

**REVIEWING THE CRISIS OF GOVERNANCE FOR
DEVELOPMENT IN DEMOCRATIC NIGERIA**

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Abstract

Governance is an important instrument for accelerated development in all sectors of the nation. It is therefore imperative for states (Nigeria inclusive) wishing to realize, maintain or promote political, economic and social development to imbibe good governance which is indicative in rule of law, transparency, accountability, religion tolerance, social cohesion and absent of legitimacy crisis. While it is widely believed that bad governance is prevalent in autocratic and oligarchic system, it is evident now that bad governance does exist more in democracies particularly with African experience. The paper therefore reviews the concept of governance, and development in Nigeria using secondary data. The study revealed that, absence of good governance in Nigeria occasioned by corruption, violence, legitimacy crisis, religious and cultural disharmony and under development has been responsible for the failure of the country to achieve the desire development. The study concluded that until proactive measures are taken for the enthronement of good governance, transparency, accountability and rule of law, development will continue to elude the nation and the corporate existence of the nation will remained threatened.

Key words: Governance, Leadership, Legitimacy, Crisis, Development

Introduction:

From time immemorial, man's greatest need has hinged on his ability to provide a peaceful and harmonious living for himself and his community, the reason the famous social contract took place between men themselves who saw the need for an established state with the capacity to support their living and provide protection and governance for the members of such states.

The concept of governance is an aged long idea, people have always desired the aura of the security and comfort governments provide, the whole essence of establishing the state in the first place was so that the people (citizens) submit themselves to the will of the state, provide the means for the state to function and allow the state to provide governance to them. The idea while contextualizing the social contract theory gives an historical paragon of the establishment of the state and the reason the state exist to function for the needs of the people. In fact, the existence of the state is hinged largely on the believe of

the people, that the state will provide “governance” whatever that may mean to those who submit themselves to the will of the state.

The concept of “good governance” is relatively new, this paper argues that when the word governance is mentioned, the idea is that it is good, but today we find in the lexicon of governance the talk of “good and bad governance”.

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (nd) observe that the terms "governance" and "good governance" are being increasingly used in development literature. Bad governance is being increasingly regarded as one of the root causes of all evil within our societies. The reason major donors and international financial institutions are increasingly basing their aid and loans on the condition that reforms that ensure "good governance" are undertaken. Whatever that means, it corroborates the assertion that the concept of good governance emerged as a result of the perpetuation of the operation and the deliverance of governance that doesn't conform with the principles of governance, this negation of the principles of governance prompted the world bank in 1989 to declare 'a crisis of governance' underlay 'the litany of Africa's development problems' (World Bank 1989).

The United Nations was established among other things to foster cooperation between nations in order to solve economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian international problems, interestingly, the drive for the promotion of good governance has become an integral part of this objective most especially in sub Saharan Africa where there is an exaggerated outburst of “bad governance”. The reason bigger states of the world have “outcast” any other system of government other than democracy; liberal capitalist scholars have argued that democracy it seems has become the only desideratum to development.

This paper thus attempts to review the Crisis of Governance in the development of Nigeria and to ask the question to what extent has this crisis crippled Nigeria's development agenda, if any.

However, to better understand what the subject matter, it is imperative to conceptualize the major subjects the paper tries to discuss, governance and development. It is the paper's stance that the two concepts are intricately intertwined as development is not a one way traffic, it is borne out of governance and a good one at that.

Governance and Good Governance:

Governance has become a popular and widely used concept amongst scholars and practitioners from different disciplines... The concept alone is quite ubiquitous and has been embedded in almost every international organization and democratic government to refer to the way in which interdependent and highly complex issues are managed. Governance implies different things depending on who is using the concept and under which context (Ysa, Albareda&Forberger, 2014). Therefore, governance would mean different things to different people depending on the peculiarity of time, place and circumstance of the individual or group contextualizing or putting it forward. Be that as it may, Madhav in Odo (2015) contends that good governance is tied to the ethical grounding of governance and must be evaluated with reference to specific norms and objectives as may be laid down.

According to the 2017-2021 Global Strategy for Good Governance (2017) Good governance refers to the management of government in a manner that is essentially free of abuse and corruption, with due regard for the rule of law and respect of people's rights to be engaged in public affairs.

To the IMF cited in Adeleke and Marcellinus(2016)governance is seeing as 'all aspects of the way a country is governed, its economic policies and regulatory framework'. It can be inferred from the definition that governance has to do with the totality of governmental actions and activities that are geared or directed toward making and realising effective economic policies. The definition lays emphasis on 'economic policies' which is regarded as the backbone of the nation's stability and development. Suffice to say a well-planned economic policy is a precondition for the survival, stability and development of the nation.

