

**CHRISTMAS GIFT STAMPEDES:
ECONOMIC HARDSHIP, MORAL
IMPLICATIONS AND THE NEED FOR ETHICAL
LEADERSHIP UNDER TINUBU'S
ADMINISTRATION**

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Abstract

This study examines the Christmas gift stampedes in Abuja, Anambra, and Oyo States in Nigeria, which resulted in several casualties within the regions; positing these incidents as stark indicators of severe economic hardship under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's administration alongside its corollary moral implications. The chaotic distribution of Christmas relief items reflects structural failures in addressing

Nigeria's worsening economic disparities and the resulting desperation among vulnerable populations. The research fills a gap in understanding how cultural and phenomenological lenses can contextualize such crises, particularly in the reciprocity between governance, societal values, and ethical leadership. Employing a qualitative methodology that incorporates both the direct and indirect data acquisition methods, the study utilizes a phenomenological and culture-centered approach to analyze lived experiences and societal narratives surrounding the events. The Amartya Sen's Capability Theoretical Approach is utilized in reinforcing the Study's arguments. Findings reveal that inadequate social safety nets, compounded by ineffective economic policies, exacerbate public despair, highlighting a deficit in moral accountability within leadership structures. Recommendations urge the actualization of ethical leadership through transparent governance, equitable wealth distribution, and culturally inclusive policy making to restore public trust and mitigate socio-economic divides, aligning governance with the lived realities of citizens.

Key Words: Christmas, Stampedes, Economic Hardship, Moral Leadership, Administration.

Introduction

Christmas, intrinsically, embodies the celebration of Christ's birth, a manifestation of divine love, hope, and

reconciliation that transcends temporal boundaries to inspire joy and unity among humanity. As a season, Hill (2023) posits that it calls for profound reflections on God's assurance and faithfulness in remembering His covenants alongside saving His people from darkness; on God's *agape* love, generosity, and peace; encapsulating the essence of goodwill towards all. The period is meant to be an uplifting interlude of joy, where communities and families strengthen harmony, gratitude, and shared happiness. The Christmas season should not serve as a backdrop for mourning or the amplification of tragedies; as such occurrences starkly contrast the season's core message of life and renewal. Society must strive to align its activities and outcomes during this time with the spirit of celebration and communal well-being, ensuring that the season remains a beacon of light and hope in an often chaotic world.

The recent spate of deaths reported in Nigeria significantly in Abuja's Maitama district, Okija in Anambra State, and at the Islamic High School Ibadan, Oyo State reflects a tragic and avoidable consequence of human frailty and methodical errors deeply rooted in poor governance. These incidents underscore the critical failures of the Nigerian government, particularly under the Tinubu administration, to address the pressing food and economic crises plaguing the nation. With rising inflation, inadequate agricultural policies, and a lack of

social safety nets, citizens are left vulnerable to hunger, malnutrition, and economic despair. Practical interventions aimed at stabilizing food production, ensuring equitable distribution, and providing targeted financial relief could have mitigated these preventable losses. The persistence of such tragedies highlights an urgent need for leadership accountability and effective strategies to safeguard the well-being of Nigerians as Zakariyau et al (2024) convey.

Christmas symbolizes the birth of Jesus Christ, embodying the gift of salvation to humanity and underscoring a profound lesson of selfless living. The example of God's sacrificial love and Christ's life of service calls on governments and individuals worldwide especially the Nigerian government and its citizens to prioritize the welfare of others above selfish pursuits. Embracing this spirit of selflessness could inspire a collective reorientation toward policies and actions that promote the common good, ensuring a society rooted in compassion and mutual care. This reflection seeks to encourage a transformative shift toward a more humane and equitable world.

Subsequently, this study advocates for a morally sound government committed to preventing tragic events during times of anticipated joy and celebration, emphasizing the implementation of measures that

enhance corporate welfare and ensure a stable standard of living to mitigate poverty and its associated societal challenges. Employing a qualitative methodology, the research integrates both primary and secondary data acquisition methods while utilizing a phenomenological and culture-centered approach to examine lived experiences and societal narratives surrounding these occurrences. Amartya Sen's Capability Theoretical Approach is applied to strengthen the study's arguments, highlighting the critical role of expanding individuals' capabilities and freedoms in addressing pervasive issues that perpetuate inequality and despair within the society.

