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Joseph's Principle of 'Saving' in Genesis 41: 46-57 and its Implications for Proper Management of National Wealth in Nigeria Context

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Abstract

Poor resource management has been a problem in many resource-rich countries in Africa, including Nigeria. Nigeria as the world's eleventh largest oil exporter with immense wealth coming from annual oil production and trade continues to suffer from poor resource management as a result of corruption, ineptitude, poor leadership, etc. This challenge has therefore led to increased poverty among the people, unemployment, poor infrastructural development, resource-control conflicts as well as ethno-religious conflicts, among others. However, the historical account as recorded in Genesis 41: 46-57 about a major economic recession to be experienced in Egypt, that would lead to seven years famine and drought all over the 'world' aptly captured Nigeria's economic mismanagement debacle. But, by sustainable economic management, statecraft, and acquired skills with integrity, patriotism, and servant-leadership style, Joseph was able to steer the nation (and the then world) out of global economic recession using a major natural endowment of Egypt: Agriculture. It is this challenge of national wealth/economic (mis)management in Nigeria that this paper examined. The Paper employed historical-critical methodology with diachronic exegetical style to contextualise the *pericope* within the Nigeria experience.

Findings revealed that the context of the passage could be applied to the Nigerian situation. Consequently, if Nigeria is to succeed in the management of her national wealth and in the pursuit of an egalitarian society with sustainable economic prosperity and

management, she must have patriotic leadership with thirst for an inclusive nation-building stratagem, a leadership that is committed to the rule of law with a demonstrable sense of fair-play and democratic tolerance; a leadership characterised with ability and integrity.

Keywords:

Joseph, Principle of Saving, Genesis 41:46-57, Management, National Wealth

Introduction

In Africa, resources such as oil and diamonds are important commodities on the international market and for many countries these resources keep the economy going and satisfy many human needs.¹ The increasing demands for these resources and the shortage in supply make it a necessity for many consumers. For countries that possess large deposits of these resources, the wealth accrued from their production and exportation increases their national income and improves their economy and so there is a high reliance on these resources. Africa has been blessed with numerous resources all of which contribute to its growth and economic development. With this vast amount of resources and the wealth amassed from their trade, resource management is very important. The concept of resource management is closely tied to that of resource control. These resources when managed properly should bring infrastructural development, reduce poverty and improve the economy of the country. Proper natural resource management also involves accountability on how these resources and the wealth are used. Proper resource management ensures that everyone in the country benefits from the national wealth in a fair and equitable manner. Resources are therefore a blessing for the countries that possess them only if properly managed.

In Africa however, these resources have been a blessing for some and a 'curse' for others, this is even more so for the region where these resources are extracted from. These resources are a curse for these regions because most of their people remain in abject poverty, experience poor economic growth and have a generally lower standard of living in comparison to other people living in

¹D. Onigbinde. *Natural Resource Management and its Implications on National and Sub-regional Security: The Case of the Niger Delta*. Accra: Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) 2008.

other parts of the country. This problem can be attributed to poor resource management.²

Poor resource management is a problem in many resource-rich countries in Africa. The argument that the more resources a country has will lead to increased economic growth and prosperity does not hold true as far as these countries are concerned. Nigeria as the world's eleventh largest oil exporter with immense wealth coming from annual oil production and trade continues to suffer from poor resource management. It is the same with oil-rich Angola and the diamond-rich countries of Congo and Sierra Leone, and all these countries are among the poorest and most violent in Africa.

At the root of most of the violent conflicts in history has been the competition for territory and resources and, as experienced in Africa, this competition is based on the lack of resources to benefit all of the population. Examples of such countries are the Congo, Angola, and Sudan all of whom have been affected by civil wars. These countries are rich in natural resources but are often poor, because of government's constant exploitation of these resources and this has created corrupt and repressive government and armed conflict.³

The story of Joseph is one of the best known tales in the Bible. The historical account as recorded in Genesis 41: 46-57 was about intending economic recession to be experienced in Egypt. This recession, from the dream of Pharaoh was expected to be so severe that it would lead to seven years famine and drought all over the 'world.' By sustainable economic management, statecraft, and acquired skills with integrity, patriotism, and servant-leadership style, Joseph was able to steer the nation (and the then world) out of global economic recession using a major natural endowment of Egypt: Agriculture.

