

**EXEMPLARY LEADERSHIP AND SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: JUXTAPOSING BIBLICAL
MOSES AND OSOFISAN'S MOREMI IN *MOROUNTODUN***

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ABSTRACT

The argument presented in this paper centres on exemplary leadership and sustainable development in Nigeria, examining the various factors that contribute to the nation's growth and development. The paper draws lessons from two distinct and divergent disciplines: the first is the Biblical Moses and his exemplary leadership style, and the second is the artistic and imaginative creation of a character by Femi Osofisan, one of Nigeria's leading voices in the literary domain. The character Moremi is said to have played a vital role in the history of the Yoruba people in western Nigeria. These two characters and their exemplary characteristics are the concern of this paper. Being two divergent characters, given that one is Biblical and the latter is artistic, their selfless leadership qualities, and how they contributed to the advancement and emancipation of their respective subjects in their struggles, are a huge lesson for Nigeria's sustainable development. Biblical Moses, for instance, was highly patient in his dealings with his people (the Israelites), who were disobedient and highly immoral. Despite their shortcomings and constant provocation, Moses could endure and return to God in prayer to plead for the forgiveness and the fulfilment of God's promise to them. Moremi, on the other hand, is said to be from the upper class of the society; as a queen, she selflessly renounced her affluence and good quality lifestyle to embark on a journey into the camp of the enemy to unravel her strength, magic and relate same to her people to liberate them from their oppressors the Igbos who were constantly molesting and killing her people, the Ifes. These two great characters and their contributions towards advancing the well-being of their people, amidst condemnations and trials, remained exemplary in their commitment to liberating their people. The paper concluded that exemplary leaders

like Moremi and Moses have the potential to enhance sustainable development if replicated in the Nigerian society.

KEYWORDS: Exemplary Leadership, Sustainable Development, Biblical Moses, and Osofisan's *Moremi*.

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is seeking exemplary leadership that will foster peaceful coexistence and promote sustainable development in all spheres of human interaction. No nation in the world can ever make progress or develop without credible leaders who are willing to make remarkable sacrifices for the common good of the general populace. This exemplary leadership quality has been missing over the years in this part of the world and beyond. In every sane society of the world, and for development to occur, such a society needs credible leadership that showcases exemplary, all-inclusive leadership. The interplay here is the fact that the all-inclusiveness of all the sectors of society in the entire process of leadership and followership has the potency to deploy all governmental apparatuses and the sound manipulation of policies and programmes, which include proper management and allocation of resources to attain the desired level of growth and development of the nation.

Exemplary leadership provides the platform where issues concerning the growth and development of nations are properly addressed to fulfill the yearnings and aspirations of the people. This helps promote nation-building, peaceful coexistence, and the attainment of sustainable development. This is achievable where leadership is just and not adjudged based on tribe, religion, or region. Rather, credible and exemplary leadership creates room and opportunities for all citizens, beyond tribal, regional, and religious affiliations, to promote the indices that are responsible for aggregating sustainable development in all the nations of the world.

According to Obiozor:

Nigeria is a nation born in optimism in 1960 at independence, but has spent its 55 years living in a state of doubt and uncertainty. Within these years of Nigeria's independence, all kinds of analyses and conclusions have been inferred on critical issues responsible for what has become a Nigerian dilemma over nation-building and national development. This is because all countries compared to Nigeria since 1960 have made astronomical progress, developed relatively stable political and economic systems (1).

The description of the kind of development that has taken place in Nigeria since its independence and its sixty-five (65) years as an independent nation is at a low pace compared to other developing countries. This is largely based on failed leadership in the country, which has ignored areas that will benefit the nation.

In Nigeria today, there is unrest in virtually all regions of the country, such as kidnapping, farmers/herders' conflicts, rural banditry, armed conflicts, small-scale insurgencies, and terrorism, and so on. The fortunate or unfortunate thing is that Nigeria is immensely blessed with both human and natural resources, which could have launched the country as one of the world-class' developed countries like America, the United Kingdom, Germany, China, and a few others. Rather, the situation in Nigeria is worrisome as things have fallen apart and everything seems to be in reverse gear rather than progressing. This prompted Achebe's position about the state of things in Nigeria when he described the situation in his book titled *The Trouble with Nigeria*, stating that: "There is nothing wrong with the Nigerian air or water, the only thing wrong with Nigeria is the inability of its leaders to rise to their responsibility" (1). Achebe's position and those of many others are the motivation for this paper. This paper centres on two personalities, the Biblical Moses and Moremi, Osofisan's creation in *Morountodun*. The reason for juxtaposing and analysing these two personalities is to note that both Moses in the Bible and Moremi in *Morountodun* were exemplary leaders who exhibited exceptional qualities that helped to better the cause of their people, as history records.