Conceptualizing Stampedes and Their Role in Inducing Casualties

Stampedes are chaotic events that often occur in overcrowded settings when individuals, driven by panic, move en masse in a single direction. This rapid, uncoordinated movement creates intense physical pressure within the crowd, leading to individuals being trampled or crushed. According to Illiyas et al (2013), stampedes are triggered by various factors, including fear of perceived threats, lack of crowd control measures, or the overwhelming rush for resources. The dynamics of such incidents are typically exacerbated by narrow exits, structural obstructions, or inadequate planning, leaving little room for escape. For instance, during the 2022 Halloween celebration in Itaewon, South

Korea, overcrowding in a narrow alley led to a stampede that claimed at least 151 lives and left many injured as Sang-Hun (2022) stipulates. This tragedy underscored the lethal potential of poor crowd management in confined spaces.

Raffles Medical Group (2024) elucidate that casualties during stampedes often result from asphyxiation, traumatic injuries, or being trampled underfoot. Lu et al (2022) assert that the immense force exerted by a panicked crowd can cause internal injuries, broken bones, or suffocation as individuals are pressed against walls, barriers, or other people. In many cases, victims succumb not solely to physical injuries but to the inability to breathe due to the overwhelming compression. For example, Ganjeh et al (2016) aver that the Hajj pilgrimage in 2015 witnessed a devastating stampede in Mina, Saudi Arabia, resulting in at least 2,431 deaths. Pilgrims were crushed as the surge of people moved uncontrollably, revealing the risks associated with managing massive religious gatherings where participants often lack clear instructions or awareness of safety protocols.

Stampedes also highlight methodic failures in event planning, such as insufficient emergency exits, inadequate crowd control measures, and poor communication. Authorities and organizers often

underestimate the density of crowds or fail to implement measures like proper queuing systems, barriers, and emergency evacuation plans. Connolly (2010) details that in 2010, a stampede at the Love Parade music festival in Duisburg, Germany, led to 18 deaths and over 500 injuries. Investigations revealed that narrow entry and exit points, combined with the influx of more attendees than anticipated, significantly contributed to the tragedy. This incident demonstrated how infrastructural shortcomings and flawed crowd management strategies can amplify the severity of stampedes.

Panic is a central driver of stampedes, often stemming from a real or perceived threat. Understanding crowd psychology, including herd behaviour and the tendency for individuals to follow others without rational assessment, can provide valuable insights into preventing such incidents. For instance, during the Hillsborough disaster in 1989 as registered by Tikkanen (2024), panic and confusion played a significant role in the crowd surge that led to 97 deaths, demonstrating how fear and lack of situational awareness can escalate chaos. Additionally, cultural practices and societal norms influence the likelihood of stampedes, as events like religious pilgrimages, festivals, or protests often draw massive crowds in regions where safety protocols might not be prioritized. Socioeconomic factors, such as

the rush to secure limited resources during crises, can also trigger stampedes, exemplified by a food distribution stampede in Yemen in 2023 that killed 78 people as documented by Nereim (2023), alongside the recent stampedes across three major States in Nigeria as being understudied in this research work, reflecting the intersection of poverty and inadequate safety measures.

Rohane (2024) exposes that modern technologies, such as AI-powered crowd monitoring systems, drones, and predictive algorithms offer solutions for managing large gatherings by providing real-time updates on crowd density, predicting potential hotspots for overcrowding, and guiding intervention efforts. The integration of such technologies has proven effective in managing events like the Olympic Games and Hajj, showing promise for significantly reducing casualties. Furthermore, authorities must prioritize proactive safety measures, such as deploying trained crowd managers, providing sufficient exits, and utilizing real-time monitoring technologies. Public awareness campaigns on safe behaviour during crowded events can also reduce panic-induced behaviour. The devastating human toll of stampedes, evidenced by incidents like Itaewon, Mina, Duisburg along with the recent stampedes in Nigeria over Christmas gifts, underscores the urgent need for robust planning and quick response mechanisms to safeguard lives in crowded spaces. These measures can

significantly reduce the likelihood of stampede-related deaths and injuries, transforming chaotic situations into controlled evacuations that minimize harm.

