



**IMPACT OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE ON SOCIAL AMENITIES IN NIGERIA:
A CASE OF BODE-SAADU, KWARA STATE**

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Abstract

Governance is a movement towards political cooperation among transnational actors such as the United Nations World Bank, International Criminal Court aimed at negotiating responses to challenges that affect more than one state or region. The local level is much more meaningful in Nigeria given the fact that citizens do not expect so much from the government at the centre. This study assessed the impact and challenges of democratic governance on social amenities in Bode-Saadu. The paper relied on both primary and secondary data. A total of 120 copies of a questionnaire were distributed while 112 were received and analysed using Statistical Package for Social Science software. The study adopted the elite theory. Finding from the study shows that democratic governance has not adequately enthroned social development in Bode-Saadu as a result of the myopic developmental dream, poor commitment and absence of political will that is capable of translating the dream or vision into realizable policies and programs. Majority of the respondents agreed that failure of leadership at the local level affects development and that community development is not adequate owing to corrupt practices among local government officials in the area. The paper recommends that the leaders should generate the political will to invest in infrastructure to aid the development of Bode-Saadu, and appointment should not be based on political or religious affiliation, but merit.

Keywords: Democracy, Development, Governance, Rural Development, Bode-Saadu, Kwara

1. Introduction

Democratisation is a social movement towards an institutional system of global democracy. Democratisation in Nigeria began at independence with the adoption of democratic institutions modeled after the British parliamentary system. Since independence, Nigeria has been grappling with the task of entrenching the culture of democracy in governance through its provisions within the independence constitution of 1960 and therefore the Republican constitution of 1963. These constitutions have prescribed the British-modeled Westminster parliamentary system for the country. After independence, the new political elite had the duty of not only institutionalizing the democratic process but also to develop a political culture, which would buttress the inherited institutions from the British colonial authority (Linus, 2015). There were, therefore, high hopes at the independence of Nigeria emerging as a fertile ground for the growth of democracy and development (Linus, 2015).

Democracy is characterised by the government during which power and civic duty are exercised by all adult citizens directly or indirectly through their freely elected representatives. It rests



upon the principle of majority rule, which means that decisions are made by the majority and have to be accepted by all, but minority viewpoints are respected and protected. Equally, one among their prime functions is to guard such basic human rights as freedom of speech and religion; the right to equal protection under the law; and therefore the opportunity to arrange and participate fully within the political, economic, and cultural life of society. More so, democracies conduct regular free and fair elections open to all citizens of voting age. The functions of democratic governance include the provision of social amenities such as water, road, hospital, market, education and defence of the the State against internal and external aggression.

Meanwhile, it became obvious that the future of democracy in Nigeria had become bleak as at the end of 1965. In January 1966, the military aborted the new democratic experiment in a bloody coup d'état. The military held on to power for almost 33 years after the 1966 coup except for some years of civil rule between 1979 and 1983 and 1987-1989. In 1979, Nigeria adopted the Presidential system of government modelled after the American system in preference to the British parliamentary system. Nigerian's short-lived democratic experiment after independence could be attributed to the breakdown of the rules of the game of politics, which profusely polluted the political stadium and made politics as dangerous for players also as spectators, gross misuse of political power; among public officers including reckless political and economic decisions in the allocation of scarce but locatable resources; erosion of the rights of individuals; the disenfranchisement of the Nigerian populace through blatant rigging of elections, conspicuous consumption of politicians amidst the abject poverty of the masses and excessively powerful regional governments, which threatened the relatively weak federal centre with wanton abandon (Elaigwu, 2011). These challenges made it difficult for the first democratic government in Nigeria under the Prime Minister, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa to build a solid democratic culture.

Studies reveal that a country with poor economic base and porous democratic culture create an avenue for military intervention and therefore the political elite would have been more cautious because it was a period of learning the state of the art of democracy. This was the period when democratic institutions were expected to be established and democratic culture accepted and imbibed by the state actors and civil society at large. Mohammed (2008), cited in Yio (2011), observes that success and goal attainment depend upon how quick the leaders and therefore the society learn to figure on the idea of democratic principles and practices. Unfortunately, in Nigeria, politics weren't driven by nationalistic and sophistication consciousness but by primordial sentiments of ethnicity, religion, regionalism, etc., with the resultant deepening of poverty and underdevelopment in the country. Against this background, the paper examines the impact of democratic governance on social amenities in Bode- Saadu, Kwara state.

