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## DEMOCRACY, LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE IN PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA: A REAPPRAISAL OF THE JOSHUA DARIYE'S ADMINISTRATION, 1999-2007.

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### Abstract

*The year 1999 is significant in the annals of Nigerian history being the period the country returned to democratic rule after the democratic process was severally interrupted by the military incursion into politics. It can be adduced that the period of military dictatorship spanned through a phase of twenty-nine years. Military rule is synonymous with arbitrariness, brutalization of citizens and the entrenchment of the practice of impunity. However, the return to the democratic dispensation culminated in the conduct of elections at both the federal and state levels in 1999. This was after the conduct of primary elections by different political parties, the platform through which political leaders were elected to power. The election in Plateau State produced Joshua Chibi Dariye as the governor and he was reelected in 2003 to serve a second term in office. This article discusses participatory leadership theory, also regarded as democratic theory, a succinct representation of the period being considered. The administration was bedeviled with challenges like impeachment, ethno-religious crisis etc. The administration tried in few sectors, but largely failed in other sectors and did not maximize the gains of democracy. In particular, the education sector was revamped, wards were created and chiefdoms were upgraded. On the other hand, the administration interfered with the legislature, judiciary, mass media and press freedom, and local government administration. It concludes by reiterating the need for checks and balances and strengthening of institutions through proper dissolution of powers and autonomy to all the arms of government and its tiers.*

**Keywords:** Democracy, Leadership, Governance, Reappraisal, Administration.

## Introduction

Prior to the year 1999, the democratic space in Nigeria had been played with its own challenges, especially military intervention or disruption of the normal process. Nigeria, the world's fourth largest democracy and the fifth largest federation, is increasingly becoming conducive for democracy. Several efforts in the past to sow the seed of democracy in the country's political soil had proved extremely difficult.<sup>1</sup> However, it laid the foundation for the continuous practice of democracy. The focus of this paper is the Dariye's administration in Plateau State, from 1999 to 2007. The state was created on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February, 1976 by General Murtala Muhammad and split from Benue-Plateau. This political enclave comprises of divergent ethnic, linguistic and cultural groups. It is pertinent to state that those who had assume leadership positions like J.D Gwomwalk, Chief Solomon Lar, prior to the emergence of Joshua Dariye in 1999 worked assiduously to establish and sustain systems, programmes and societal values.<sup>2</sup> These were designed to guarantee the potential and economic viability of the state. The administration of Joshua Dariye after being inaugurated initiated a policy termed "Re-engineering", a philosophy developed towards creating the desired impact on the socio-economic and political developments of the state.<sup>3</sup> It is against this background that this article focuses on a reappraisal of different sectors under the purview of the administration.

## Theoretical Framework

For clarity of analysis, it is sine qua non to present a theoretical framework in this study for a proper understanding. Research has proven that theories on leadership and governance abound, they are primarily normative, directed at better comprehending leadership processes and explaining the rationale behind their variation across time and space. The theory suitable for this study as advanced by Kurt Lewin in the 1990s is the participatory leadership or governance interchangeably regarded as "Democratic leadership". This theory stems from the notion that success in governance is certain when rather than taking autocratic decisions, others like subordinates, peers, and stakeholders are deliberately included in the process of governance. This supports the inclusion of the populace in decision making, which improves the understanding of challenges. Inevitably, the people are committed to actions that lead towards the realization of both vision and mission statement. Consensus is normally reached at the end of consultative fora, honourably adhered to and endorsed by the representatives of the people and the leader for the growth, progress and advancement of the society (State).<sup>4</sup>

The praxis emphasized key approaches to governance also known as consultation, empowerment of the less privileged, joint decision making and democratic leadership. This theory is relevant to

<sup>1</sup> Sonni Gwanle Tyoden, lecture "The Gains and Pains of Democracy in Nigeria" Delivered at the 2008 Public Lecture/Dinner Night of the Nigerian Institute of Management (Chartered) Jos, Published by African Centre for Communication and Environment, 2008. f the Nigerian Institute of Management he Nigerian Institute of Management (NIM), published by ACCEf Nigerian Institute of Management (NIM), Jos, published by ACCE

<sup>2</sup> Plateau State Government, Plateau: The Heritage and Hope (Jos: 2001), Irukwu, J.O. Nigeria: *The Last Chance* (Nigeria: Spectrum, 2005), 31. ,2005).31.,2005),31.