Theoretical Underpinning

The Amartya Sen's Capability Theoretical Approach was adopted in bolstering the ideas of this study. Kuhumba (2017), CMI Business School (2020) and Wells (2024) expound that the theory, propounded by the Indian economist and philosopher Amartya Sen in the 1980s, is a moral and evaluative framework that emphasizes the importance of individuals' freedom to achieve well-being. It asserts that social arrangements should be judged based on the extent to which they enable people to realize functions and capabilities they value, rather than focusing solely on wealth, commodities, or mental reactions like utility. Sen contends that the true measure of a person's well-being lies in their real opportunities to do and be what they value, encapsulated in their set of capabilities. This approach has informed various normative theories, including those of social justice and human development, and has influenced policies aimed at expanding human capabilities, particularly in developing contexts.

Amartya Sen's Capability Theoretical Approach is particularly suited to addressing the problem statement for this research because it shifts the focus from mere

economic growth to the enhancement of individuals' capabilities, significantly, their substantive freedoms to lead lives they value. In the context of stampedes driven by economic hardship, the approach underscores the importance of addressing structural inequalities and expanding access to essential resources, such as food and basic income, to prevent such desperate scenarios. Sen's framework emphasizes the moral obligation of leadership to prioritize policies that enhance people's well-being and empower them to overcome poverty-induced vulnerabilities. Within Tinubu's administration, applying the Capability Approach would entail the creation of comprehensive social safety nets and ethical governance schemes aimed at ensuring dignity, reducing dependency on charity, and cultivating equitable development to alleviate economic distress sustainably. This theoretical lens provides both a moral and pragmatic foundation for addressing the socio-economic challenges that lead to such crises.

Evidence-Based Survey

The recent fatal stampedes during Christmas charity events in Nigeria, specifically in Abuja's Maitama district, Okija in Anambra State, and at the Islamic High School in Ibadan, Oyo State underscore the severe economic hardships faced by citizens under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's administration. These tragedies, resulting in at least 67 deaths, including many children,

highlight the desperation of the populace amid soaring inflation and a depreciating naira. I. Uche, O. Ezeanya, M. Illiyah, and R. Adegoke (personal communication, December 15th, 2024) decry that the media's alleged underreporting of fatalities further suggests potential governmental attempts to downplay the crisis's severity, raising concerns about transparency and the administration's capacity to address escalating poverty and ensure public safety during humanitarian efforts.

Elaborating on the above concrete situation, Shibayan et al (2024a), Shibayan et al (2024b) and Echeazu (2024) report that on December 21, 2024, a stampede occurred at the Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Maitama, an upscale district within the Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC) of the Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria, during a charity event. The incident resulted in 10 deaths, including four children, while over 1,000 individuals were evacuated. According to the Anchors, the tragedy unfolded in the early hours of the morning as a large crowd, many of whom had been waiting since the previous night, surged at one of the church gates to access food and clothing items, leading to injuries and fatalities. The event highlights the growing trend of pre-Christmas charity distributions amid Nigeria's escalating cost-of-living crisis. Viral footage and eyewitness accounts corroborate the chaos, with several victims receiving medical attention as investigations continues.