Despite the stability in Nigerian democracy in the Fourth Republic from 1999 till date, the politicians are presumed to have provided fewer dividends of democracy to many citizens. Nigerians have celebrated 21 years of uninterrupted democratic dispensations as a sign of political maturity to demonstrate to the world that Africans are now advanced in democratic governance. However, the 21-year democratic sojourn in the country did not give us the expected dividends. Those in authorities have inflicted the country with a stench of political corruption and chronic lie for the past 21 years. Bode- Saadu suffers problems ranging from the



poor health care centre, quality education, poor road network, inadequate pipe bone water even though it is the headquarters of Moro local government area. Many scholars have worked on democracy and social amenities (such as Aluko 2008, Okoro 2011, Kenneth 2012, and Ober 2013) and so on but none has written on the impact of democratic governance on social amenities in Bode-Saadu, Kwara state. This study intends to establish the nexus between democratic governance and social amenities in Bode-Saadu and to identify challenges confronting democratic governance in achieving social amenities in Bode-Saadu.

2. Literature Review

Conceptual Discourse

Democracy - Yio (2012) sees democracy as "a system of government based on the acquisition of authority from the people, institutionalisation of the rule of law, emphasis on the legitimacy of rules, availability of choices and cherished values as well as accountability in governance". He argues from its Athenian origin that democracy is viewed as "Government by the people with the full and direct participation of the people". But democracy in practice even in Athens wasn't inclusive within the absolute sense because it excluded women and slaves who were integral components of the Greek city-states. Democracy is defined as a system of choosing policy makers and of organising government so that policy represents and responds to the public's preferences. Ukase (2014) sees democracy as a method by which decision-making is transferred to individuals who have gained power in a competitive struggle for the votes of citizens. It is a situation in which people have the opportunity of accepting or rejecting the men who are to rule them. He also views democracy as a political system characterised by regular and free elections in which politicians organised into political parties, compete for power by right of the virtue of all adults to vote and by the guarantee of a variety of political and civil rights. Cohen (1971) notes that democracy is a system of community government in which by and large the members of the community participate or may participate directly or indirectly in making decisions, which affect them. Chafe (1994) sees democracy as the involvement of the people in the running of the political, socio-economic and cultural affairs of their polity.

Democratic Governance - Jega (2006) lists the constitutive elements of democratic governance to include; representation, participation, responsive and accountable governance, egalitarian society, transparency and accountability in both public conduct and the management of commonwealth (public resources). Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and Office for Democratic Institution and Human Rights (ODIHR) view democratic governance as a "system of government where institutions function consistent with democratic processes and norms, both internally and in their interaction with other institutions". According to these organisations, key principles of democratic governance are political pluralism, institutional accountability and responsiveness.

Development - Development refers to man's progressive qualitative and continued improvement of human labour (Chukwuemeka, 2013). Development is required not only to enable citizens to have higher standards of living and material advancement but also to realise socio-economic and political transformation also as attain technological feats over the environment (Igbokwe-Ibeto, 2003). Development is viewed as "multi-dimensional, referring to positive changes which affect the bulk and which dwell in the social, economic, political and cultural spheres of societal



life. Rudeback (1997) says development is about the people, beginning from the grassroots where the majority of Nigerians live. Development involves a departure from the past to the new situation, which is reflected in the economic, social, educational and political aspects of a nation. Lawal and Oluwatoyin (2011) assert that development as a concept is a victim of definitional pluralism. Gboyega (2003) opines that development implies improvement in the material well-being of all citizens, not the most powerful and the rich alone, in a sustainable way, such today's consumption doesn't imperil the future; it also demands that poverty and inequality of access to the great things of life be removed or drastically reduced. It seeks to enhance personal physical security and livelihoods and expansion of life chances.