<sup>3</sup> Plateau State Government, The Heritage... (Jos: 2001), 99, 199-120.

<sup>4</sup> <http://changingminds.org/disciplines/leadership/theories/leadership-theories.htm>. Accessed December 11, 2020.

this period considered to be a period of supposed leadership and governance in a democratic set-up as opposed to military rule. It can be used to assess the policy direction of any administration, like that of Dariye is being discussed. At the initial stage, the administration typified the ideals of the aforementioned theory. The administration had strong belief in collective leadership which in itself is a necessary ingredient in a democratic dispensation. The governor began by ensuring a truce occasioned by broken relationships, the foundation for infrastructure was laid while government machinery was seen as a necessary step towards uplifting the state to higher heights.<sup>5</sup> Subsequent events attested to the fact that the philosophy of “Re-engineering” did not later translate into visible impacts on the masses and negated the participatory or leadership framework. In contrast to the theory, the administration later fell short of the yearnings and aspirations of the people as performance was below standard. Of utmost consideration is the alleged corruption and lack of transparency which became a predominant feature of that era.

## Review of Literature

In conceptualizing democracy, leadership and the use of power in Nigeria’s fourth republic, Gambo and Adakai viewed it as a carefully constituted structure that determined through aggregation of competing view points, the direction of society.<sup>6</sup> Leadership is more responsive to the aspirations of the people than the one imposed on them. In his contribution, Bingel defined leadership in its simplest form as the ability to inspire, direct, motivate and encourage others positively to targeted ends. Yet from a different perspective, it connotes the ability to lead others and not necessarily an availability to lead, even though availability might at times lead to leadership itself. Basically, leaders are responsible for the actualization of certain aims and objectives; as such they are expected to possess rare qualities.<sup>7</sup>

In a World Bank report titled “Can Africa Claim the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?” governance was conceived as the means by which power is exercised in the management of a nation’s or country’s economic and social resources for sustainable development.<sup>8</sup> Tunde Zack-Williams succinctly puts it as a periodic submission of the governors to the governed to account for their stewardship. Consequently, for the governed to be able to make considered decisions, relevant institutions should respect not just the right of the citizens to choose those who will form the government, but their social and political rights should be seen as alienable.<sup>9</sup> From the return to democracy till date, the Nigerian scenario has been quite appalling because only few leaders, if not a minute percentage give accurate account of their stewardship, majority evade it. Contracts are mostly distorted or shrouded in secrecy. Most times, clear distinction is not displayed in the areas of

<sup>5</sup> Plateau State Government, Centenary History of Plateau State: 1914-2014 (Nigeria: 2015, 378).

<sup>6</sup> Gambo A.N and Adakai F. Amayah, “Democracy, Leadership And the Use of Power in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic” in *Journal of Political Science, cal Sciencecal Science*, No.1 and 2 (2005), 241-247.

<sup>7</sup> Bingel, B.T “The Poverty of Leadership in Nigeria, 1960-2010” in *Nigeria at 50: The Challenges of Nation Building*, ed. Olayemi Akinwumu, Mamman Musa Adamu, Patrick Ukase (Nigeria: Ahmadu Bello University, 2012), 3-4 Akinwumi, Mamman Musa Adamu, Patrick Ukase (Nigeria: Ahmadu Bello University, 2012), 3-4.

<sup>8</sup> World Bank Report. “Can Africa Claim the 21<sup>st</sup> Century/Washington World Bank? (2000). <https://www.wprldb.org/wbr/governance>. Accessed December 11, 2020.

<sup>9</sup> William-Zack Tunde, “NO Democracy, No Development. Reflections on Democracy and Development in Africa” In *Quarterly Journal of the Centre for Democracy and Development*, 2, No.5 (2001)5.

public accountability, financial accountability, administrative and political accountability, responsiveness and transparency.