DEFINING THE CONCEPT OF LEADERSHIP

Leadership within the Nigerian context has various definitions and explanations as to what it constitutes. Many scholars, diplomats, and artisans alike have viewed leadership from different perspectives depending on their understanding of what it means to them. Leadership, which revolves around the ability to organise individuals for the achievement of a common goal, is often marred by the leader's inability to provide the people with the needed representation for the effective actualisation of set goals and the attainment of sustainable development. Leadership roles and dispositions vary in given situations across all sectors of the country.

Leadership refers to the collective effort to govern or direct the affairs of a people. This concept highlights the importance of Stoner, Freeman, and Gilbert's perspective, which views leadership as "the process of planning, organising, leading and controlling the work of organisational members using all available

organisational resources to attain stated organisational goals” (7). This definition supports the argument that strong leadership, often represented by a single individual, is essential for effectively guiding an organisation toward its goals and fostering sustainable development.

Similarly, Winston and Patterson, cited in Onolememen, provide us with another definition of leadership that:

A leader is one or more people who selects, equips, trains, and influences one or more followers who have diverse gifts, abilities, and skills and focuses the followers to the organization’s mission and objectives causing the followers to willingly and enthusiastically expend spiritual, emotional, and physical energy in a concerted coordinated effort to achieve the organizational mission and objectives (67).

This definition of leadership has given us a perceptible insight into the hallmark of the argument in this paper. Leadership is a broad term, and connotes the ability to lead people and ensure that they are truly represented. In doing so, leaders are expected to create the right atmosphere that enables followers to function very well.

Again, Teles takes the argument further when he conceptualised that:

Leadership is a paradoxical phenomenon; it is admired yet controversial, respected and often ridiculed, explainable but uncertain, relevant, yet blamed by so many. This seems to be particularly true when it is about political leadership. It encompasses those activities and interactions between individuals, which take place due to a particular setting of power, legitimacy or influence gap between them (126).

It is convincing that leadership is a broad entity with multiple layers, and this multidimensional nature can never be separated from the controversies that surround it in the truest sense of the word. Leadership is an integral part of humanity and existence in general.

Iyanya conceives leadership to mean “One’s ability to motivate and guide any group of people towards the attainment of a set goal or objective. The desired goal in some cases is determined by the group members, in other cases, the leader may be the one to identify such goals and then convince group members to follow” (104). Biden adds that “leadership refers to the commitment to a cause and determination to convince others that a cause is important” (cited in Teles 3). From the two perceptible views adumbrated above, it becomes imperative to note that leadership provides the leader with the opportunity to lead, guide, and motivate the

group into taking actions that will improve the well-being of the group. Allan Bass takes the conversation further and notes very emphatically that:

Leadership has been conceived as the focus of group processes, as a matter of personality, as a matter of inducing compliance, as the exercise of influence, as particular behaviour as a form of persuasion, as a power relation, as an instrument to achieve goals, as an effect of interaction, as a differentiated role, as initiation of structure, and as many combinations of these definitions (11).

Haiman says, "In the broadest sense, leadership refers to the process whereby an individual directs, guides, influences, or controls the thoughts, feelings, or behaviours of other human beings" (4). Ogali takes it further when he notes that leadership is "a process of a person in a position of authority inspiring an organised group of people to set and accomplish great and lofty goals in a dynamic social milieu to resolve continually merging challenges confronting the group of community" (154). The views of these three scholars are convincing enough to suggest that only exemplary leadership has the potential to control and check the activities of group members towards sustainable development.