Review of Relevant Literature

Alkali (2004) conceptualises governance as the exercise of political power to manage public affairs. He points out that governance borders on such issues as rule of law, accountability and transparency, development-oriented leadership, freedom of expression and association, responsiveness, responsibility, representativeness, efficiency and effectiveness. He argues that "accountability and transparency are the hallmarks of governance". Mimiko (2007) states that democracy provides a platform for good governance, and promotes systematic stability as long as there is an outlet to legitimately access power by the political contenders through the people's vote at elections." Kim et al. (2005) posit that "the institutionalisation of participation by all people may be a cornerstone of good governance". Ekpe (2008) argues that democratic governance aims to create a conducive climate for political and socio-economic development and extend the efficiency and effectiveness of development programmes during a society. Democracy is sweet because it's the power to facilitate development and it is meaningless without economic and social rights (Abiola & Olaopa 2006; Ojo 2006). McGill (1995) sees "institution as an instrument for action." Styhre (2001) argues that institutions are reflections of the socio-political values that surround them.

In Nigeria, one of the major problems responsible for the failure of democratic governance is the lack of capacity on the part of the structure, system and operators of these institutions to achieve set goals. This development isn't unconnected with the very fact that a lot of Nigerians, including politicians and citizens, lack proper democratic ethos to realise sustainable democratic governance for development. Omowuyi (2007) argues that: For those who want to promote democracy in a society like Nigeria, there should be an understanding that no one is born a democrat and that democratic life is an acquired or learned behaviour. This suggests that if we learn anti-democratic behaviour, we will also unlearn it. For instance, for Nigerians to learn democratic behaviour for good governance and development, Kofi Annan posits, "no one is born a democrat and no one is born a good citizen, it is only through diligence and education that we learn through the course of our lives to value democratic institutions because they ensure our freedom and safeguard our rights" (Annan, 2011). Ober (2013) says: if democracy is to be robustly sustained over time, public decisions must respect democratic values while advancing citizens' interests. Democracy may be a sham if meaningful decisions, resulting in significant public outcomes, aren't made by free citizens, secure in their dignity, acting as political equals (Ober, 2013).

Dudley (1993) states the failure of some democratic governance in Nigeriamight be explained within the context of the argument of Richard Joseph. Consistent with Joseph (1991) "Nigerians



often seek to devise structures that will prevent the materialization of the state affairs they fear most, namely, that presumed opponents will take a decisive and perhaps ruinous advantage over them." With this kind of mindset, democratic institutions are bound to fail both in structure, content and implementation of the policies and programmes for which they were established. Marshall (1992) discusses a social dimension to democratic citizenship additionally to civil and political rights, democracy can include social rights like social services, providing for those in need, and ensuring the overall welfare of others. This approach argues that unless individuals have sufficient resources to satisfy their basic social needs, democratic principles of political equality and participation are meaningless (Huber, Rueschemeyer and Stephens 1997). Abati (2007) identifies Nigeria as a country where the political leaders would not allow the institutions of state to function efficiently because this would have made it difficult for them to carry out the maximum amount power as they do: It's as if the chief task of governance has been the frustration of public institutions. The effect has been the powering of the politics of personality.

Linus (2015) writes on the challenges of democratic governance. He posits that since Nigeria's political independence in 1960, the country has not had the opportunity of being governed by a willing and ready leader but those that can at best be described as "accidental leaders". This underscores the fact that most of our developmental challenges are rooted in lack of sound, visionary and result-oriented leadership. Most Nigerian leaders have shown a lack of commitment for true nationhood and allowed personal ambitions and ethnic, regional also as religious persuasions to override national considerations. Chimee (2009) notes, the three major strands that account for leadership failure in Nigeria are lack of ideology; ethnicity; and corruption. Nigeria, today, runs a democratic system of government that's expected to mark democratic values of public accountability; transparency; good conscience; fiscal discipline; due process; amongst others. However, there's a lack of credible leadership to enforce these characteristics of democracy and good governance.

Theoretical Framework

The elite theory was originally developed by Mosca in (1923). The elite theory contends that societies are divided along class lines and that upper-class elite pulls the strings of state. Government is dominated by a couple of top leaders, most of whom are outside of the state. Power is not in the hands of elected representatives. Upper-class elite hold significant power. Wealth is the basis of power and the wealthy will rule. The wealthy can afford to finance election campaigns and control key institutions like corporations. For instance, the price of oil was influenced by the elite group from N86.50k to N145.00. The same set of group sponsor electoral candidates, who determine who will govern and as such influence government policies. Such a decision is usually based on the elite's interest and affects the majority of Nigerians. As a result, it is difficult to benefit from dividends of democracy and social development in Nigeria. The study adopts elite theory because it creates a gap between have and have not which determines the nature of development in our society.