Ake and Olowojolu (2016) argues that Governance involves far more than the power of the state or the strength of political will. The rule of law, state of security and safety, provision of basic needs, human capital, and accountability are not merely technical questions of administrative procedure or institutional design. They are outcomes of democratizing processes driven by committed leadership, and also by the participation of and contention among groups and interests in society processes that are most effective when sustained and managed by legitimate and effective leaders. This paper adds however, that leadership when it is done properly epitomizes good governance as it defines what governance stands for, it is said in the parlance of politics that when leadership is not good, governance doesn't get delivered. Fukuyama (2013) suffices governance as a government's ability to make and enforce rules and to deliver services, regardless of whether that government is democratic or not.

It is important at this point to contextualize what good governance is all about having underscored the concept of governance. It is true that when governance is not delivered in the proper way, the good contract that exist between the people and the state is bridged and the reason why the state exist in the first place is displaced and replaced with in the context of Nigeria, primitive accumulation of wealth and a total and comprehensive disregard for the yearnings and plights of the people.

The United Nations Development Project (2002) observes that “good governance” as the drive for the rule of law, transparency, equity, effectiveness efficiency, accountability, and strategic vision in the exercise of political, economic, and administrative authority. Corroborating the above, the Centre Of Expertise For Local Government Reform (2006) suffices the principles of good governance into 12 principles of Participation, Representation, Fair Conduct of Elections, Responsiveness, Efficiency and Effectiveness, Openness and Transparency, Rule of Law, Ethical Conduct, Competence and Capacity, Innovation and Openness to Change, Sustainability and Long Term Orientation, Sound Financial Management, Human Rights, Cultural Diversity and Social Cohesion and Accountability.

Interestingly, these principles have been used to measure the deliverance of governance in many part of the world. Be that as it may, if one is to juxtapose these principles with the deliverance of governance in Nigeria, there would be little to say as the Nigerian democratic journey thus far has not lived up to the expectations of Nigerians most especially since the acclaimed democratic revolution by the All Progressive Congress (APC) in 2015 when Nigerians were united at ousting an incumbent government that they felt was delivering “good governance” but all standards, they probably have a different idea today.

Development:

The desire of man throughout the ages has always been geared towards improvement; some development scholars have argued that the movement from one point to another is development so long there is an improvement from the previous point, the reason all state in the world seek development most especially the so-called “developing” states who have been trapped in the western conception of development and who's leadership have continuously deprived her people the “good things” of life. However, like good governance, development does not have any universal definition as it comes with peculiarity as what is development to a people might not mean same elsewhere.

In the 1960s the identification of development with economic growth came under increasing criticism. Authors such as Dudley Seers, Gunnar Myrdal, Paul Streeten, Hollis Chenery, MahbulHaq and institutions like the International Labour Organisation (ILO) pointed out that developing countries did not experience much change in the living conditions of the masses of the poor in spite of the impressive growth figures in the post-World War II period. Chenery cited in Szirmai (nd).

Nnadozie in Orluwene (2014) argues that man is viewed as both the subject and object of development. Development is taken as the ability and capacity of man to adequately interact with his physical environment and other individuals to constantly improve himself and humanity.

It is in corroborating the above that Nnadoziein Orluwene(2014) observes that Development is also conceived by scholars of Marxist perspective as a dialectical process in which the contradictions between a society's productive forces and relations of production are resolved in a dynamic manner. The contradictions in a society are regarded as the driving forces of development in that society. Development is seen as a social and dynamic process and the goal of which is change. The process does not necessarily entail evolution or gradualism, nor does it abhor violence. In fact, according to radical scholars, development as a dialectical process is anti-convention and more often than not involves struggles, violent upheavals and radical changes.

To Lawal in Adah and Abasilim (2015) development is a vital necessity to the growth and sustenance of any vibrant nation.

According to Bellù(2011)in his book *Development and Development Paradigms A (Reasoned) Review of Prevailing Visions* he argues that“development” means an “event constituting a new stage in a changing situation” or the process of change per se. If not qualified, “development” is implicitly intended as something positive or desirable. When referring to a society or to a socio-economic system, “development” usually means improvement, either in the general situation of the system, or in some of its constituent elements. Development may occur due to some deliberate action carried out by single agents or by some authority pre-ordered to achieve improvement, to favourable circumstances in both. Development policies and private investment, in all their forms, are examples of such actions.

All the definitions above about development have all tilted their arguments about development to mean an improvement in the way people live and that it doesn't occur out of chance, they argue that it is orchestrated by a deliberate attempt to create it.

Analytical Framework:

In trying to phantom why development as eluded many states in African and indeed the developing world in general and Nigeria in particular, one is tempted to look at the nature of the African states and to correlate it with the continents current developmental challenge.