CONCEPTUALISING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Conceptualising sustainable development within the context of this paper provides us with an understanding that no nation in the world can attain meaningful development if the apparatus or indices meant for growth are not properly harnessed. This is one of the reasons this paper seeks to examine exemplary leadership and link it as one of such indices that has the wherewithal to bring about not just development but a sustainable one. Sustainable development is the process of meeting human developmental needs by preserving and sustaining the resources for development. The concept of sustainable development gained popularity in the 1980s, driven by the desire to preserve the Earth and its inhabitants. At this point in the world's history, humanity was desirous to keep nature. This is why Amacker noted that sustainable development was a term first coined in 1980, which means to conserve the earth's natural resources (Amacker, "Sustainable Development"). The entire rationale for sustainable development is to ensure that human activities on the planet are protected.

Gess and Pidlisnyuk state that sustainable development depends on transparent, participatory, and accountable systems of government. Exemplary

leadership across society builds sustainable development in Nigeria and beyond. This is possible only if the principles of social living are followed. Leaders at all levels must provide responsible and fair representation.

In trying to understand what sustainable development means, a report by the United Nations, on the World Commission on Environment and Development, comes this striking definition of sustainable development to mean “The development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their needs” (86). Again, this paper becomes imperative owing to the subject matter it tries to address. This definition by the World Commission on Environment and Development strengthens the argument by noting that it is only when leaders are prudent and sincere in all the decisions they make and how those decisions affect citizens that the world we live in will begin to enjoy a better life.

Given that development is a positive change, which is propelled by the social, economic, political, and cultural aspects of human existence for an improved lifestyle in every sane society, sustainable development becomes the pattern by which development in its entirety can be achieved. For Nigeria to achieve sustainable development, certain parameters must be arrived at. This is why Obiegbu makes bold to unravel some of those parameters with the submission that “making the necessary decisions now to realise the vision of stimulating economic growth and tackling the deficits, maximising the well-being of the citizens and protecting our environment, without affecting the ability of the future generations to do the same” (83). The reality is that for sustainable development to occur in any form or country, the government (leaders) needs to be exemplary and take proactive and productive measures that can promote the quality of life and the well-being of the people.

In putting the thesis on sustainable development together, this definition from Goteng and Randawa comes in handy, where these scholars were emphatic in their essay when they submitted that, “Sustainable development implies continual improvement of the living conditions of human beings in a particular community (society) from one generation to another” (199). This connotes that whatever beseeches a people affects their developmental processes. It is in the light of the foregoing that exemplary leadership is needed for the sustenance of all developmental apparatuses of a nation. In the context of Nigeria and its leadership peculiarities, it is incumbent on leaders to display exemplary leadership that will continue to improve the living conditions of citizens and, at the same time, promote sustainable development for both present and future generations.

EXAMINING MOREMI'S EXEMPLARY LEADERSHIP ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Femi Osofisan's *Morountodun* is a thought-provoking piece that presents the ancient story of Moremi, the Ife Queen, who infiltrated the enemy's camp to study their secrets and transmit them to her people. In the dramatic representation, the playwright captures and presents lucidly the crisis that ensues in two folds. On the one hand, the masses are aggrieved with the upper class about the ill treatment they are being subjected to, and on the other hand, the war between the Ife people and the Igbos. From the playwright's creation, there is no reason for the Ife people to always be defeated by their enemy, the Igbo people. It has become common knowledge, and the Ife people fear for their lives. This continuous fight and humiliation that the Ife people suffer in the hands of the Igbos in Osofisan's creation breed the strong desire by Moremi, the queen mother, who is determined to infiltrate the enemy camp and save her people from further destruction and even extinction. This singular act brings out her exceptional and exemplary leadership character.

In the first instance, Moremi is determined to abandon her comfort zone as the Queen mother, who is highly respected by her husband, the king, friends, and the entire people of the kingdom. Moremi wants to embark on a journey to the enemy's camp to understudy their tactics and relate them to her people. This will bring victory to her people and improve their living conditions. She (Moremi) undergoes the purification rites as it is customary with the tradition of the people, and is ready to proceed on the journey.

Niniola asks if she is not afraid of the journey and her intended mission, but Moremi responds thus:

Moremi: Well...up till this moment, I never thought of it. Fear was... a faraway land. When I went to Esinmirin to make my pledge, my heart was as stout as the iroko tree. Right up till this last moment of my departure, when I held my son Oluorogbo to my breast and bade him farewell. The priest led me darkly into the grove for the appropriate ceremonies, and then, slowly, we danced past the shrine of my husband's grandfather, Oduduwa. You know, going from god to god, looking into their impressive eyes, then walking through the streets, past the throngs of silent forms, the people watching, immobile, I felt like one drunk on wine. I felt strong and light, the noon breeze was in my veins...but then, we arrived here, in the market, and the priest left. And I was alone, alone with these empty spaces.... (31-32).