3. Methodology

This research is a descriptive study designed to investigate the topic: Impact of democratic governance on social amenities in Bode-Saadu, Kwara State. Both primary and secondary data were used. The population of this study is drawn from five areas in the town. The simple



random method is used for this study for the avoidance of bias and to ensure equal representation in response to the questionnaire administered. The sample size for this study is 120 but only 112 questionnaires were retrieved. The first section of the questionnaire captures bio-data information of the respondents while the second section captures information based on the concept of this research, using a 5-point Likert scale with "1= Strongly Disagree and 5=Strongly Agree". The data gathered were analysed using the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) for easy analysis.

4. Results

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Demographic Data of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent (%)
<i>Sex</i>		
Male	74	66.1
Female	38	33.9
<i>Marital Status</i>		
Single	89	79.5
Married	23	20.5
Total	112	100

Source: Researchers' Field Survey 2020

The table presents the respondents' profile. These include sex, marital status. A total of 112 of respondents completed the questionnaire. The respondents consisted of 74 (66.1%) males and females 38 (33.9%) responses to the survey. That shows that the majority of the respondents were males. The majority of the respondents were also single.

Table 2: Impact of Democratic Governance on Social Amenities in Bode-Saadu

Items	Opinion	Percent	Mean	Std Dev.	Remark
1. There is the availability of tap water to all the five areas in Bode-Saadu.					
Strongly Disagree	74	66.1	1.4286	0.71929	Strongly Disagree
Disagree	33	29.5			
Undecided	-	-			
Agree	5	4.5			
Strongly Agree	-	-			
2. Construction of road network is executed on every quarter in Bode-Saadu.					
Strongly Disagree	62	55.4	1.4911	0.61506	Strongly Disagree
Disagree	47	42.0			
Undecided	1	.9			
Agree	2	1.8			
Strongly Agree	-	-			



Items	Opinion	Percent	Mean	Std Dev.	Remark
3. Democratic governance has improved healthcare services in Bode-Saadu through mobilisation of men and materials.					
Strongly Disagree	43	38.4	1.8393	0.91586	Disagree
Disagree	57	50.9			
Undecided	-	-			
Agree	11	9.8			
Strongly Agree	1	.9			
4. Democratic government attracts and builds a modern market in Bode-Saadu.					
Strongly Disagree	28	25.0	2.0804	0.99674	Disagree
Disagree	65	58.0			
Undecided	6	5.4			
Agree	8	7.1			
Strongly Agree	5	4.5			
5. Democratic governance has facilitated standard new schools and proper maintenance of old schools in Bode-Saadu					
Strongly Disagree	39	34.8	2.0268	1.19654.	Disagree
Disagree	58	51.8			
Undecided	-	-			
Agree	3	2.7			
Strongly Agree	12	10.7			
6. Democratic governance helps to recruit and deploy qualified teachers to both Primary and Secondary Schools to Bode-Saadu.					
Strongly Disagree	57	50.9	2.0000	5.08841	Strongly Disagree
Disagree	52	46.4			
Undecided	-	-			
Agree	2	1.8			
Strongly Agree	1	.9			
Total	112	100			

Source: Researchers' Field Survey 2020



Table 3: Challenges of Democratic Governance on Social Amenities in Bode-Saadu

Items	Opinion	Percent	Mean	Std Dev.	Remark
1. There is a high level of illiteracy among indigenes of Bode-Saadu.					
Strongly Disagree	1	0.9	4.2857	0.64972	Agree
Disagree	2	1.8			
Undecided	-	-			
Agree	70	62.5			
Strongly Agree	39	34.8			
2. Poor representatives at local level negatively affect social development in Bode-Saadu					
Strongly Disagree	5	4.5	3.9732	0.99964	Agree
Disagree	9	8.0			
Undecided	-	-			
Agree	68	60.7			
Strongly Agree	30	26.8			
3. Community development is not adequate in Bode-Saadu owing to corruption.					
Strongly Disagree	-	-	4.2143	0.57623	Agree
Disagree	3	2.7			
Undecided	-	-			
Agree	79	70.5			
Strongly Agree	30	26.8			
4. Embezzlement by political office holders affects social amenities in the area.					
Strongly Disagree	13	11.6	3.6518	1.25712	Agree
Disagree	-	-			
Undecided	12	10.7			
Agree	63	56.3			
Strongly Agree	24	21.4			
5. The crisis between traditional rulers hinders progress in Bode-Saadu.					
Strongly Disagree	15	13.4	3.6696	1.26198	Agree
Disagree	7	6.3			
Undecided	2	1.8			
Agree	64	57.1			
Strongly Agree	24	21.4			