Adejoro (2024), Okonkwo (2024), Ndukuba (2024), and Lawal (2024) files that the tragic stampede at a Christmas rice distribution event in Okija town, Ihiala Local Government Area, Anambra State, on December 21, 2024, underscores the challenges of managing large-scale philanthropic events in socio-economically strained communities. Organized annually by the Obijackson Foundation, led by Chief Earnest Obiejesi (Obi Jackson), the Correspondents depict that the event aimed to distribute food items to the less privileged but turned fatal as an uncontrollable crowd surged into the venue at Amarata, Ohalegbu village, resulting in significant casualties. The Columnists equally relate that reports vary on the number of fatalities, with initial estimates citing 12 deaths and over 32 injuries, though media sources have been accused of misrepresenting the figures, with some suggesting as many as 29 fatalities and even more. Eyewitnesses attributed the tragedy to fears of insufficient supplies amid widespread hunger, causing disorderly behaviour that overwhelmed the organizers' control efforts. The Anambra State Police, led by SP Tochukwu Ikenga, have since taken over the scene for investigation, highlighting the need for enhanced crowd management strategies during such events.

Ewokor (2024), Aljazeera (2024), and the Guardian Staff and Agencies (2024) account that a tragic stampede

occurred on December 18, 2024, at the Islamic High School in the Bashorun district of Ibadan, under the jurisdiction of Ibadan North Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria. As the News Analysts convey, the incident unfolded during a Christmas funfair event organized by the Women In Need Of Guidance and Support Foundation and Agidigbo FM radio station, attracting a crowd of up to 5,000 children and young people. The stampede resulted in the deaths of at least 35 children, with six others seriously injured, as confirmed by the Oyo State Police Command. Following the disaster, eight individuals, including the main sponsor of the event, were arrested, while the Homicide Section of the State Criminal Investigation Department launched a probe. Noteworthy, as the Media Professionals relate, is that the Nigerian President Bola Tinubu expressed profound sadness, offering condolences to the victims' families and urging the Oyo State government to enforce stricter safety regulations for public events. Oyo State Governor Seyi Makinde also deployed security forces to restore order and vowed accountability for the tragedy.

These chaos of 2024 Christmas stampedes has become a stark reminder of the pressures and pitfalls of the holiday season, blending consumer frenzy with socio-economic realities. These chaotic scenes, marked by desperate shoppers jostling for discounted goods, are not random but the predictable result of aggressive marketing that

plays on the fear of missing out and the allure of limited-time deals. Beyond the surface, these stampedes reveal deeper societal challenges: economic disparities that push people to extremes, cultural norms equating material success with happiness, and the fragility of crowd management in high-stakes retail events. While it is easy to blame overzealous shoppers, the issue calls for a more complex critique of reflecting on whether the contemporary Nigerian Government capitalizes on Good Governance and alleviating the masses sufferings, retail practices and a rethinking of safety measures to prevent such tragedies. As a season traditionally associated with goodwill and reflection, perhaps it's time to question whether the relentless pursuit of bargains truly aligns with the spirit of Christmas.

Moral Implications of the Deaths in the Christmas Stampedes

The recent deaths in the Christmas stampedes across Nigeria highlight several crucial moral implications, especially in the context of the ongoing economic crisis. Despite the severe hardships faced by many Nigerians, it is important to remember that life is not always rosy, obstacles are bound to surface, and should always be approached with a free positive mind as challenges: Moreover, moments of celebration should not lead to reckless behaviour. The overwhelming desperation that drove individuals to participate in such chaotic events,

risking their lives for mere food or material goods, illustrates the deep struggles that have taken root in society. However, it is essential for citizens to maintain composure, understanding that these actions often result in avoidable fatalities and that life itself is invaluable. Irrespective of the crisis, Nigerians must traverse their challenges with dignity, emphasizing that hasty, reckless behaviour is never a solution to hardship.

In tandem, the government must recognize the gravity of the situation and take decisive action to mitigate the escalating food crisis. This ongoing crisis is not merely a reflection of economic misfortune; it starkly reveals the failures of governance. The recurring theme of rising food prices, coupled with the inability to meet basic needs, suggests fundamental and endemic inefficiencies and corruption within leadership. The Nigerian government must move beyond passive acknowledgments and implement strategies that address both immediate needs and long-term solutions for food security. This is not a mere policy issue but a matter of moral responsibility, one that impacts the lives of millions who suffer silently under the weight of food scarcity.