The focus of this paper therefore is to examine Joseph's principle of saving and economic policies in Genesis 41: 46-57 can be applied to Nigerian economic (mis)management challenges in order to evolve an egalitarian society with sustainable economic prosperity and management.

Nigeria, and its Economic Management

²A. Heidenheimer, and M. Johnston, (eds.) *Political Corruption: Concepts and Contexts*. London: Transaction Publishers.1993.

³E. O. Ajani. 'Spirituality and National Development in Nigeria: Critical Points of Disjunction' in *Ogbomosho Journal of Theology* vol. xvi no. 3.2011.

Prof. Ibrahim Gambari at a presentation during the 2008 Mustapha Akanbi Foundation Lecture affirmed that Nations are an important part of modern society.⁴ However, Gambari, continued that nations and their sustainable growth just don't happen by historical accident; rather they are built by men and women with vision and resolve. Nation-building is therefore the product of conscious statecraft, not happenstance. Nation-building is always a work-in-progress; a dynamic process in constant need of nurturing and re-invention. Nation-building never stops and true nation-builder never rest because all nations are constantly being faced with new challenges. Hence, nations and economic managements that would engender sustainable growth and development is a product of the human will and imagination and the institutions that sustain their collective efforts.⁵

In today's world, skills, industriousness, productivity, and competitiveness are the determinant factors of national greatness. Not even the possession of the nuclear bomb is enough to make a nation great without reference to cultural and religious values as well as the industriousness and creativity of its citizens.

The major question then, is why has the task of nation-building and economic prosperity been so difficult in Nigeria, and the fruits so patchy, despite her enormous human and natural resources? Gambari⁴ suggest that we should look for the answer in three critical areas: (1) threats and challenges posed by the environment for nation-building; (2) the quality of leadership that has confronted these challenges; and (3) the fragility of political and development institutions. The need to understand the environment for nation-building in Nigeria is important, so we can clearly identify our strengths, weaknesses, and core challenges. Gambari, further highlighted that we also need to evolve a system of leadership selection and accountability which produces the sort of leaders that will confront the challenges of the environment in a way that is beneficial for nation-building and economic prosperity.⁶

⁴A. Gambari. The Challenge of Nations Building: The Case of Nigeria. First Year Anniversary Lecture of Mustapha Akanbi Foundation. Abuja. Retrieved online from www.mustaphaakanbifoundation.org , 2008.

⁵Obioha, U. Precious. 'Unethical Practices in Religion: The Nigeria Experience- A call for Reorientation and Repositioning' in *Orisun Journal of Religion and Human Values*. Vol. 6 & 7. Ago Iwoye: Department of Religious Studies, OlabisiOnabanjo University.2007-2008.

⁶A. Gambari. The Challenge of Nations Building: The Case of Nigeria. First Year Anniversary Lecture of Mustapha Akanbi Foundation. Abuja. Retrieved online from www.mustaphaakanbifoundation.org 2008.

Onigbinde,⁷ however, opine that the notion of natural resource 'curse' is closely linked to poor resource management as it creates stagnation and conflict, rather than economic growth and development. In Africa, conflicts over natural resources occur on large scale. It therefore shows that "for marginalized groups seeking to redress injustices or inequities in resource distribution and economic empowerment, conflict is an inherent feature of their struggle for change and can provide the leverage needed to assert their claims. In Nigeria, several decades of neglect has created restiveness among various groups.⁸ Conflicts are evident through clashes between the government, militia groups and other significant actors vying for ownership and control of the resources. Even though groups use conflict as a medium to promote their demands, it has led to more political instability and the increasing loss of lives and wanton destruction of properties.

In a bid to "safe for the raining day" the Nigeria Government created Sovereign Wealth Fund; however this later became an avenue for corrupt enrichment by political office holders. According to Central Bank of Nigeria⁹ the Sovereign Wealth Fund was established to address the controversies surrounding the Excess Crude Account (ECA). The fund is expected to generate revenue to meet budget shortfalls, provide dedicated funding for development of infrastructure and keep some savings for future generations, according to the law establishing it. Prior to this period, savings made from the difference between budgeted oil prices and actual market prices were held in the ECA, which was subject to the whims and caprices of the political leaders, thus raising serious issues of transparency and accountability. "It was a typical case of government money in government house at the whims of government officials."¹⁰

ECA was a Nigerian government account used to save oil revenues in excess of the benchmark price. The Excess Crude Account was established in 2004, and its objective is primarily to protect planned budgets against shortfalls due to volatile crude oil prices.¹¹ By delinking government expenditures from oil revenues,

⁷A. Gambari. *The Challenge of Nations Building: The Case of Nigeria*. First Year Anniversary Lecture of Mustapha Akanbi Foundation. Abuja. Retrieved online from www.mustaphaakanbifoundation.org 2008.