In a work titled “Summary Report of the International Conference on Democratization and Development in West Africa in the New Millennium” held at the ECOWAS Conference Centre, Abuja, Mayegun reiterated Ms. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf’s opinion on the historical and social origins of West Africa’s major problems and the background to the social economic, cultural and political malaise. As far back as 1999 when Nigerian leaders assumed positions, there was the challenge of leadership with the right kind of orientation, know-how, moral rectitude and administrative capacity. The quality of political leadership was poor when compared to the honesty, accountability and commitment to Nigerians, exemplified by the likes of Azikwe, Awolowo, Balewa and a host of others. What was predominant from 1999 and is our bane today stems from too many governments characterized by visionless, quick fix policies, lack of accountability; outright greed and corruption.<sup>10</sup>

Saleh in his unpublished M.A dissertation gave an insight into leadership crisis which covered the period of the administration being considered. He corroborated Oyeboode’s position by describing Nigeria’s leadership as “clueless and underperforming”. He further alluded to the fact that the nation can only rise above her challenges once this deficit is addressed. Reference was made to stakeholders including the ‘academia’ as a replacement for the incumbent ‘self-centered and self-opinionated’ ruling class with a more responsive and responsible set of leaders.<sup>11</sup> However, the problem is not necessarily replacing politicians with the academia but a total reorientation and stringent penalty for underperformance. Undoubtedly, when saddled with the responsibility of occupying various positions, the academia is sometimes caught in the web of corruption.

Lawan detailed the failure of leadership and governance as the critical issue bedeviling the Nigerian democratic experiment. The crisis of leadership is a big minus for the democratic project. He averred that from the local government to the federal level, our leaders do not simply understand what a responsible leader denote, because they have no vision and vision creates power, goals and is the basis for success.<sup>12</sup> However, Abubakar and Hadiza differed in their remark about governance. They explained that with the incubation of democracy in 1999, the system of governance in the country started taking new dimension, with improvement in the

<sup>10</sup> Mayegun, Olusegun, “Summary Report of the International Conference on Democratization and Development in West Africa”Held at the he ECOWAS Conference Centre, Abuja (1999), 43-44. he ECOWAS Conference Centre, Abuja(1999),43-44.

Sirleaf, Ellen Johnson, “What is Wrong with the Lome Peace Accord” in Summary Report of the International Conference on Democratization and Development in West Africa in the New Millennium, Held at theization and Development, Held at the ECOWAS Conference Centre, Abuja (1999), 10. ization and Development in West Africa in the New Millennium, Held at the ECOWAS Conference Centre, Abuja(1999),10.

<sup>11</sup> Saleh, Ponsah, “Nigeria And the United Nations: A History of Nigeria’s Quest for The Reform of the Security Council, 1977-2011.” Unpublished M.A Dissertation, University of Jos, 2012, 92. ".Unpublished M.A Dissertation, University of Jos,2012,92.

<sup>12</sup> Lawan, M. Mahmoud, “Eleven Years of Nigeria’s Democracy: The Challenges and Prospects” in the Challenges of Nigeria at 50: Essays in ays in Honour of Professor Abdullahi Mahdi, ed. Ashafa A.M (Nigeria: Gombe State University, 2014), 138-139.ays in Honour of Professor Abdullahi Mahdi,ed.Ashafa A.M(Nigeria: Tombs State University, 2014),138-139.

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standard of living of the populace. They opined that there was freedom of speech, liberty and more participation of people in the political process.<sup>13</sup>

In contextualizing democracy leadership and governance, it was opined that godfatherism resulted into backwardness, Stephen asserted that during the Dariye's administration, local government workers were not paid for one year and also state government workers were not paid for two months. The administration was characterized by so much abandoned projects, most clinics built in each zone of the state were not properly equipped; most of them were closed down after commissioning.<sup>14</sup> Though, his work never took into consideration the number or estimate of abandoned projects to substantiate his claim. On his part, Shedrack explained that recurrent conflicts and the cycle of violence invariably affected the process of governance at that time. His point of contention was that key political decision required to bring about lasting peace in Jos, such as conducting local government polls in Jos North Local Government Area have been avoided and glossed over by relevant authorities and could pose a challenge in the future.<sup>15</sup> Of a truth, extreme violent conflicts situations in the year 2001 and 2004 affected governance to a large extent within those years. The imposition of State of Emergency by President Olusegun Obasanjo on Plateau state and the impeachment of governor Dariye in 2006 by the State house of assembly constituted major challenges.

