

# **The Challenges of Leadership in the Countries of Africa and Theory of Leadership in the Juche Idea**

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## **Concept of Leadership**

Decisions and actions of political leaders in governments and political parties influence and affect the lives of their people. Leadership is power and authority which is exercised by leaders in political systems.

The concept of leadership in social sciences refers to power and authority to direct and organize people in the social and political systems. People are organized and directed to achieve shared common interests and common good. That means leaders coordinate the work of their people to accomplish objectives which might not be achieved by one person.

Leadership can be defined as a process of planning, organizing, directing and controlling the activities of other people in combination with other resources to achieve stated goals. A leader is a person who coordinates sections of the society in order to get them to work together. The role of the leader is to guide, to persuade or to induce

people to perform their tasks effectively and willingly without using command or force as it is used by kings, emperors, military rulers and other dictators (J. F. Safari, 1996: 10).

Leadership is ability and skills which are acquired and practised. A person can have natural leadership qualities but inborn qualities alone are not sufficient to make a person a good leader. The inborn leadership qualities must be developed through learning and practice otherwise, they will remain latent. Charismatic leaders are born with leadership qualities. But many good leaders learn and develop leadership skills and abilities.

Traditional leaders in positions of chiefs, kings, emperors and queens were born to inherit those positions. They were not elected democratically into those positions. Modern leaders in governments and political parties are elected by votes or appointed into leadership positions.

Voters consider themselves capable of electing good leaders during government or party elections. But election experiences have shown that in African countries, voters have not always been right in electing good leaders. A person who is voted into a political position by getting majority votes might be a bad leader during his or her term of office. The elected or appointed person may have authority but with no good leadership abilities.

## **Challenges of Leadership in Africa**

In traditional political systems in state societies, there were chiefdoms, kingdoms and empires which operated in ethnic or tribal societies in African countries. There are historical records of traditional political systems in many countries of Africa. Basil Davidson (1965) has records on Growth of African Civilization (1000-1800 AD) in West African where there were traditional political systems with empires such as the empire of Mali, the empire of Ghana, the empire of Songhay, the empire of Kanem-Bornu and Hausa States. Walter Rodney (1976) wrote on how Europe underdeveloped Africa and discussed traditional political systems in Africa prior to European colonization of Africa. In the Inter-Lacustrine zone in the areas of great lakes Victoria, Albert and Edward in East Africa, several famous states emerged and one of the largest Kingdoms was Bunyoro – Kitara which covered the areas which today are called Bunyoro, Ankole, Toro and Buganda in Uganda and Karagwe in Tanzania. The Kingdom was ruled by Bachwezi dynasty. Within southern section of the continent of Africa between the rivers Zambezi and Limpopo in the countries of Mozambique and Zimbabwe there emerged in the 15<sup>th</sup> century the empire of Monomotapa. The traditional political systems were not democratic. There were no elections. Traditional rulers inherited the positions and appointed their subordinates in the ruling family or dynasty. The power of the rulers got things done.

## **Political Parties in African Countries**

In the countries of Africa, political parties came during the period of the rise of nationalism and the struggle for independence from European colonial rule. Political modernization involved disintegration of traditional political systems and creation of political parties which operated beyond ethnic and tribal boundaries. Creation of modern political parties and rise of nationalism and struggle for political independence operated country wide or at national level and awakened Africans in their respective countries to fight for their independence. All countries of Africa have won their political independence starting with Ghana in 1957 with Kwame Nkrumah being the first president of that country. In 1960's and 1970's most countries of Africa won their independence and these countries included the following with their first presidents shown in brackets: Tanganyika (Julius Nyerere), Kenya (Jomo Kenyatta), Uganda (Milton Obote), Malawi (Hasting Banda), Zambia (Keneth Kaunda), Togo (Silvanus Olimpio), Nigeria (Mnandi Azikiwe), Botswana (Seretse Khama), Congo Brazaville (Masemba Debat), Congo Kinshasa (Joseph Kasavubu) and Ivory Coast (Felix Hauphuet Boigny). These are some countries of Africa and their first presidents who found their independence. Southern Sudan was the last country to win independence on July 11, 2011.

Military coups replaced some governments which were established following wining general elections. Only few countries in Africa have had no military governments. Countries which have not had military coups include Tanganyika, Kenya, Malawi, Zambia

and Botswana. Military rule has no elections or democracy. Military commands got things done and military dictators suppressed democratic political systems. Military coups took place to remove governments elected by votes.

### **Leadership in Multi-Party Political System**

Multi-Party political system was imposed in the countries of Africa in 1980s and 1990s by the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and the Western capitalist countries and the United States of America as a conditionality for countries of Africa to be given foreign aid. But the leaders in African governments do not want the systems of multi-party politics because of the challenges which are directed to the leaders who won elections and they are leaders in governments. The leaders in governments see opposition from political parties as divisive forces which challenge the status quo of the governments which were established by political parties which won elections in respective countries. Opposition from defeated political parties threaten efforts and achievements on national unity and destruct social and economic development plans.

African countries have held general elections and party elections to elect leaders. But many elections have not been free and fair. Elections have involved cheating, stealing votes, corruption and refusing to accept defeat in many countries. For example, general elections were reported not to be free and fair in the Republic of Kenya in 2007, the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire in 2010 and the Republic of Zimbabwe in 2008. In these countries clashes with members of rival political parties erupted leaving many people wounded or killed and peace settlement involved international negotiations and pressure to return the situation to normal.