⁸C. Achebe. *The Trouble with Nigeria*. Oxford: Heinemann. 1984

⁹D. Onigbinde. *Natural Resource Management and its Implications on National and Sub-regional Security: The Case of the Niger Delta*. Accra: Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) 2008.

¹⁰Central Bank of Nigeria. *Understanding Monetary Policies Series (19): The Sovereign Wealth Fund*. Abuja: Central Bank of Nigeria.2012.

¹¹Ibid.

the Excess Crude Account is expected to insulate the Nigerian economy from external shocks. Important to note is that the surging crude oil prices during this period led to the Excess Crude Account increasing almost fourfold, from \$5.1 billion in 2005 to over \$20 billion by November 2008, accounting for more than one-third of Nigeria's external reserves at that time. By June 2010, the account had fallen to less than \$4 billion due to corruption and economic mismanagement. In 2010, Nigeria's National Economic Council approved the plan to replace the Excess Crude Account with a National Sovereign Wealth fund. Today, the actual credit in the SWF is unknown.¹²

Challenges before Nigerian Nation-building:

Nigeria faces five main nation-building and economic prosperity challenges:

(1) the challenge from our history; (2) the challenge of socio-economic inequalities; (3) the challenges of an appropriate constitutional settlement; (4) the challenges of building institutions for democracy and development; and (5) the challenge of leadership.¹³ In our quest for nation-building and economic prosperity, we have recorded some successes, such as keeping the country together in the face of many challenges. But these challenges continue to keep Nigeria from achieving her full potential:

The Challenge of History

The historical legacies of colonial rule create some challenges for nation-building in Nigeria. Colonial rule divided Nigeria into North and South with different land tenure systems, local government administration, educational systems, and judicial systems. While large British colonies like India and the Sudan had a single administrative system, Nigeria had two, one for the North and one for the South.¹⁴ It was almost as if these were two separate countries, held together only by a shared currency and transportation system. Many members of the Nigerian elite class in the 1950s and 1960s had their education and world outlook molded by the regional institutions. Some had little or no understanding of their

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴T. Lawal, and O. Abe. 'National Development in Nigeria: Issues, Challenges, and Prospects' in *Journal of Public Administration and Policy Research* vol. 3 (9) 2011.

neighbouring regions. Under these conditions, it was easy for prejudice and fear to thrive. During the period of the decolonization struggle, Nigerian nationalists from different regions fought each other as much as they fought the British colonialists.¹⁵ Nigeria never had a central rallying figure like Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana or Nelson Mandela in South Africa. Instead, each region threw up its own champions.¹⁶

From this historical legacy, therefore, regionalism has been a major challenge to nation-building and economic management in Nigeria. To their credit, however, the founding fathers of our nation tried to deal with this challenge by adopting federalism and advocating a policy of unity-in-diversity. Unfortunately, the lack of consolidation of Nigerian federalism around commonly shared values and positions means that this challenge of divisive historical legacy continues to undermine our efforts at nation-building. One current manifestation of this historical legacy is the division between 'indigenes' and 'settlers. An appalling case in reference is the infamous Kaduna Declaration on the eviction notice to Igbo people from the North from October 1st and the purported removal of Christian Religious Knowledge from the curriculum of secondary education while Islamic/Arabic studies (IAS) is made compulsory. Or how better should one describe a situation where the words Christ, Church, Christianity or Christian are not mentioned once in the constitution and the word Sharia is mentioned 73 times, Grand Khadi 54 times, Islam 29 times and Muslims 10 times or that the life of a Fulani cow is seemingly more important to that of a farmer. This division has been a source of domestic tension and undermines the efforts at creating a common nationhood.¹⁷

The Challenge of Socio-Economic Inequalities

An important aspect of nation-building and economic management is the building of a common citizenship. But how can one have a common citizenship when the person in Ilorin has a radically

¹⁵M. M. Ogbeidi. Political Leadership and Corruption in Nigeria Since 1960: A Socio-economic Analysis. *Journal of Nigerian Studies*. 2012.

