



Good Governance, Strategies For Sustainable Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

The basic requirements of life, sound infrastructural development amongst other attributes of life of a decent society are the indices of good governance which unfortunately seems to be missing in the development of Nigeria. The paper attempted to examine the following as objectives of this paper; assess the relationship between good governance and development in Nigeria, identify the nature of good governance in Nigeria, etcetera. The study adopted the elite theory as theoretical framework and the qualitative research methods. The major findings include the following; absence of good governance in Nigeria, corrupt practices, lack of proper planning etc. The study concluded that corruption has destroyed development in Nigeria. It was recommended that strict policy measure should be adopted to revitalize the economy. There should also be limitations to the interference of the political class.

Key words; Governance, Good governance, strategies, Development, Sustainable development

Introduction

All over the world, good representation of governance, which manifest in quality living, infrastructural development, political stability etc, which makes up the component of good governance have always been the desire and expectations of every existing member of a society. So, when qualities of good governance for instance are mentioned with particular reference to the developed countries of the world such as better health care, good roads, employment opportunities etc, it is because governance is taken as a very seriously business there. When citizens queue up to cast their votes during elections, the striking thing in their minds is to ensure that there is good governance. Obviously because, when there is good governance, every other thing is guaranteed. Happiness, political stability, rule of law and other qualities of good governance are guaranteed. This has been Nigeria's fight or struggle from political independence, on 1st of October, 1960, coupled with series of military intervention starting from the 15th January coup, 1966, counter coup of 29th July 1966, 1975 coup amongst many. For instance, the first coup of 15th January 1966 by Major Patrick

Kaduna Nzeogwu cited in Chibuzor and Nwoke(2014), opined that 'our enemies are the political profiteers, swindlers, the men in high and low places who seek bribes and demand ten percent, those that seek to keep the country divided permanently so that they can remain in office as ministers and VIPs of waste, the tribalists, the nepotisms....'

However, as good as these expectations may seem, the absence of it in Nigeria has made life very unbearable and nauseating to many Nigerians. Many have paid the price of misgovernance over the years and even now. So, the quality of good governance needs not to be over emphasized because it is germane to growth, development and other sectors of human development. No doubt the quality of good governance in Nigeria has completely eroded many Nigerians. This is obviously because of bad leadership, terrorism, corruption, outright wickedness of man to man. 'The Nigerian problem' according to Achebe in Lale(2019), 'is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal examples which are the hall marks of true leadership'. Corroborating the above, the bible told us that' when

the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn (Olukoya,2018). So, the onus is upon good leaders to govern well in order for the dividends of good governance which has been repeatedly mentioned above to be achieved. It is some of these issues such as bad leadership, desperation for power, lack of planning which have consistently hindered good governance and the strategies of having it, that the study intends to interrogate

Statement of the Problem

Over the years issues of good governance and strategies for achievements have always been a contending one. Scholars of different intellectual background have in the time past come up with different approaches to dealing with it in order to attain an equitable height of satisfaction. Some had viewed it from the stand point of political factor others have looked at it from economic perspective. Others with various factor like corruption, psychology. For instance, looking at it from the corruption perspective, Mordi(2024, p.185), opined that ‘in 2023 general elections, the influence of money was pervasive with many candidates relying on financial inducements to secure votes’. Nonetheless, despite the logicity and clear approaches by some of these scholars, this paper would be approached from the stand point of political perspective where the politicians with the connivance of the elite mortgage the system to suit personal interest. The actions of the politicians make the system epileptic, wobbling and above all unworkable (Efeurhobo, 2024, p.129).

Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to identify and address what has been stagnating good governance and sustainable development in Nigeria. However, the following are the specific objectives of the study;

1. Assess the relationship between good governance and development in Nigeria
2. Identify the nature of good governance in the political development of Nigeria
3. Consequences of lack of good governance

Conceptual Clarifications

Attempt was made to lucidly clarify some concepts of this study for better understanding of the paper in general. Below are some of them;

Governance; Governance implies the art of leading people with the avowed desire to meet an expected end. Expected end in this context requires achieving goals that will promote and enhance the happiness of the people. Thus, it is governance when employment opportunities are created. Good roads, provisions for health facilities and a lot of other indices of human

development. According to Ikelegbe(2016, p.202)’’ governance essentially refers to the mechanisms, processes and institutions for determining and managing public affairs and society’’.