In his article published in Vanguard newspaper, Sufuyan posited that governance was not really effective because President Olusegun Obasanjo obviously and specifically set Dariye up and defined as it were the direction he expected the state legislature to take on the issue of impeachment. He also believed that powerful personalities in the state, interests and circumstances constituted a barrier to the smooth running of affairs. These personalities were retired military generals and their civilian collaborators who were blessed with high connections in the Presidential Villa, Abuja. He also alluded to the fact that these powerful agents were not comfortable with his style of governance and accused him of adopting divide and rule strategy, preferring the leadership of the church to the powerful political leadership.<sup>16</sup> Whether the above reason is justifiable for the level of performance recorded then is a question to be answered. Similarly, the people of Plateau State were commended by President Obasanjo for their steadfastness and support, despite the misrule and havoc caused them during the leadership of impeached Governor Joshua Dariye.<sup>17</sup> The same government at the federal level also had her own shortcomings and constituted a clog in the wheel of progress in the state, while she also undermined the democratic experience in the state. The authors faulted some of these write-ups as they never brought to the fore major government policies with lasting impacts during moments of peace and non-interference from outsiders.

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<sup>13</sup> Abubakar, Aminu and Jibrin Hadiza, "Democracy and Development in Nigeria in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" in International Conference on Democracy, Dictatorship and Development in Africa (2015), 25. democracy, Dictatorship and Development in Africa (2015), 25. democracy, Dictatorship and Development in Africa (2015), 25.

<sup>14</sup> Stephen Isaac Alangs, "Godfatherism: The Cause of Backwardness in Politics on the Plateau, 199-2015". Unpublished B.A Project, UniUniversity of Jos, 2016. University of Jos, 2016.

<sup>15</sup> Best Shedrack Gaya: *Conflict and Peace Building in Plateau State* (Nigeria: Spectrum, 2007), 7-9.

<sup>16</sup> Sufuyan Ojeifo, "Dariye: The Tasks Ahead" *Vanguard*, November 2004.

<sup>17</sup> Standard "OBJ Commends Plateau", *Nigerian Standard*, January 2007.

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## Leadership Style, Political Aspect, Governance and Programmes

In the affairs of men, leadership is one of the most complex activities. This is premised on the fact that, first, a leader has to make very diverse choices in terms of priorities in order to ensure that the very limited resources at hand are employed towards meeting the most urgent needs of those being governed. More to this is that the leader has to aggregate all the contending opinions, needs and aspirations of the governed in order to ensure that the common good is served. Expectedly, the initiation of programmes must tally with the yearning and aspirations of the people while policy implementation and appointments must be evenly distributed across all the local governments of the state. It was a general belief that quite pronounced from the list of political appointment is the seeming building of political machinery that is totally indigenous in character and grassroots in concept and orientation. This was perceived as having put the Governor and other politicians who had been in active politics before him at variance. On the other hand, delegates at the Plateau Peace Conference of 2004 noted the lopsided political appointments in favour of the central senatorial zone of the state from 1999. The lopsided appointments snowballed into feelings of marginalization of the Northern and Southern senatorial zones. Other groups complained of one form of marginalization or under-representation in the administration.<sup>18</sup> This is in contrast to the theory of participatory or democratic leadership style propounded by Kurt Lewin.