¹⁶A. Gambari. The Challenge of Nations Building: The Case of Nigeria. First Year Anniversary Lecture of Mustapha Akanbi Foundation. Abuja. Retrieved online from www.mustaphaakanbifoundation.org 2008.

¹⁷O. N. Shogunle. 'Security and National Development: The Boko Haram Debacle in Nigeria.' in *Religion, Peace and Development in Nigeria: A Festschrift in Honour of Prof. E Ade Odumuyiwa*. ed. A.A. Akanni. Ago-Iwoye: Department of Religious Studies, OlabisiOnabanjo University. 2014.

different quality of life from the person in Yenagoa? Or when the woman in Gusau is more likely to die in childbirth than the woman in Ibadan? Through the development of the economy and equal opportunities for all, or through the development of social welfare safety nets, mature nations try to establish a base-line of social and economic rights which all members of the national community must enjoy. Not to enjoy these socio-economic rights means that the people involved are marginalized from national life, it was this national economic management concept that Joseph employed in Egypt that made the national wealth to be evenly distributed among the people during the famine. Gambari indicated that this is why in many Western European countries, contemporary nation-building is about preventing 'social exclusion' or the exclusion of significant segments of the population from enjoying basic social and economic rights.¹⁸

In Nigeria, however, not only are many of her citizens denied basic rights such as the right to education and health, there is also serious variation in the enjoyment of these rights across the country. As a consequence, the citizen is not motivated to support the State and society, because he or she does not feel that the society is adequately concerned about his/her welfare. Also socio-economic inequalities across the country fuels fears and suspicious which keep Nigerians divided.¹⁹

These inequalities pose two related challenges to nation-building. Firstly, high levels of socio-economic inequalities mean that different Nigerians live different lives in different parts of the country. One's chances of surviving child-birth, of surviving childhood, of receiving education and skills, all vary across the country. If different parts of Nigeria were separate countries, some parts will be middle income countries, while others will be poorer than the poorest countries in the world! A common nationhood cannot be achieved while citizens are living such parallel lives. Inequalities are a threat to a common citizenship. Secondly, even in those parts of the country that are relatively better off, the level of social provision and protection is still low by world standards. Instead of resorting to the divisive politics of indigene against settler as a means of accessing resources, a generalized

¹⁸A. Gambari. *The Challenge of Nations Building: The Case of Nigeria*. First Year Anniversary Lecture of Mustapha Akanbi Foundation. Abuja. Retrieved online from www.mustaphaakanbifoundation.org 2008.

¹⁹M. Audi. "Poverty and the Missionary Mandate of the Church: A theological Discourse" *Ogbomoso Journal of Theology* vol. xiv (1). 2009.

commitment to social citizenship will create a civic structure of rights that will unite people around shared rights and goals.²⁰

Poverty and nation-building are strange bedfellows, whether the poor are 20% or 85% of the population. A largely marginalized citizenry, increasingly crippled by poverty and the lack of basic needs, can hardly be expected to play its proper role in the development of the nation. Nations are built by healthy and skilled citizens. Nigeria needs a social contract with its citizens as a basis for demanding their loyalty and support.

The Leadership Challenge

Leadership is a critical factor in nation-building and it should be understood in two important but related ways. Firstly, there are the *personal* qualities of integrity, honesty, commitment, and competence of *individual* leaders at the top. Secondly, there are the *collective* qualities of common vision, focus, and desire for development of the elites as a whole. All of these played their roles eminently in the *periscope* which shows the budding of Joseph's outstanding and sterling qualities thriving in an enabling environment.

The standards for recruitment and the performance of Nigeria's individual leaders over the years have left much to be desired.²¹ A nation does not need leaders who see themselves as champions of only some sections of its population, who do not understand the economic and political problems of the country, with no requisite knowledge for national economic management, not to mention finding sustainable solutions to them. A nation does not need leaders who are more interested in silencing their opponents, than in pursuing justice. Nor does it need leaders, who preach one thing, and do the exact opposite or places themselves above the constitution and the laws of the country, but leaders who lead by upholding and respecting the law.