The lines from Moremi are expository; they open the conversation on her doggedness to ensure that her people are liberated. The speech shows how exemplary she is; she even went as far as to hold her son Oluorogbo to her breast and bade him farewell. This is amazing, and it is only those with true leadership qualities who can sacrifice their happiness and that of their loved ones to bring positive change to their society and sustainable development. Moremi says that “perhaps, if we dance together again, like before, for a little while, perhaps Moremi will recover her courage” (32). This further justifies her willingness to ensure that the glory and victory of her people are absolutely resolved. And to achieve this, she pays the dreaded price of entering the camp of the enemy to learn their powerful prowess and relate to her people for counterespionage.

Niniola’s attempts at persuading Moremi to desist from her insistence to journey to the enemy’s camp proved abortive as Moremi tells her that:

Moremi: You talk of beauty and success and glamour! But what is all that to me when, one fine day, in the midst of the most splendid rejoicing, with the choicest meat in my teeth, without warning at all, the Igbos can arrive suddenly, locusts in the air, and eat everything up? That is the life our gods have provided for us after all our rituals and sacrifices. No, no! Nini, it is time for us to rise, to stand and square up our shoulders by our own courage, and stop leaning on the gods (33).

These lines portray Moremi as an exemplary leader who is never distracted by the good things of life. Moremi is viewed as a person who sees beyond the enjoyment; she would rather wish for a future where she can sit back and watch her people enjoy their lives without further problems. This conviction from an exemplary leader is the reason for Moremi’s actions to find ways to redeem her people from an impending doom.

To further justify her reasons for embarking on the journey to save her people from the constant attacks and humiliations from the Igbos, Moremi is propelled to question her friend Niniola:

Moremi...How many times already, we watched our festivals change into periods of mourning? When the Igbos set on us. Yet we have made sacrifice upon sacrifice till the earth is glutted with blood. Our priests have scraped their throats hoarse on incantations, and their latest ploy is to try and make us accept defeat as fate. Tell me, my friend, what more shall we do to learn that the gods will not help us? I have decided. Moremi shall be the clay which the race requires to remould itself (34).

These are reassuring words from a true leader who has the interest of her subjects at heart. Here, Moremi presents us with another dimension of what society faces in the name of overdependence on others. In her speech, one could discern how the people's dependence on their gods has not yielded any results for their survival.

Reassuring herself of the journey she is embarking upon, and having taken solace in her conversation with Niniola, her friend. Moremi utters these words confidently, "Come, Nini. Embrace me. I am glad you came and talked to me. Now, Moremi is no longer afraid. Let the women come, and we shall dance together, like the procession on a bridal night. Your doubt and your fear have strengthened me. I shall go, and I shall return" (34). True representation is that which removes personal self and fear but is motivated by the realities of the whole. In the same vein, Oronmiyon, Moremi's husband, tries to talk her into forgetting her quest to redeem the people. He tries to persuade her from embarking on the journey as he sneaks into her departure point to lure her back home by saying, "This is no time to worry about that. Come quickly.... I say, do not worry. I, Oronmiyon, I am the public opinion. Subjects only echo the ruler's caprices" (36-37). In response to his plea, Moremi questions him, "So, what about the mothers who will crowd to your palace tomorrow, as before, their hands empty again, those hands which only this morning held laughing children to their breasts? Ah, the thought that Oluorogbo, a prince born, can be stolen like that, stripped of his inheritance, and turned into a slave before nightfall..." (37). This tells the distinction between credible leadership and an unguided leader. Oronmiyon represents leaders who care less about the subjects that they represent.

In the development that follows, Moremi's husband, the king, sees reasons with her and describes her special qualities and her willingness to accept the reality of ending the mish-mash, which threatens the lives of his people, in the conversation below:

Oronmiyon: I know you are a woman of tremendous courage. Right from the day of your arrival, you became the real favourite of the royal chambers. Your beauty and your special grace, Moremi, wear the principal ornaments of the palace....

Moremi: (Teasing) And yet, my lord, only two moons ago, you took another wife?

