for the citizens.

The reasons behind the above political leadership were found to be corruption, lack of vision, selfishness, wrong value-system, and greediness, political party members' interest over citizens' interest, ethnic interest, and embezzlement.

Based on the study' findings it is important to recommend the followings;

1. The political leaders in the Ricers State should be very sensitive to the cries and desperations of the average man in the society as to improve the socio-economic development of the state.

2. The government of Rivers State should enforce and mobilize the appropriate anti-graft institutions or agencies with the necessary materials needed to apprehend and recover looted public funds from

corrupt public officials. Lawmakers should also pass into law stern measures as punishments to prevent prospective public officials from looting public fund or involving in corrupt practices.

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