If Nigeria is to succeed in nation-building and a thriving and sustainable national economic management, she must have a leadership that is committed to the rule of law with a demonstrable sense of fair-play and democratic tolerance; a leadership with ability and integrity; above all else, it must have a leadership that can see beyond the ostentatious pomp of office. It must have leaders who have a vision for a Nigeria better than the one they inherited; leaders

²⁰R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer, and B. K. Waltke. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. Chicago: Moody. 1980.

²¹A. Gboyega. *Corruption and Democratization in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Agba Areo Publishers. 1996.

who will lead by deeds and not by words; achievers, not deceivers. The nation is in need of a leadership that will not only leave its foot-prints in the sands of time, but one, which by dint of hard-work, fair-play, dedication and commitment, will live forever in the hearts of Nigerians.

Genesis 41:46-56 and Joseph's Principle of Saving

וַיֹּסֶף בְּוַשְׁלָשִׁים שָׁנָה בְּעַמְלֹו לִפְנֵי פַרְעֹה מִלֶּדְ-מִצְרַיִם וַיֵּצֵא יוֹסֵף מִלִּפְנֵי פַרְעֹה וַיַּעֲבֹר בְּכָל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם:

וַתַּעַשׂ הָאָרֶץ בְּשִׁבְעַ שָׁנֵי הַשָּׁבַע לַקְּמָצִים:

וַיִּקְבֹּץ אֶת-כָּל-אֲכָלוֹ שִׁבְעַ שָׁנִים אֲשֶׁר הָיָו בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וַיִּתֵּן-אֲכָל בְּעָרִים אֲכָל שְׂדֵה-הָעִיר אֲשֶׁר סְבִיבֹתֶיהָ נָתַן בַּתּוֹכָהּ:

וַיִּצְבֹּר יוֹסֵף בָּר כַּחֲלוֹל הַיָּם הַרְבֵּה מְאֹד עַד כִּי-תִחַדֵּל לִסְפֹּר כִּי-אֵין מִסְפָּר:

וַלְיוֹסֵף יָלַד שָׁנֵי בָנִים בְּטֶרֶם תָּבֹא שְׁנַת הָרָעָב אֲשֶׁר יִלְדֶה-לוֹ אֶסְנַת בַּת-פּוֹטִי פְרַעֲוֹ פֶהֱוּ אוֹן:

וַיִּקְרָא יוֹסֵף אֶת-שֵׁם הַבְּכוֹר מְנַשֶּׁה כִּי-נִשְׁאַה אֱלֹהִים אֶת-כָּל-עַמְלֵי וְאֵת כָּל-בְּיַת אָבִי:

וְאֵת שֵׁם הַשֵּׁנִי קָרָא אֶפְרַיִם כִּי-הִפְרִנִי אֱלֹהִים בְּאֶרֶץ עֲנִי:

וַתִּחְלִינָה שִׁבְעַ שָׁנֵי הַשָּׁבַע אֲשֶׁר הָיָה בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם:

וַתִּחְלִינָה שִׁבְעַ שָׁנֵי הָרָעָב לָבוֹא כַּאֲשֶׁר אָמַר יוֹסֵף וַיְהִי רָעַב בְּכָל-הָאֲרָצוֹת וּבְכָל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם הָיָה לָחֶם:

וַתִּרְעַב כָּל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וַיִּצְעַק הָעָם אֶל-פַּרְעֹה לֵאמֹר וַיֹּאמֶר פַּרְעֹה לְכָל-מִצְרַיִם לְכוּ אֶל-יוֹסֵף אֲשֶׁר-יֹאמַר לָכֶם תַּעֲשׂוּ:

וַהֲרַעַב הָיָה עַל כָּל-פְּנֵי הָאָרֶץ וַיִּפְתַּח יוֹסֵף אֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר בָּהֶם וַיִּשְׁבֹּר לַמִּצְרַיִם וַיַּחֲזֶק הָרָעַב בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם:

וְכָל-הָאָרֶץ בָּאוּ מִצְרַיִמָּה לְשֹׁבֵר אֶל-יוֹסֵף כִּי-תִחַדֵּק הָרָעַב בְּכָל-הָאָרֶץ:

⁴⁶ Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went through all the land of Egypt.