Religious institutions in Nigeria also bear a significant moral obligation in these times. While many of them provide spiritual guidance, there is an ethical

expectation that they engage more proactively in the socio-political issues that plague the nation. Rather than offering prophecies of prosperity in the face of evident societal collapse, religious leaders should call for genuine reforms, holding the government accountable. The alignment of religious teachings with the well-being of the people can act as a powerful force for change. Furthermore, religious institutions should extend their support by collaborating with the government and civil society to find sustainable solutions to the food crisis. If they truly wish to serve their communities, they must rise beyond the confines of spiritual rhetoric and contribute to tangible actions that alleviate suffering.

Additionally, the stampede's deaths expose the failure of public infrastructure and safety measures. The lack of planning for public events, especially those with large crowds, reflects an oversight in governance and society's collective responsibility. There is a moral imperative for leaders to ensure that policies surrounding public safety are not only reactive but proactive. Governments and private organizations should invest in proper event management systems that prioritize human life and well-being. Communities, too, must be more vigilant in observing the risks posed by overcrowded environments and take active steps to prevent tragedies. Furthermore, the incident also serves as a reminder that Nigeria, like

many other countries, is caught in the web of a global economic crisis. While national challenges are compounded by international forces, it does not absolve local leaders from their responsibility to address the dire needs of their citizens. Economic hardship, though global in nature, should not be an excuse for inaction or poor governance. Governments worldwide must prioritize the well-being of their citizens, particularly in times of crisis, as they hold the power to shape the collective future of their nations. Thus, while external factors may contribute to the hardship faced, Nigeria's leadership must still act decisively to shield its citizens from avoidable suffering.

Adopting Amartya Sen's Capability Theoretical Approach to Advocate Ethical Leadership in Protecting Vulnerable Nigerians from Food Crisis Stampedes

Amartya Sen's Capability Theoretical Approach, which emphasizes the importance of expanding individuals' freedoms to live the lives they value, provides a robust blueprint for advocating moral leadership in addressing Nigeria's food crisis and preventing stampedes. At its core, the theory highlights the need for leaders to ensure that vulnerable populations have the necessary resources and opportunities to meet their essential needs, including food security. In this context, moral leadership calls for a

deep commitment to equity, empathy, and justice. The Tinubu administration must prioritize the empowerment of vulnerable groups, such as low-income households, internally displaced persons, and rural communities, by ensuring access to not just food, but also the economic, social, and infrastructural conditions that allow individuals to build sustainable livelihoods. Through policy reforms that address root causes of food insecurity, such as poverty, poor infrastructure, and limited access to agricultural resources, leaders can create an environment where people are not forced into perilous situations to secure their basic needs.

Ethical leadership must manifest through the design and implementation of policies that protect the most vulnerable during times of food scarcity. This involves using Sen's capability framework to assess the needs of these populations and investing in community-driven solutions that provide both immediate relief and long-term empowerment. Government agencies, humanitarian organizations, and the private sector must collaborate to improve food distribution systems, ensuring that resources reach those most at risk of being marginalized. Additionally, leaders must cultivate a culture of inclusivity and transparency, where decisions are made with the input of vulnerable groups themselves. Such participatory decision-making helps to ensure that policies reflect the real-world experiences of those

affected, leading to more effective solutions and reducing the likelihood of crises, like stampedes, which are often driven by lack of trust, information, and equitable access to food.

The ability to prevent food crisis stampedes is intrinsically tied to effective communication and the development of robust social safety nets. Leaders must facilitate public awareness about food security issues, create contingency plans, and coordinate efforts to prepare for potential crises. Public policies that incorporate Sen's focus on the freedom to achieve well-being can ensure that the most at-risk groups are supported not only by emergency interventions but also by sustainable policies that provide consistent, dignified access to food. The goal is not merely to prevent stampedes but to foster an environment where vulnerable Nigerians are empowered to live lives free from the threats of food insecurity and related crises. In this way, moral leadership rooted in the Capability Approach can bridge the gap between poverty and prosperity, ensuring that food security becomes a universal right, not a privilege.