Good governance; It means governance in its true and exact representation. Governance is good when the people for whom it is meant for are happy and satisfied. For instance, it is good governance when basic necessities of life such as health, good food, housing, are consistently put in place to enhance the quality of life. The concept of good governance describe how public institutions conduct public affairs and manage public resources in order to ensure the realization of human rights, transparency, accountability, and citizenship.(Ambily & Itu,2021,p.25).

Strategies; Strategies are means by which goal or the objective of a thing is achieved or realized. The government of the day for instance needs some strategies to fulfill its obligations to its citizenry. The provision of public transport vehicles by government to reduce the pains and troubles of commuters is a strategy to save members of the public from rigorous transport challenges.

Development; Development means changes in the quality of life of a people over a fairly long period of time. It is development when a people socio economic life transform from harsh, unstable condition to one of opulence and comfort. Development according to Ake(2001) cited in Obi(2006) is thus the process by which people create and recreate themselves and their life circumstances to realize higher levels of civilization in accordance with their own choices and value. Again, Rodney,(1972) sees development both from the level of the individuals and that of the society as a whole.

Theoretical Framework

Many theories ranging from Group theory, democratic theory etc may be suitable for this study. However, the elite theory is comparatively better, at least for the purpose of this study. The elite theory is a theory that is anchored on the opinion of a small group of persons with knowledge and idea about the decision to take on behalf of the generality of the people. Their decision is usually a decision reached to enhance the quality of leadership. According to Egonmwan(2000), ‘ the elite are made up largely of middle and upper class people in western societies who have more of the skills and qualities required for leadership and who tend to share certain values about politics, mobility and leadership requirements that make the difference between them and others. The hallmark of distinction between them and others in the community is their class status and leadership resources rather than their attitudinal differences’

Corroborating the above, Oronsaye(1996,p.69), asserted that 'the proposition of the elite theory is that it is not the masses through their demands and support who determine or decide public policies but the governing elite reflecting their values and interest'. It is only expected that these category of persons should in all fairness represent the interest of all, since everybody cannot participate in the decision making process. Its limitations however could be that, as humans, their personal interest may over ride the interest of the general public. This may just explain why good governance is epileptic in the Nigeria political system despite its many strategies.

Literature Review

Good Governance, Strategies for Development

Good governance is an antidote for peaceful coexistence as well as reliable strategy to promote sustainable development particularly in a country where issues of development have become topical. In Nigeria for instance, in an attempt to achieve sustainable development, different governments since independence till date have strategized in order to attain a meaningful height of economic development. All these have not given the country the anticipated realization of goals attainment. What then is good governance? Good governance implies the ability of existing government to meet up with certain expectations of hopes on the part of the citizenry. It could be provision for good health system, employment opportunities, and portable drinking water, stable electricity supply, amongst many, that serves as indices of good governance. Adeosun(2012, sees good governance as competent management of a country's resources or affairs in a manner that is open, transparent, accountable, equitable and responsive to the yearnings and aspirations of the people'. Still in line with the above, good governance relates to political and institutional processes and outcomes that are deemed necessary to achieve the goals of development (2015), cited in Onyesom et al(2015). According to World bank (1992), good governance encompasses the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercise including the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies as well as the respect of the citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interaction.

So, it is good governance when institutions/ agencies of government such as the judiciary, presidency, existing ministries (civil service, police, etc) are used as strategies to carry out the expectations of members of the public. For instance, the availability of medical hospitals as institutions of government is charged with the responsibility to provide effective and efficient health care services to the citizens of the state, the

establishment of the court for the effective dispensation of justice, construction of good roads for ease of commercial activities amongst many are clear indicators of good governance in any country. Therefore, the ministries responsible for these aforementioned services are seen and regarded as institutions of good governance. Thus, good governance refers to as the processes and structure through which public institutions conduct public affairs, manage resources and guarantee the realization of human rights in a manner that is free from abuse and corruption, and with due regard to the rule of law(UNDP,1997)

The strategies of good governance therefore are accountability, rule of law, effective and efficient service delivery amongst others. Still in line with good governance, lets in the order with which the strategies of good governance have been listed discuss them briefly.

Accountability; this is one of the strategies of good governance. It is expected that those entrusted with the responsibility of governance must take responsibility for their actions and decisions as far as their services are concern. According to World Bank(2007), 'public official must be held responsible for their actions and decisions through effective oversight mechanisms, legal frameworks and active civil society engagements.