Leadership in countries of Africa faces challenges. A person who is elected into leadership position in government or political party must prove capable of leading people. Leadership ability should be visible and real. Africans aspire to live in democratic systems in which they have rights to life, freedom and participation in social and economic development. Africa needs good and dedicated leaders. Some leaders in governments and in political parties are not good leaders. Some leaders have become traitors to their countries and they do not work with their people for the benefit of their people. Some leaders enrich themselves, their families and their friends at the expense of the people in their countries.

African people should be free to form their political parties and elect their political leaders. Political modernization accepts multi-party democratic system in which political parties have freedom of conducting their activities and participate in free and fair elections of government and party leaders.

Good leaders should maintain strong party system and provide procedures to get more members as the party grows. The development of a strong political party system is a prerequisite for political stability for modernizing African countries. Good leadership in a country should strive to build government of the people, for the people and by the people.

There is wide spread fear of multi-party political system in Africa. Fear on multi-party system leads to policies and efforts to suppress existing political parties and preventing new political parties to emerge. There are few countries of Africa where political parties have had health political environments leading to successful and peaceful inter-party

succession in general elections for presidents of their countries. These occurred in Zambia and Malawi. African countries need good leadership for rapid social and economic development. The theory of leadership in the Juche Idea is of great importance in addressing the problem of leadership in the countries of Africa.

### **Theory of Leadership in the Juche Idea**

The creation of a correct leadership philosophy conforming with historical development has been an urgent requirement. It was Kim IL Sung who enunciated the scientific leadership philosophy. President Kim Il Sung evolved the man-centered<sup>1</sup> Juche Idea and established the leadership theory and leadership method. Kim Jong IL developed in depth the scientific leadership idea and theory of Juche enunciated by President Kim IL Sung (Baek, J. S. 1999).

Kim Jong IL established a scientific man-centred philosophic world outlook and applied it to state building and the leadership of the people. Man-first doctrine and man-centred theory is a condensed expression of the principle of Juche idea that man is the master of everything and decides everything. The man-first doctrine and man-centred theory mean that man is the master of the world and that everything should be considered and treated placing man at the centre. Man has the right to make everything in the world serve him because he is the master of the world. This is requirement of man-first doctrine.

The basic requirement of the man-first doctrine is that everything should be made to serve man because he is the master of the world and everything should be settled

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<sup>1</sup> The concept of man in this article refers to a person and people both of male and female gender

believing in man and depending on his strength because man is the most developed and powerful being in the world.

The method by which man is placed at the centre in all considerations and everything is made to serve him is the most scientific and revolutionary methodology. It serves as a guide in reshaping nature and society and leading the state and society because man is the master of the world and the most developed and powerful being in the world. Kim Jong IL said that man is the social being with independence, creativity and consciousness. Independence means to become master of ones destiny and lead a free life without being subjected to any fetters and subornation.

The man-first doctrine, the man-centred theory, constitute an ideological and theoretical guide of universal significance which, because of their specific accuracy and vitality, all leaders endeavouring to build a humanistic society should follow in leading the state.

### **The Leader – Centred Theory**

General Kim Jong IL's leadership philosophy is based on the leader-centred theory. It is the principle of his leadership philosophy that the destiny of the people can be successfully carried out only when they have an understanding leader and are led by him because the leader plays the decisive role in the transformation movement.

Kim Jong Il considered the question of the leader as the basic question of decisive significance relating to the development of social history and carrying out the destiny of the people, and he had established a scientific understanding of this question. Kim Jong



IL said that he invariably places the leader at the centre in all considerations and that he always advocates the leader-centred theory (Baek, J. S. 1999).

The leader-centred theory, in essence, elucidates that the leader plays the decisive role in the historical development and that the destiny of the people can be successfully carried out when they are faithful to the leadership. General Kim Jong IL said that the essence of the leader in all contexts lies in the leader being the centre of the life of the socio-political community. It is Kim Jong IL's view that the leader is the main agent of social reform, the centre of unity and cohesion and who organizes and command the activity and struggle of the people in a coordinated manner.

It is an historical truth that if the people are not under the wise leadership of a leader they cannot emerge victorious in the struggle for freedom and liberation. The leadership of the leader is essential to all success because the wise leader elucidates the scientific idea and theory to develop society and successfully hew out the destiny of the people.

The leader plays the decisive role in providing the motive force of historical development. The force precisely means the force of rallying the people. The rallying of the people is effected by depending on one centre. The leader is the centre which enables the unity and cohesion of all people. When the right leader is at the helm, the people, rallied firmly behind the leader, form a socio-political organism, a powerful main agent. Only when the people are led by a leader can they have correct strategy and tactics and develop society. The wise leader leads the revolution to success by unusual wisdom. The leader-centred theory is the principle underlying successful leadership and which promotes the progress of social history and guides correctly the state and society.

The scientific accuracy and vitality of the leadership philosophy of Kim Jong IL lie in that it takes as the basic principle the man first doctrine, the man-centred theory and the leader-centred theory. This is inspiring banner to lead people to victory and accelerate historical development.