⁴⁷ During the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth abundantly,

⁴⁸ and he gathered up all the food of the seven years when there was plenty in the land of Egypt, and stored up food in the cities; he stored up in every city the food from the fields around it.

⁴⁹ And Joseph stored up grain in great abundance, like the sand of the sea, until he ceased to measure it, for it could not be measured.

⁵⁰ Before the year of famine came, Joseph had two sons, whom Asenath, the daughter of Potiphara priest of On, bore to him.

⁵¹ Joseph called the name of the first-born Manasseh, "For," he said, "God has made me forget all my hardship and all my father's house."

⁵² The name of the second he called Ephraim, "For God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction."

⁵³ The seven years of plenty that prevailed in the land of Egypt came to an end;

⁵⁴ and the seven years of famine began to come, as Joseph had said. There was famine in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread.

⁵⁵ When all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread; and Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, "Go to Joseph; what he says to you, do."

⁵⁶ So when the famine had spread over all the land, Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe in the land of Egypt.

⁵⁷ Moreover, all the earth came to Egypt to Joseph to buy grain, because the famine was severe over all the earth.

Below are the principles employed by Joseph in his task of Economic Management of Egypt:

Understanding the Economic Challenges of Egypt

וַיֵּצֵא יוֹסֵף מִלְפָּנָי (and Joseph went out) Joseph immediately went about the work to which Pharaoh had appointed him. His primary interest was in getting the job done, rather than taking personal advantage of his new position at the Prime Minister. He recognized that his wisdom and discernment were gifts from God, but nevertheless that he still had much to learn about the land of Egypt; its agricultural industry in particular. As his first act, "Joseph went through all the land of Egypt" (Gen. 41:46) on an inspection tour. He would have to become familiar with the people who managed agriculture, the locations and conditions of the fields, the crops, the roads, and means of transportation. It is inconceivable that Joseph could have accomplished all of this on a personal level. He would have had to establish and oversee the training of what amounted to a Department of Agriculture and Revenue. To go out

ax*y` (y¹f¹°), as a Hebrew verb appears over a thousand times in Qal and Hiphil, but only five times in the Hophal. The Hiphil has the usual causative meaning "cause to go out, bring out, lead out," and it was in this context that it was used in the text according to Harris, Archer, and Waltke.²²

Creation of a Long-term Agricultural Policy and Infrastructure

After he had surveyed the land of Egypt and its environs, Joseph's work touched on nearly every practical area of the nation's life. With God's wisdom on Joseph, he was able to do the work of strategic planning and administration. His office would have required that he learn much about: legislation, communication, negotiation, transportation, safe and efficient methods of food storage, building, economic strategizing and forecasting, record-keeping, payroll management, the handling of transactions both by means of currency and through bartering, human resources, and the acquisition of real estate.

His extraordinary abilities with respect to God and people did not operate in separate domains. The genius of Joseph's success lay in the effective integration of his divine gifts and acquired competencies. For Joseph, all of this was 'godly-work.'

During the seven years of ub*c* ('b¹±) plenty harvest, Joseph had the grain stored in cities and not just a single city (Gen. 41:48-49). According to Harris, Archer, and Waltke, the Hebrew word IK) (koel) All, every, any, whole, is a very common particle, occurring about 5400 times. Of these all, about 800 are in a genitive relation with the following word, signifying thus, "the whole of something."²³ It is commonly translated "all" if the following word is plural, and "every" if the word is singular and without the article, and it was in this way the word was used in the *pericope*. It can also have a suffix attached to it: "the whole of it, all of it." This particular formation may then follow a given noun, stressing the aspect of totality (2 Sam 2:9). It can also be used in this way with the noun understood, as does Isaiah when he expressed the corruption of the entire people by saying, "All of it loves a bribe" (Isa 1:23). In some contexts it denotes "all kinds of," "of all sorts." Thus Eliezer took with him "all of the good thing of his master" i.e. "a great variety of good things" (Gen 24:10; cf. Lev 19:23),

²²R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer, and B. K. Waltke. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. Chicago: Moody. 1980.