The next strategy in the order they were listed is rule of law. Here, all must be fairly and equally treated as far as the law and principles governing human affairs are concern. There must be no bias from any corner as far as the law is concerned. Such action will go a long way to promote and sustain national development. In the words of Kaufmann, Kraay,& Mastruzzi(2010),' a strong legal framework that is impartial, fair, and enforced without discrimination ensures justice and equality before the law''. In line with the last scholar, Bisi et al(1978), viewing the concept of rule of law from the perspective of professor A.V. Dicey, asserted that his doctrine stresses the fundamental idea that the law is all important and that while law can be invoked to maintain order and exercise of power must be in accordance with the law of the state''.

Again, effective and efficient service delivery is another strategy. The strategy of good governance is highly significant. People must as a matter of necessity feels the impact of government services. Grindle(2007), noted that 'public institutions should deliver services completely and associate resources responsibly to meet the needs of society'.

How has Good Governance Enhanced Sustainable Development in Nigeria

No doubt the objective of good governance is sustainable development. In other words, when there is good governance sustainable development is guaranteed. The desire of every citizen is to ensure that the government of the day provides strategies of good governance such as transparency, Anti corruption measures, decentralization and local governance and many more that will promote and sustain peaceful coexistence as well as sustainable development. Unfortunately, the absence of some of these strategies of governance has been the bane of the populace and existing governments. Many have actually yearned for the strategies of good governance. Regrettably, the absence of these has caused many Nigerians anguish, pains, and frustration and even death. Whereas good governance is germane to human development and more important is the fact that it is supposed to be the hallmark of any democratically elected government. When such government is unable to live up to such expectations, it is no longer good governance but bad and hopeless one. In the words of Ogundiya (2010), 'bad governance in Nigeria is the bane of sustainable development' as political elites divert public resources to personal gain rather than investing in infrastructure and welfare'. Corroborating the above, (Sala-I-Martin & Subramanian, 2013) pointed out that the Nigerian national petroleum corporation (NNPC) has often been cited for opaque financial practices, contributing to revenue leakages and underdevelopment''.

Corruption is another terrible factor that has hindered good governance in Nigeria. It has affected the development of Nigeria in virtually all ramifications of human endeavor. By implication, sustainable development has been weakened as existing sectors of the economy have all gone moribund as money meant for their developments went into the hands of the few in charge of management and administration. According to Ologbenla (2007), 'corruption is one of

the three monsters the country is grappling with. Others are bad leadership and governance'.

The bad leadership has resulted to political instability and insecurity. The point is corruption arising from weak governance has brought about bandits, kidnapping and other violent means of making Nigeria ungovernable. The Boko Haram insurgency in the North East is a product of poverty, unemployment and government neglect (Adebajo, 2020). Similarly, (Mgbenwelu, 2002, p.75) noted that democracy has proven elusive if not chimerical, as cycles of civilian and military governments have been punctuated by false starts, failed transitions, and recurring challenges to stable rule.

Again, the politics of godfathers has become the norm in Nigeria politics. Existing governors and leaders pay homage to their predecessors rather than to the electorates who ordinarily should be the beneficiary of good governance. More often than not, honor and acknowledgments are accorded the man who installed them into power. Failure to comply will amount to removal or heating the polity for the 'stubborn' governor. The River State is a case study where governor Fubara has been at loggerhead with his predecessor, the FCT minister, Mr. Nyesom Wike. The battle was so tense that the federal government under the leadership of his Excellency, Bola Ahmed Tinubu had to declare a state of emergency in the state. Consequently, sustainable development is retrogressed as much may not be done in terms of development. So, the good governance that ought to be the reflection of the people's yearnings and aspirations has been hijacked by the oligarchs. As rightly observed by Ekpu (2009, p.11), he identifies non legitimacy of government due to election malpractice, corruption, violence, tribalism, poverty, illiteracy, impunity and secret oath seeking. May be a pictorial representation and tabular form of bad governance in Nigeria will help to give a clearer picture of the analysis above.