However one is tempted to ask the question, did African states evolve like other states, or did African states evolve out of a unique or peculiar evolutionary process, because if Africa did, why is the African ruling and governing class so insensitive to the wants of the people to constantly breach the “social contract” that exist between the state and the people. Baradat, in Fadakinte (2011) argues that the social contract theory emerged when the ruler and the ruled agreed on their respective roles and had obligations to one another. Thus, the contract was established when the all-powerful or sovereign, i.e. the people made an agreement that created the state and gave the ruler of the state certain powers. In other words the social contract theory was based on the concept of popular sovereignty in which the ultimate source of the power of the state was the people

In trying to understand the Nigerian state, Ekekwe in Fadakinte (2011) opined that, immediately after independence the class character of the nationalist leaders began to show in their activities particularly when they began to assume political positions of authority. They appeared not to bother about the abject conditions of their people and the inherent injustice which colonialism had created in the societies. The petty bourgeoisie now in position of political authority focused more on relations of distribution and were more desirous of imbibing the life style and privileges of colonialism than in abolishing its injustice and oppression of the Nigerian masses.

Ibn-Mohammed and Shuiabu (2019) in corroborating the above observed that Africa's contact with the developed world encouraged the perpetration and exploitation both mental, social, cultural and psychological masturbation and forceful excavation of our mineral and natural resources to the help further develop the developed world at the detriment of Africa via slavery and colonialism, they however argue that to continue to blame Africa's contact with the west for the continued woes Africa is facing is to completely discredit the contribution of the governance class on the continent who have ripped the continent of its common good overtime.

Ekeh in Osaghae (2003) suffices the nature and character of the African state when he observed that 'unique' nature of African politics has ethnicity, nepotism, and corruption as underlying elements. To corroborate this, Adesola (2014) argues that the political and social problems of some states and which threatened their state building processes arose from the predatory nature of the emergent leaders who preyed and personalised state assets and natural resources for the benefits of certain ethnic groups and those perceived to be loyal them.

The operators of African states today are selfish, greedy, unpatriotic and have shown total contempt for development, one would even argue that they are anti-growth and development

The Crisis of governance in Nigeria:

The African state continues to experience a lot of crisis, owing to the unpatriotic and un-nationalistic character of her leaders since the colonizers left our shores, Nigeria is at the epicentre of this crisis, with all her potentials for greatness, Nigeria wallows in the underdevelopment trap and rather than her leaders salvage her from this crisis, they prefer to share the largesse or spoils amongst themselves at the detriment of common good. It is at this point that this paper ventures into the crux of the matter, to look at the crisis of governance in Nigeria. It is why Ogundiya (2010) opines that one of the major explanations for the failure of all development programmes in Nigeria has been the absence of democracy and the intermittent military intervention in politics.

As earlier stated, this paper does not align itself with the apologist western blame fanners, who do not see Africa or Nigeria's problems as emanating from the internal contradictions of the maladministration and the outer perpetration of governance that doesn't conform with the needs of the people, need we say, the aspirations of any state in the modern world. This paper strongly aligns herself with the more realistic schools of thought, who understand that our problems are majorly internal rather than by some external factor. The reason Dike in Adah and Abasilim (2015) observed that leadership has become a bane to development in Nigeria, according to him, most of the so called leaders do not actually understand that leadership entails assuming responsibilities for certain important issues.

This paper joins others before it to link Nigeria's governance crisis to the following issues, though, these issues are inexhaustive, and we'll discuss the most prevalent ones.

Legitimacy Crisis:

Ogundiya (2009) observed that one of the prevailing problems dominating the Nigerian political landscape is how to find a non-coercive basis for securing and maintaining the loyalty of the citizens to the authority of the state. This has been the source of the country's seemingly insoluble political instability. Electoral democracy has failed to enhance and confer political legitimacy on governments and the arrogation of power by the military has aggravated rather than alleviate the problem. Even the incessant constitutional changes have failed since legitimacy cannot be constitutionally engineered. In fact, the crisis of legitimacy in Nigeria has become persistent, endemic and cyclical. To further explain the above Ekeh in Ogundiya (2009) further argues that the endemic crisis of legitimacy in Nigeria is a function of state incapacitation and policy failures. Therefore the poverty of legitimacy, first cultivated in the process of decolonization, has been reinforced and compounded by failures of governance.

Legitimacy crisis is at the core of the governance quagmire in the Nigeria parlance, there seems to be a disconnect between the governed and the governors, the rulers and the ruled, they both seem to have different points of alignment. Since the rebirth of democracy, many leaders have emerged against the people's choices, to compound the matter; many of these leaders have made "governance" elusive or rather some sort of mirage to the people. What Ogundiya and Ekeh have succinctly done is to paint a true picture of the crisis of legitimacy that envelops the Nigerian polity. The over three decades of militocracy and two decades of civil rule have not yielded much difference in terms of the deliverance of governance and as such this crisis emanates from the governing class's inability to give meaning to the citizenry through the deliverance of good governance.