²³R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer, and B. K. Waltke. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. Chicago: Moody. 1980.

hence, it is this same manner of usage that was implied in the text.²⁴

During the seven lean years that followed, Joseph dispensed grain to the Egyptians and other people who were affected by the widespread famine. To create and administer all this, while surviving the political intrigue of an absolute monarchy, must have required exceptional talent and acquired skills.

Joseph's Successful Management of the Food Crisis

After the people ran out of money, Joseph allowed them to barter their livestock for food. This plan lasted for one year during which Joseph collected horses, sheep, goats, cattle, and donkeys (Gen. 47:15-17). He would have had to determine the value of these animals and establish an equitable system for exchange. When food is scarce, people are especially concerned for the survival of themselves and their loved ones. Providing access to points of food distribution and treating people even-handedly become acutely important administrative matters.

When all of the livestock had been traded, people willingly sold themselves into slavery to Pharaoh and sold him the ownership of their lands as well (Gen. 47:18-21). From the perspective of leadership, this must have been awful to witness. Joseph, however, allowed the people to sell their land and to enter into servitude, but he did not take advantage of them in their powerlessness. Joseph would have had to see that these properties were valued correctly in exchange for seed for planting (Gen. 47:23). He enacted an enduring law that people return 20 percent of the harvest to Pharaoh. This entailed creating a system to monitor and enforce the people's compliance with the law and establishing a department dedicated to managing the revenue. In all of this, Joseph exempted the priestly families from selling their land because Pharaoh supplied them with a fixed allotment of food to meet their needs adequately (Gen. 47:22, 26). Handling this special population would have entailed having a smaller, distinct system of distribution that was tailored for them.

Poverty alleviation Programme

Joseph successfully brought Egypt through the agricultural catastrophe. When the seven years of good harvests came, Joseph developed a stockpiling system to store the grain for use during the coming drought. The Hebrew word for gather further explained what the writer of this passage actually meant: Jb[^]q*

²⁴Ibid.

(q¹baf) "to collect, gather, assemble" also appears in Ugaritic, Arabic, Aramaic, and post-biblical Hebrew. *Qabas* appears in all periods of Hebrew and about 130 times in the Bible. The verb is a near synonym to *qabats*, differing from it only by having a more extensive range of meanings.²⁵

First, *qabats* means "to gather" things together into a single location. The word may focus on the process of "gathering," as in Gen 41:35 (the first occurrence): Joseph advised Pharaoh to appoint overseers to "gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh..." The verb may also focus on the result of the process, as in Gen 41:48: "And he gathered up all the food of the seven years, which were in the land of Egypt..."²⁶

When the seven years of drought arrived, "Joseph opened the store-houses" and provided enough food to help the nation through the famine. His wise strategy and effective implementation of the plan even allowed Egypt to supply grain to the rest of the world during the famine (Gen. 41:57). In this case, God's fulfillment of his promise that Abraham's descendants would be a blessing to the world occurred not only for the benefit of foreign nations, but even through the industry of a foreign nation, Egypt.

In fact, God's blessing for the people of Israel came only after and through his blessing of foreigners. God did not raise up an Israelite in the land of Israel to provide for Israel's relief during the famine. Instead God enabled Joseph, working in and through the Egyptian government, to provide for the needs of the people of Israel (Gen. 47:11-12). Nonetheless, Joseph, as an Egyptian official was also involved in an infamous repression of the people during this period, he probably initiated and/or supported the slavery-for-food power structure, a decision that imposed slavery on uncounted numbers of people (Gen. 47:21).²⁷

Genesis 41: 46-56 and its Implication for National Wealth in Africa

Strategic Planning and Proper Administration of National Wealth

For Nigeria to achieve her goal of sustainable growth and development and the proper management of her national wealth, she must have to manage the overall situation of her socio-economic development with the right concept of management, which will

²⁵B. Davidson. *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*. Twelfth Printing. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006.

²⁶W. E. Vine. *Vine's Expository Dictionary of the Old and New Testaments Words*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1997.

²⁷Ibid.

earnestly turn the economic and social development into the track of comprehensive, coordinated and sustainable development, following Joseph's principles. Joseph was able to strategically plan and give proper administration needed for the job at hand. This includes maintaining balanced and fairly rapid economic development. This will further expand domestic demand; regulate the relationship between investment and consumption; control investment in a reasonable manner and strengthen the pulling effect of consumption on economic growth as observed in the principles of Joseph in Gen. 41: 46-56.