As it relates to promotion of democratic ideals, a transition advisory committee was constituted before the administration became operational. They were saddled with the arduous task of producing a blueprint towards realizing the aspirations of his administration. The Governor promised to give precedence attention to prompt payment of workers' salaries, peace, security, youth empowerment, health, education, water, sanitation and rural development. In 2002, the administration also pledged that the people of the state would participate in the activities of governance. Delegates on the other hand believed that bad governance was the foundation of conflict while good governance would have prevented such conflicts. This is in addition to unnecessary class stratification quite glaring at that time. Political victimization which is a negation of the democratic principles of justice, equity and fairness was also evident. Politics, regarded by the delegates at the peace conference, as an act of leadership and governance practiced in the state from 1999 to 2004 was key to creating disenchantment, unhealthy rivalry, and struggle for control of power and resources which culminated into the crisis. Also, lamentations trailed the high level of alleged corruption at all level of the society in the period under review. Delegates also noted with concern that marginalization and inequitable distribution of social amenities and appointments was the fall out of bad leadership and governance.<sup>19</sup>

### Economic Policy of the Administration

The philosophy of the administration was the "Re-Engineering Programme" which was designed and targeted at leaving the state better than the Governor met it. It also entailed the reorientation

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<sup>18</sup> Plateau State, Plateau Resolves: Report of the Plateau Peace Conference 2004 (Jos: Plateau State of Nigeria Gazette, 2004), 74-76..

<sup>19</sup> Kasmi Y. Hilary, "Governor Dariye's Score Sheet", *Standard*, May 2003, 6.  
Davou Lat, "Workers' Salaries: We Will Pay Promptly" *Standard*, June 2003, 1.

of the state towards positive and result-oriented thinking, the accommodation of divergent views irrespective of political, ethnic or religious differences. In the Governor's foreword to the compendium entitled: Plateau State: Heritage and Hope which was written to commemorate the 25<sup>th</sup> of the existence of the state, posited that:

*...Yet another reality I was fully conversant with was the undeniable fact and, indeed, a paradox-that majority of our people were living below the poverty line. We are putting down firm structures that will, God willing provide the necessary opportunities for our people to free themselves from poverty.*<sup>20</sup>

The mission statement of the Governor at his assumption of office in 1999 is encapsulated below:

*To build a viable, just, peaceful, Plateau State in which the people are economically and politically empowered and their value system redefined in line with today's realities and prepared for tomorrow's challenges...*<sup>21</sup>

The period this article covered witnessed harsh economic conditions arising from decline in the living conditions of the people. This led to hunger, anger, frustration and bitterness. The gap between the rich and the poor was widened leading to domination, hatred and lack of trust. It was observed in 2004 that the economic base of the state was weak. Even the non-utilization, mortgaging and sometimes outright sales of some state investments like the BARC Farms, Plateau Highland Bottling Company, Plateau Ceramics, Kuru Livestock's, Panyam Fish Farm further improvised the state and negated job creation. The outright sale of these viable economic ventures would have been useful in providing employment opportunities to the people in the state. Emphasis was also placed on the youths who constituted a chunk of the society at that time but were not gainfully employed, thus leading to poverty and despair among this category of people.<sup>22</sup> Records are unavailable to reveal any deliberate effort employed by government to uplift the living standard of the masses.

## **Transparency and Accountability**

With the inauguration of the Governor in 1999, the desire to ensure due process informed his decision to set up a commission of inquiry to review major contracts employments and appointments in the state from 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1998 to 29<sup>th</sup> May 1999. From the terms of reference of the committee which included making recommendation as the committee may deem it fit on all the above or any other matters that will assist in ensuring good governance, probity and accountability in the public sector, it suggested that the government was determined to pursue a good cause. The commission which was set up in June 1999 finally presented its report in February 2000. The commission of inquiry advocated that for the administration to make progress, government must be transparent and willing to create or give room for a virile and

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<sup>20</sup> Plateau State Government, Plateau: Centenary History...(Jos: 2014), 380

<sup>21</sup> Plateau State Government, Centenary History... 375, 380

<sup>22</sup> Plateau State, Plateau Resolves ... 125, 130.

vibrant civil service in the execution of government policies and programmes. While the government pledged to be transparent, there were allegations especially after the expiration of the second tenure of the administration that taxes realized from the salaries of civil servants between 1999 and 2000 were not remitted to the state treasury. Stephen buttressed the fact that bad governance culminated into failure to transform the economy of the state regardless of the huge amount allocated to the state from the federal account as monthly subvention and such government spending could not be justified.<sup>23</sup>