Pictorial Representation of Bad Governance in Nigeria



Source; Shutterstock



Source; Alamy

Tabular Representation of Bad Governance in Nigeria, Shown Below;

Issue	Description	Source
Corruption	Widespread corruption in government and public offices, which hinders development and equitable resource distribution.	Transparency International (Corruption Perception Index, 2023)
Lack of Accountability	Poor transparency and accountability mechanisms in government actions, with little or no consequences for those involved in financial mismanagement or abuse of power.	Human Rights Watch (Nigeria 2023)
Weak Rule of Law	The legal system is often undermined by political interference, slow judicial processes, and failure to enforce laws impartially.	The World Bank (World Governance Indicators)
Insecurity	Increasing violence from groups like Boko Haram, Fulani herdsmen, and kidnappers, as well as neglect of adequate security measures by the government.	UNODC Report (2022), BBC News (Nigeria Security Crisis)
Poor Infrastructure	Lack of proper infrastructure, including roads, electricity, healthcare, and education systems, particularly in rural areas.	World Bank (Nigeria Infrastructure Report)
Unemployment & Poverty	High unemployment rates, especially among youths, leading to poverty and social unrest. The government has failed to provide sustainable job opportunities.	National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) (2023 Report)
Ethnic and Religious Tension	Persistent ethnic and religious conflicts, sometimes exacerbated by political leaders' divisive rhetoric and actions.	International Crisis Group (Nigeria Briefings)
Electoral Fraud & Rigging	Widespread electoral malpractices, including vote-buying, rigging, and lack of transparency, particularly during general elections.	INEC Reports, The Guardian (Nigeria 2023)
Human Rights Violations	State-sanctioned abuses, including extrajudicial killings by security forces, restriction of freedoms of expression and association.	Amnesty International (Nigeria 2023 Human Rights Report)
Economic Mismanagement	Mismanagement of the country's resources, resulting in a reliance on oil, misallocation of funds, and lack of economic diversification.	The Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG) 2022 Economic Report

Discussions of Findings.

The pictures/videos above explain the grotesque pictures arising from the protest and disillusionment of the Nigerian masses. It revealed nauseating and

frustrating situations that they are tired of. Consequently, to this category of people, sustainable development which is the objective of good governance is epileptic and gradually going into

extinction. All hopes seem lost. And the only way out of this economic doldrums is to protest against poor governance in order to have better strategies and sustainable development.

On the table analysis above, corruption has brazenly and without any form of decency done incalculable damages to the development of Nigeria political system. There is high level display of im unity among those entrusted the role of leadership. Regrettably, there is the gross abuse of the misuse of public office for personal aggrandizement. Beside this ugly development is the problem of lack of accountability in virtually all sectors of the national economy. There is secrecy of policy formulation arising from close decision process and poor audit reporting.

Weak rule of law. Here again, the persistent interference by the politicians has often time weaken the political institutions and consequently slow sustainable development. Undue influence on judges has questionably adversely affected the law making process and made some judges to be impartial in their lawful duties.

Insecurity is the aftermath of bad governance. The emergence of Boko Haram, bandits , kidnapping amongst many other social vices have stagnated sustainable development because of bad and poor governance. People can no longer assess their farms with ease. Citizens of different category can't go about their legitimate businesses without being hurt.

Poor infrastructure is another bane of bad governance in Nigeria. Consequently, sustainable development is at cross road. There is the dearth of bad roads all over the federation. With some parts as kidnappers den. Poor health care facility has worsen the situation as having assess to quality drugs become a mirage

Conclusion

In the light of the above discussions and analysis, good governance is the hallmark of every democratically elected government. Ostensibly because, it brings about sustainable development ranging from stability of government, rule of law, employment opportunities and other indices of

sustainable development. Unfortunately, the system has been hijacked by the greedy few who run the country as if it is a personal empire. The obvious reason why the country is revolving around in one spot with death rate increasing by the day is because of the absence of good governance that has manifested terribly in the actions of kidnappers and bandits. Good governance is guaranteed when those entrusted with the power of governance are ready to lead with the desire to implement policies and programmes that will enhance the living standard of the people. According to Chudi(2015,p.30), 'government in the contemporary world in Europe and America are more successful because they pursue good governance.' Supporting the above, Sheng(2001, p30-31) recognized that good governance entails the following characteristics' (1) participatory, (2) consensus oriented,(3) accountable, (4) transparent, (5) responsive,(6) effective and efficient,(7) even handed and inclusive, (8) the rule of law'. It is in the light of this it becomes logical to argue that there is good governance giving all the available conditions or emphasis above. It behooves leaders who have been legitimately entrusted the right to lead with the clear objective to achieve sustainable development.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are mentioned below arising from the discussion and analysis above. No doubt, some of these suggestions will go a long way to promote and enhance good governance and strategies of sustainable development.

1. Improvement on the electoral process that will enable the people's choice to emerge.
2. Strict punishment for manipulation of election results.
3. Strict adherence to the principle of rule of law, where everyone irrespective of your position must be equal before the law.
4. Consistent protest of bad governance by the electorates
5. Recall of bad leaders who are representatives of their various constituents.

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