Oronmiyon: Of course, you understand. Kings are like a mother bee. They must clothe themselves in people. The palace must fill its hives with nectar of female voices. That is how our fathers made it. But your place of eminence

was never in dispute, for your courage is strong, like our ancient rafter. Your name alone holds up with esteem the tottering roof of our besieged kingdom....I said to myself, echoing your words, that Moremi is the one person in this land who can succeed, if we are ever to find a counter to this mysterious power of theirs which turns my bravest warriors into omolangigi each time the marauders come upon us (36).

This further justifies our point in this paper: the masses should always identify and support leaders. This will help build further the zeal in the leaders to provide credible leadership for the people that they represent, and this will, in turn, bring about sustainable development. When leaders and their subjects are united, there is a likelihood of sustainable development, especially when leadership is exemplary.

Moremi is not happy with this development, and she laments as she reiterates her commitment to embark on a trip to end the rift. This is her lamentation and recommitment:

Moremi: Do you hear them, my Lord? The Igbos are drawing near, combing the streets and alleys, scaling our walls with ease. And you know what is happening as our story repeats itself. Already our men tremble by their household shrines, their prayers stuck in their teeth. Our warriors are beginning to babble like Obatala's misfits. The women are pissing shamelessly in front of their screaming children. Your priests are again going to pieces in helpless rage, their vaunted charms now impotent like Osanyin left in the rain... They are near, they approach, Kabiyesi, you can do nothing other than gnash your teeth. Once again, we are encircled, and the mysterious paralysis is beginning to spread in our veins like the stupor of majele. Nothing in Ife has been discovered to counter it: no leaf or bark, no grass, no ritual amulet, we are lost, lost... And yet Moremi is prepared to stake her life, to take the risk of captivity to be able at last to penetrate the enemy camp and learn their magic... (37).

All leaders, just like Moremi, must understand that what affects the people they govern affects them as leaders. To this end, Moremi's determination to go into the enemy's camp and understudy their magic. To reveal the same to her people for a renewed cause of action and survival of her people, presents us with the selfless and exemplary leadership of Moremi as a character in Osofisan's creation of *Moruntodun* as a dramatic text. Her exemplary quality in the play is a mirror and great lesson for leaders in our country to emulate to bring about sustainable development.

In her concluding remarks and regarding her decision to embark on the journey, Moremi says, "...Nobody sacrifices Moremi. Nobody! I have chosen, all by myself. Neither by the gods' cajoling, nor by your designing. Moremi chose and carries the burden upon herself..." (38). At the core of the play, the audience is made to understand that the Ife people found new ways to contend with the Igbos. The exemplary leadership of Moremi is what interests this paper, and it calls on leaders in our society to follow the path of leaders like Moremi to achieve sustainable development through quality and rational handling of events that concern the welfare of the people.

EXAMINING BIBLICAL PORTRAITS OF MOSES AS A LEADER ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

According to Moses' story as provided towards the end of the book of Genesis, how, on the invitation of Pharaoh and Joseph, his chief minister, to escape the severe famine in Canaan, Jacob and his sons went down into Egypt (Gen. 47:1-28). While factual details about this period are very flimsy. The immigration in Joseph's time may have been three or four centuries before the birth of Moses. Recent biblical scholarship is reluctant to claim factual precision for any of the narratives of the early monarchy. No record of the Hebrew exodus has been discovered in the Egyptian sources. However, the following historical reconstruction is still held by many based on the biblical text. Many centuries before Jacob's time, Egypt had been conquered by a pastoral Semitic race from Anatolia, the Hyksos, who brought the native Egyptians into cruel subjection.

Thus favoured, the Israelites "multiplied exceedingly" (Gen. 47:27) and extended to the west and south. At some time in the 13th century BC., the supremacy of the Hyksos in Northern Egypt came to an end and "there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph (Exod. 1:4). Under the new regime, the Egyptians began to despise them, and the period of their "affliction" (Gen. 15:13) began. They continued, however, to increase in numbers, and "the land was filled with them" (Ex. 1:7). The native Egyptians regarded them with suspicion, and made their lives bitter with hard bondage, and "all their service was with rigor" (Ex. 1:13, 14).