Items	Opinion	Percent	Mean	Std Dev.	Remark
6. Unemployment and underemployment bring setback to social amenities in Bode-Saadu.					
Strongly Disagree	2	1.8	3.9286	0.75593	Agree
Disagree	8	7.1			
Undecided	-	-			
Agree	88	78.6			
Strongly Agree	14	12.5			
Total	112	100			

Source: Researchers' Field Survey 2020

Discussion of Findings

The study reveals that majority disagreed and strongly disagreed that there is the availability of tap water in all the five areas in Bode-Saadu. The majority of the respondents strongly disagreed that the construction of the road network is executed every quarter in Bode-Saadu. Apart from the express road (Ilorin-Jebba road) that was recently rehabilitated, there is no other motorable road in the town. The respondents disagreed that democratic governance has improved healthcare services in Bode-Saadu through the mobilisation of men and materials. The only government hospital built along the Sabo area is dilapidated and no longer functioning. The clinic is now a place where goats, sheep, and rams spend their daylight. The finding also revealed that respondents disagreed that democratic government attracts and builds a modern market in Bode-Saadu. Because of this, therefore, the residents maintain their 5days market. It is also discovered that majority of the respondents disagreed that democratic governance has facilitated standard new schools and proper maintenance of old schools in Bode-Saadu. There is no higher institution in the town. The Government Secondary School Bode-Saadu built by Kwara State government has inadequate teachers. Many teachers are always out of duties since the majority of them are non-indigenes; they usually attend school for three days (Monday – Wednesday). The respondents also strongly disagreed that democratic governance helps to recruit and deploy qualified teachers to both Primary and Secondary Schools to Bode-Saadu.

The finding shows that there is a high level of illiteracy among indigenes of Bode-Saadu, according to respondents. The majority of the respondents agreed that poor representation at local level negatively affects social amenities in the area. The majority of the respondents agreed that community development is not adequate in Bode-Saadu owing to corruption. The majority of the respondents also agreed that embezzlement by political office holders affects social amenities in the area. This is similar to Ezeani (2004), which states corruption remains a major problem which has constrained local government, especially in developing countries from contributing meaningfully to the uplift of the standard of living of the local people. The respondents agreed that the crisis between traditional rulers hinders progress in Bode-Saadu. For instance, there is a conflict of interest over who owns the leadership of Bode-Saadu between Magaji of Bode-Saadu and Daudu of Lanwa District. The Magaji is the son of the soil while



Daudu is not but appointed and imposed on Lanwa District in Bode-Saadu town. Daudu's palace is situated at Bode-Saadu opposite Magaji's Family Compound.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The paper examined the impact and challenges of democratic governance on social amenities in Bode-Saadu. The study concluded that social amenities are largely undermined in Bode-Saadu owing to poor representation, illiteracy, corruption and unnecessary political interference. The Kwara State government should improve and channel tap water to all areas to prevent people from drinking Arihun and Osin streams, and well water. The healthcare services should be improved through the provision and mobilisation of men and materials. Bode-Saadu as the headquarters of Moro local government should not be under the control of Ilorin anymore because the traditional ruler and political appointees are selected and appointed from Ilorin and this affects the development of the area. Political office holders should develop the political will to invest in infrastructure to aid the development of Bode-Saadu. The fight against corruption must be sincerely carried out. Appointment should not be based on political or religious affiliation, but merit. Political consideration in awarding contracts should be discouraged. People should be enlightened, employed and empowered. Periodic monitoring of local government projects should be encouraged. The people of Bode-Saadu should be encouraged and sponsored for advance studies instead of seeing Secondary school certificate as the apex.

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