It is also important, in line with the principle of economic growth, to strengthen the building of a harmonious society, in which the society should be people oriented and employment should be increased. Most importantly, more emphasis should be put on social fairness, so that all people can share the fruits of reform and development, and social stability thereby maintaining solidarity. It is also good to give a better play to the fundamental role of the market in resource allocation and enhance the efficiency of resource allocation. Government's functions should also be rationalized, so as to improve the macro- economic control system of the system. Furthermore, to achieve those principles, efforts should be made towards improving the corporate governance structure of the national wealth.

Better Conservation of the National Wealth

There is need to uphold resource conservation as a basic national policy. It is also important to develop a recycling economy; protect the ecological environment; expedite the building of a resource conservation and environmental friendly society. The nation must also facilitate the coordination between economic development and population, resources and environment. Promote national economic and social information; move earnestly along the path of new industrialization and sustainable management just as Joseph did.

Improved National Security

Poor resource management has an impact on the political, economic, religious, and environmental security of Nigeria. These aspects of Nigerian society are a cause for concern especially with its attendant effects on the continued existence of Nigeria as a nation.²⁸

²⁸O. N. Shogunle. 'Security and National Development: The Boko Haram Debacle in Nigeria.' in *Religion, Peace and Development in Nigeria: A Festschrift in Honour of*

Revived Economy

The world economy is facing the most severe financial crisis. This global recession has affected several aspects of every nation's economy. The risk of global recession has heightened significantly and volatility of commodity prices, which is the mainstay of most developing countries like Nigeria, has increased exponentially. This includes the sustenance of human capital resources in Nigeria. The Federal Government should come up with intervention policies that will minimize the effects and jumpstart the economy towards recovery and sustainable wealth creation and economic management in Nigeria.

Conclusion/ Recommendations

There is need for African governments to work more on diversifying their economies. Federal Reserve (like the Nigeria Sovereign Wealth Fund) should be maintained and properly managed with openness and legislative procedures, while Infrastructural deficit should be worked upon to alleviate the sufferings of the masses. Joseph was able to prevent the famine foresaw by Pharaoh through tact and godly wisdom and also by designing proper economic policies and effective administration.

While Leadership is not everything, it is an extremely important factor. Unless Africa gets leaders in Africa with ability, integrity, statecraft, commitment, and vision, it cannot succeed at nation-building and proper economic management. Beyond the qualities of individual leaders, however, there is the equally important question of the quality of the collective leadership offered by the African/Nigerian elite class as a whole. Leadership at this level (and at all levels) must be able to eschew every resemblance of Yoruba adage of *Opatoro so noin nu u!* "One who makes Kobo and loses Naira."

The Lesson of Botswana and Somalia is apt here: Botswana and Somalia are quite similar when one examines their human and material resources as nations. Both have: (1) one large dominant ethnic group divided into clans; (2) both are sparsely populated in semi-arid conditions; (3) at independence, both depended on livestock for the livelihood of a majority of their populations. While the Botswana leadership was collectively focused and had a vision of what it wanted to do with the country, the leadership in Somalia

Prof. E Ade Odumuyiwa. (ed.) A.A Akanni. Ago-Iwoye: Department of Religious Studies, Olabisi Onabanjo University, 2014.

was divided against itself. As a result, Botswana learnt to harness its limited resources for generally agreed objectives. It learned to survive under the shadow of apartheid South Africa. And it learned to manage its diamond resources well when those resources started flowing in. Somalia, on the other hand had a divided leadership, some of whom wanted to build Greater Somalia by military means, while others simply wanted to get on with running the country they inherited from colonialism, there was also religious and tribal conflicts that led to civil war/genocide (a similar story with Nigeria) and eventual secession of a section of the country. As a result, the Somali leadership lacked focus and vision, and often fought itself through conspiracies and military coups. Somalia also went to war with her neighbours. For anybody looking at these two countries today, the difference is clear.

The comparative histories of Botswana and Somalia suggest that Nigeria should be concerned not just with the quality of leadership of our Presidents, Governors, Senators and Judges; we should also be concerned by the quality of leadership which we all bring to our professional and personal responsibilities as exemplified in the story of Joseph.