Advocating Ethical Governance and Principled Leadership in the Bola Ahmed Tinubu Administration

Ethical governance and principled leadership are essential for creating a society grounded in justice, equity, and progress. Within the Bola Ahmed Tinubu administration, achieving this vision demands a deliberate commitment to transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in governance processes. Policies and decisions must align with constitutional provisions, ensuring they reflect the collective aspirations of the populace. Actively engaging civil society organizations and institutional stakeholders will promote governance that prioritizes public welfare over personal or political interests. Ethical governance also requires the adoption of meritocracy in appointments and resource allocation, rejecting nepotism and favoritism in all forms. Principled leadership necessitates unwavering integrity, adherence to the rule of law, and dedication to public service. Tinubu and his team must exemplify these qualities through personal accountability and a transparent governance style. Corruption must be tackled decisively by empowering anti-corruption agencies, ensuring their independence, and promoting judicial efficiency. An independent media that holds public officials accountable should also be encouraged. Addressing socio-economic challenges, such as unemployment, inadequate healthcare systems, and poor education, must be a priority, ensuring that governance benefits are distributed equitably across all regions and demographics.

Leadership that upholds ethical standards must also prioritize proactive and inclusive decision-making. Engaging diverse stakeholders, including the private sector, grassroots organizations, and traditional leaders, will create a collaborative environment where trust and collective responsibility thrive. Leveraging technology can further enhance transparency and public participation. Digital platforms should be utilized to streamline service delivery, facilitate real-time feedback, and provide avenues for citizens to actively contribute to policy discussions. This approach ensures that governance remains responsive to the evolving needs of the population. A critical aspect of ethical governance is addressing structural issues that perpetuate inequality and marginalization. The administration should commit to reforming institutional configurations that hinder social and economic mobility, ensuring access to opportunities for all citizens, particularly marginalized groups. Strengthening local government systems to make them more effective and autonomous can bring governance closer to the people, enhancing efficiency and inclusiveness. Building strong, ethical institutions that can withstand political changes will provide a sustainable foundation for long-term national development.

Promoting ethical governance also involves cultivating a culture of accountability across all levels of government. Public officials should be held to the highest ethical standards, with mechanisms in place to monitor their activities and enforce disciplinary measures where necessary. Encouraging civic education to empower citizens with knowledge of their rights and responsibilities can enhance public engagement and vigilance. Strengthening democratic processes, such as free and fair elections, will ensure that leadership remains legitimate and responsive to the will of the people. Tinubu administration has a unique opportunity to set a new standard for ethical governance and principled leadership. Through prioritizing transparency, inclusivity, and accountability, and through deliberate efforts to address socio-economic challenges, the administration can build a legacy of trust and progress. This requires not only strong leadership but also the collective effort of all Nigerians to uphold the values that ensure a just and equitable society.

Conclusion

This study underscores the grave implications of economic hardship as witnessed in the tragic Christmas gift stampedes in Nigeria. It highlights the urgent need for moral and ethical leadership to address the root causes of the food crisis while examining the interrelation between food scarcity, economic instability,

and governance. The aim is not to vilify the administration of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu but to provide constructive criticism geared toward practical solutions that alleviate the suffering of Nigerians. Acknowledging the complexities of governance, the study calls for policies that prioritize social welfare and equitable food distribution, ensuring humanitarian initiatives do not inadvertently lead to loss of lives.

The research recognizes its limitations in scope and practicality. While it presents key perspectives on the economic and moral dimensions of food crises, it is not exhaustive. Factors such as political pressures, global economic trends, and regional disparities may influence outcomes beyond the focus of this study. Logistical and data constraints limited the depth of exploration into grassroots-level impacts and long-term policy effects, signaling the need for further investigation into these areas.

Future studies could explore successful food distribution models in similar contexts and assess their applicability in Nigeria. Research might also examine the roles of private sector partnerships, technological innovations, and community-led initiatives in addressing food crises. Emphasizing interdisciplinary approaches would expand the knowledge base required to prevent further casualties

and provide sustainable solutions to Nigeria's economic and social challenges.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are deemed apposite to the findings of this study.