### **Civil Service**

Prior to the emergence of the Dariye's administration in 1999, the issue of the ₦3,500 new national minimum wage, which was believed to be a move that would cripple the state's economy was on ground, after several weeks the strikes were settled. Civil servants were regarded as critical to the growing and development of the state. There was a promise to encourage and motivate civil servants to be more productive, efficient and result-oriented. In June 2003, the Governor resolved to give close attention to prompt payment of workers' salaries. Contrary to the previous statement, Stephen asserted that subsequently workers' salaries was not prioritized as local government workers were not paid for one year and also state government workers were not paid for two months. Problems emanated from a demoralized civil service. Later, there was over-politicization of the civil service which eroded the confidence people had. The long term effect was that it undermined the neutrality and impartiality of the service.<sup>24</sup>

### **Education**

The 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria stipulated that Government shall direct its policy towards ensuring that there are equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels. The administration of Joshua Dariye with its re-engineering policy established institutions like the College of Agriculture, Garkawa, College of Arts, Science and Remedial Studies (CAST), Kurgwi. A state university was established i.e the Plateau State University (PLASU), Bokokos to take care of the youths who could not secure admission into the federal university in the state. The Re-engineering government approved the release of ₦24 million as grant to voluntary agency institutions in the state in the year 1999. It was opined that the administration competed favorably with the oil rich states in the provision of education. In the year 2000, the State Primary Education Board (SPEB), now State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) renovated 1,182 classrooms with 108 class furniture and over 4,000 pupils were beneficiary of these gesture.

There was also an award of contracts worth ₦68 million to rehabilitate more classrooms under the Education Tax Fund (ETF). Schools which were been taken over by past military administrations were returned to their owners by the Dariye's administration. They included Government Secondary School Zaria road to Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI) and Government Colleges, Zawan and Gindirito the Roman Catholic Mission and Church of Christ in Nigeria

<sup>23</sup> Bulus Gambo, "Dariye to Refund ₦64bn-Revelation at Inquiry Commission," *Standard*, September 2008, 2.

Stephen Isaac Alangs, "Godfatherism: The Cause... 2.

<sup>24</sup> Davou Lat, "Workers' Salaries... June 2001, 1

Stephen Isaac Alangs, "Godfatherism: The Cause ... 46

(COCIN) respectively now Church of Christ in Nations. The government had to take into cognizance settlement of backlog of arrears to lecturers in colleges of Education, Gindiri and Plateau State Polytechnic while monies were also released for the accreditation of courses in both institutions.<sup>25</sup> Assistance in the form of grants was given to community and missionary schools, this involved part payment of staff salaries working in these institutions. This was one major aspect that the administration exemplified the democratic leadership praxis adopted in this work.

### **Social Aspects**

During the first tenure of the administration of Dariye, there was a nexus between the state and federal government. The result was the appointment of some of the indigenous people of the state into key positions at the federal level. Those appointed into the federal cabinet of the then President Olusegun Obasanjo in 1999 were Mr. Damishi Sango and Mrs. Pauline K. Tallen who served as Minister for Youths and Sports, and Minister of State for Science and Technology respectively. The smooth relation resulted in the Governor support of the second term bid of the president in 2003. There was a new twist to the relationship between these levels of government from the year 2003. The president was displeased with the inability of the Governor to stem the Yelwa Shendam conflict of 2004 which necessitated the declaration of a state of emergency in May 2004 in the state. The Governor was removed and a Sole Administrator appointed in the person of Major General MC Alli (Rtd). This decision was ratified by the then National Assembly. The relationship worsened with the impeachment of the Governor in November 2006 by less than the quorum of the state house of assembly members (two-third majority). This was believed to have received the backing of the President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo.<sup>26</sup>

There were social factors which were not addressed by the administration; they include: rumour peddling, general intolerance, perceived marginalization in the distribution of social amenities and appointments, lack of credible leadership. Leadership did not measure up in proffering solutions to the issues and others like segregate patterns of settlement and corruption. Corruption permeated almost all level of the society and leadership was not pragmatic enough to stem the tide. Between 1999 and 2003, there was gross inadequacy of social amenities like roads, pipe-borne water, hospital, schools amongst others. There was the indigene/settler imbroglio which inevitably led to the disrespect for the culture, customs and values of host communities. Negative attitudes, unforgiveness, hatred, revenge, anger, unremorsefulness and easy resort to violence affected relationships and was the harbinger to other issues. In short, it constituted the after effects of the crisis since 2001.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Plateau State Government, 2005 Fiscal Year Approved Budget (Plateau, 2005), 14

Aristakus Yohanna, "PLSG Releases ₦24 million to Voluntary Agency Schools", *Standard*, November, 1999, 1.