Pharaoh's desire to weaken and root out the Hebrews is thwarted by the midwives, who secretly spare the male children. He instructs his people to drown all Hebrew male children in the Nile (Ex. 1:22). Moses is born amid this crisis, son of Amram and Jochebed, who already have two children, Miriam and Aaron. His mother conceals him for three months and then contrives to have her child adopted

by Pharaoh's daughter by placing him in a basket of bulrushes, and setting it afloat at the spot where the princess came down to bathe. The princess sends Miriam, who was standing nearby, to fetch a nurse. She brings her mother, to whom the princess says, "Take this child and nurse it for me", and so the name of "Moses" is explained ("Saved from the Water" Ex. 2:10).

On the other hand, according to von Rad, "There is a noticeable difference in the picture of Moses given by the Elohist." (1). The idea of Moses' office has changed, "Elohist has pushed Moses much more into the foreground as the instrument of God in effecting the deliverance." (2). Moreover, "Moses is now the miracle-worker, in fact almost to the point of being a magician." (3). Moses' importance is enhanced "by setting Aaron over against him.... Moses is God for Aaron, and Aaron the mouth for Moses, Moses is the creative initiator and Aaron only the executive speaker (Ex. iv. 16);" and (4) Moses is a prophet in Egypt, but "of a special type he is much more the prophet of action, taking an active hand in the events" (*ROTT* 1: 292–93). He now concerns himself with the condition of his Hebrew countrymen, and "looked upon their burdens" (Ex. 2:11). He makes common cause with them to break the yoke of bondage. One day, his indignation roused against an Egyptian who was beating a Hebrew, he killed the Egyptian and hid the body in the sand. But soon he finds that the deed was known and that Pharaoh "sought to slay Moses" (Ex. 2:15). So, Moses flees from Egypt to the land of Midian, the southern end of the Sinai Peninsula, and finds a home there with the family of Reuel, where he remained for forty years (Acts 7:30).

After an eventful journey in the wilderness, we see them at length encamped in the plains of Moab, ready to cross over the Jordan into the Promised Land. There, Moses addresses the assembled elders (Deut. 1:1-4; 5:1-26:19; 27:11-30:20), and gives the people his last counsels, which fill the entire book of Deuteronomy. Then comes his song of thanksgiving (Deut. 32), and its review of the marvelous history of what God has done through him. After blessing the tribes (33), he ascends to the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah opposite Jericho (Deut. 34:1), from where he surveys the land much farther than the eye can see. "God showed him all the land of Gilead, to Dan, and all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, to the utmost sea, and the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, to Zoar" (Deut. 34:2-3), the magnificent inheritance of the tribes of whom he had been so long the leader; yet he himself was destined never to enter the Promised Land. Nevertheless, Moses was distinguished for his meekness and patience and firmness, and "he endured as seeing him who is invisible." "There

arose not a prophet since in Israel like to Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, in all the signs and the wonders, which the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land, and in all that mighty hand, and in all the great terror which Moses showed in the sight of all Israel" (Deut. 34:10-12). The entire representation in the above statements shows the life and leadership qualities of Moses in the Bible.

We understand that even though Moses was instrumental in leading the Israelites out of the land of Egypt to the promised land, he could not enter the land promised by God himself. Yet Moses gave thanks to God the Father as he watched his brethren enter the promised land with joy and thanksgiving to God, the maker of heaven and the earth.

CONCLUSION AND THE WAY FORWARD

The challenges of exemplary leadership and sustainable development in Nigeria are enormous and daunting, with both local and global dynamics. The argument advanced in this paper is that sustainable development is possible even here in Nigeria, through strategic and exemplary leadership. The argument, therefore, has shown that if the country has credible leaders such as Moses in the Bible, whose concern was for the people God entrusted into his care, it is evident that countries can only witness sustainable development with such leaders as Moses and Moremi. Just like Moremi in Osofisan's *Morountodun*, who sacrificed herself to avert the impending calamity that was to befall her people (the Ife people) from their enemy, shows how exemplary leadership can save a people and bring sustainable development. In this paper, we have established that sustainable development is possible for any nation. But it can only be attained if leaders at all levels display exemplary qualities that advance fairness, equity, and equality for all citizens. This leads us to conclude that there is a need for a total change in attitude by leaders at all levels. Leaders should pay more attention to the yearnings and aspirations of the people to build trust and, at the same time, rebuild the lost confidence in leadership that has neglected the citizens over the years. This is the only way the country can achieve sustainable development.

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