Necessitating Freedom of Expression and Constructive Criticism: The Tinubu administration must recognize the fundamental importance of freedom of expression in a democratic society. The regime's approach to social media criticism, particularly through threats of arrest by the Inspector General of Police, undermines citizens' right to hold their leaders accountable. Maintaining civility in criticisms is essential, but criminalizing dissent creates an environment of fear and erodes trust in governance. Establishing clear boundaries between constructive feedback and defamation while emphasizing dialogue over repression will enhance transparency, accountability, and a healthy democratic culture.

Adopting a Growth Mindset through Constructive Feedback: Leaders who learn from their mistakes and welcome constructive feedback often achieve greater success. The Tinubu administration should embrace this principle by acknowledging errors when they occur and using them as opportunities for growth. Defending failures or rationalizing mistakes cultivates a culture of denial that alienates the public and stifles progress. Embracing criticisms and implementing meaningful reforms demonstrates a commitment to governance

improvement, earning the confidence of the Nigerian populace.

Curbing Extravagance and Prioritizing Economic Development: Wasteful expenditures on luxuries such as excessive vacations, medical tourism, and procurement of additional official vehicles, presidential jets, and yachts should be abandoned. These resources can be redirected towards economic revitalization initiatives. Investments in infrastructure, education, and healthcare promise long-term benefits for Nigerians and create a more sustainable economic outlook. Transparent and judicious use of public funds signals a dedication to addressing the nation's pressing issues.

Strategic Borrowing for Economic Growth: Borrowing merely to settle debts or pay salaries is unsustainable and harms Nigeria's economic stability. If borrowing is necessary, it should target projects promising significant economic returns, such as renewable energy, agriculture, technology, and manufacturing industries. These sectors hold potential for job creation, enhanced local productivity, and reduced dependence on imports. Prioritizing investments with economic returns ensures a self-reliant economy and reduces the country's debt burden over time.

Strengthening Institutional Structures: Sustainable governance requires prioritizing the enhancement of Nigeria's institutions. Reinforcing anti-corruption agencies, improving judicial independence, and ensuring transparency in public procurement processes serve as critical measures. Strong institutions act as checks on

executive excesses and ensure accountability at all levels of governance, thereby promoting economic growth and social stability.

Empowering Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs): Significant resources should be channeled into empowering SMEs, which play a vital role in economic growth and employment. Offering low-interest loans, technical support, and favorable tax policies stimulates entrepreneurial activities, diversifies the economy, and reduces unemployment. SMEs boost local production and encourage innovation and competition, which are crucial for sustainable development.

Promoting Youth Inclusion in Governance: Nigeria's youthful population is one of its greatest assets. Creating avenues for youth participation in governance and policymaking harnesses their energy and creativity. Mentorship programs, leadership development training, and appointments in key government sectors introduce fresh perspectives in decision-making and cultivate a sense of belonging and ownership among the younger generation. Nigerian politicians should desist from utilizing the youth solely as political thugs.

Improving Education and Healthcare Systems: A robust education system and accessible healthcare are essential to national development. Allocating more resources to these sectors ensures improved infrastructure, better teacher training, and access to quality healthcare services. Addressing brain drain by creating conducive working environments for professionals in these fields strengthens Nigeria's human capital.

Diversification of Revenue Sources: Dependence on oil revenue must be reduced through investments in agriculture, technology, and tourism. Modernizing agriculture and adopting export-focused strategies enhance foreign exchange earnings and ensure food security. Exploring alternative revenue streams creates a more resilient economy.

Tackling Insecurity with a Holistic Approach: Insecurity remains a significant impediment to Nigeria's progress. Combining military action with socio-economic interventions addresses the root causes of insecurity, including poverty, unemployment, and ethnic tensions. Collaborative efforts with regional and international partners improve the effectiveness of counter-terrorism strategies.

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