Kasmi Y. Hilary, "Re-engineering Has Helped Plateau-Dariye," *Standard*, November 2002, 1.

Nigeria, 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

<sup>26</sup> Plateau State Government, Centenary History... 370

Standard "OBJ Commends Plateau," ....1

Jibrin Dauda, and Abdulmajeed Shakirat "Dariye Asks for Forgiveness" *Daily Trust*, November 2004, 2.

<sup>27</sup> Plateau State, Plateau Resolves ... 46, 51, 55, 109 & 127

## Local Government Administration/Wards Creation

The advent of democracy in 1999 led to the devolution of powers by the Federal government to states to conduct elections at the third tier of government. In Plateau State and throughout the period of the Dariye's administration, local government elections were never conducted. The acronym PLASIEC meaning Plateau State Independent Electoral Commission was only in name. At the third level of government, the impact of governance was less appreciated especially with the imposition of interim chairmen. Election was only conducted in November, 2008 when the tenure of the administration has expired and another one inaugurated on May 29<sup>th</sup> 2007. There was also a negative trend whereby some local government councils were being over-staffed while some were under-staffed. Some top government functionaries influenced the postings of their spouses nearer to their residence and to local government areas considered economically viable in the payment of salaries.<sup>28</sup> Illegal deductions from local governments strangled administration and prevented them from carrying out developmental projects.

The administration of Dariye was instrumental in the creation of three hundred and twenty-five (325) wards in the state. The purpose was to bring governance close to the people, especially the rural populace. The creation of more chiefdom and districts was also a good idea, this was based on popular demands, long-cherished yearnings and aspirations of the electorate across the length and breadth of the state. This was taken into consideration and implemented between 2002 and 2005. In a state wide broadcast on Thursday, 6<sup>th</sup> March 2002, the Governor announced the creation of eleven new chiefdoms, two hundred and forty-five new districts, upgrading of eleven existing chiefdoms in addition to three that were upgraded earlier, and the grading of some Berom and Taroh traditional institutions/Chiefs. He further stated that under the administration, the exercise would be a continuous one. Nevertheless, this was fraught with challenges as the indiscriminate manner of chiefdoms and district exercise in 2002 created problems in many parts of the state.<sup>29</sup>

## Conclusion

This article is placed within the context of history, leadership and governance with the return to the practice and entrenchment of democracy in Plateau State in the year 1999. It focused on different aspects of the administration vis-a-vis the life-cycle of the administration. This largely laid the foundation on which successive administrations consolidated governance. The return to democracy though advantageous has been characterized by a plethora of challenges namely leadership crisis or conflict, ethnocentrism, corruption amongst others. Basically, the administrations of Joshua Dariye tried in few aspects like education, creation of wards and chiefdoms, but underperformed in other areas. Some areas not covered by this article stemmed from dearth of data and information. The adoption of participatory theory is to prove that for any administration or government to succeed, leadership must be inclusive, participatory and endear herself to the people through pragmatic policies and programmes. The authors do not claim to be oblivious of the challenges which bedeviled the government at that time, rather appreciates them.

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<sup>28</sup> Plateau State, Plateau Resolves ... 56

Standard "Dariye Swears in Transition Interim Chairman" *Standard*, December 2001.

<sup>29</sup> Plateau State, Plateau Resolves ... 86

Due to the scope of this article, they were not captured. However, challenges are part and parcel of the democratic process and leaders cannot hide under the guise of challenges to perform below expectations. This article strongly recommended that the institutions of government should be placed on the judicious use of state resources. Power should be dissolve across the three tiers and arms of government with autonomy granted across the governments for effective governance and administration. Finally, accountability and transparency should be the fulcrum of any democratic government; this will ensure even development, reduce poverty, hunger and conflict in the state.

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