Corruption:

Corruption is as old as civilization itself and in the particular case of Nigeria; it is as old as the history of the country itself (Aluko, in Egwemi, 2012). To further buttress this point, Omotola in Egwemi (2012) traces corruption to colonialism. He argues that by all standards, colonialism in Nigeria was built on corruption. This is to the extent that “because of the colonialist's corrupt disposition to exploit the state for their exclusive benefit, they liquidated social structure against corruption associated with pre-colonial Africa and replaced and or transformed them to their own purposes”. Be that as it may, Omotola hinges on the perpetuation of the blame game, this paper agrees that corruption can be rooted in colonialism, however, corruption has continued to be endemic even after the colonizers left, who is to blame for that. Olowojolu (2016) opined that “since the return to civilian rule, Nigeria has been undergoing serious and deepening socio-political and economic crisis. These problems generated by mismanagement of human capital and mineral resources and the prevalence of insecurity, call our attention to the problem of leadership in the country. Similarly, the staggering waves of insecurity, blatant corruption coupled with moral decadence can be attributed to leadership problem”. Egwemi (2012) buttresses further when he observed that “since the return to democratic rule in the country in 1999, the country has either been ranked first or second in global corruption rating by Transparency International. This has been a matter of deep concern for both ordinary Nigerians and the political leadership of the country”.

It has become impossible to talk about Nigeria today without linking it to corruption, political and bureaucratic corruption has crippled the growth and development of the Nigerian state, in as much as corruption can be found everywhere in the facet of Nigerian life, political and administrative class that are supposed to propel and act as catalyst of change have instead concluded on bleeding the country dry and made governance elusive, corruption has therefore become the cornerstone of Nigeria's development and the amplifier of bad governance.

Religiosity:

According to Onapajo (2016) Religion has played a major role right from the early days of elections in Nigeria. This is more apparent in the northern part of the country, given the influential role religion plays in its social system. Religion took a central role in the ideology and membership profile of the first political parties that emerged in the 1950s, following the concession of the colonial government to the nationalists' demands for wider political participation. Onapajo (2012) observes that “Nigerians have been observed to be more loyal to religion than the state. This is manifested in the growing trend of religiosity, the phenomenal rise in the number of worship centres and influential clergies in Nigeria today”. Falola in Onapajo (2012) posits that 'loyalty to religion is often more important than loyalty to the state among Nigerians.' While the significant role religion plays in Nigerian politics becomes obvious at every count of events, major state actors don't downplay it as insignificant in the body polity of Nigeria.

Religion continues to play a vital role in the politics of Nigeria, more so, with the geographical division of the country done in such a way that it creates a natural divide between the major religions in the state. Popular sovereignty in many cases have been determined by religious biases rather than in the capacity of individuals to deliver governance, this scenario has caged development and has allowed the perpetuation of an incompetent, unpatriotic and unnationalistic governing and ruling class to continue to steer ship of the Nigerian state.

Religion that is supposed to be a beamer of light and a carrier of the torch of truth, has on the contrary played negative in many cases when playing its role in the parlance of Nigerian politics, the pulpit has become a podium for legitimizing bad governance simply because the perpetrator is from a certain faith or creed, interestingly, this is done to the detriment of the generality of the people, who themselves are believers and look up to the pulpit for truth and courage, they however get masturbated psychologically by this new class of political actors who are hell bent on ensuring bad governance so long it pleases their interpretation of scripture.

Ethnicity:

Ebegbulem (2011) observes that Nigeria as a country is a conglomeration or an aggregation of several nationalities which makes the country a pluralistic and multi-faceted society. Umezina (2012) opines that the greatest factor militating against the development efforts of Nigeria as a nation is ethnicity. According to him, unless the problem is addressed properly, meaningful development will remain elusive and an illusion. To him, Nigeria is a mishmash of more than 250 ethnic groups, each of which is jostling for recognition and relevance in the political arena; each has terrible angst of being dominated by others; each is crying of political marginalization. The hue and cry appear to be getting louder as the years roll by and even seem to threaten the corporate existence of the nation.

Similarly, Ebegbulem (2011) argues that since Nigeria achieved political independence in 1960; there has been struggle among the various ethnic nationalities in the country over control of political power and natural resources which led to the civil war from 1967 – 1970. Since independence, Nigeria's democracy has been characterized by ethnic-based politics.

Arguably, ethnicity is one of the core problems militating strongly against the deliverance of governance in the Nigerian state. Like religion, fanners of ethnicity have always found a way of toying with the peoples head using the instrumentality of ethnicity or tribe. You find communities owning criminals and calling them “our criminal”. Ethnicity is put above reason and corporate national development and as such this problem has hindered in many senses the deliverance of good governance across board.

Way forward:

Nigeria faces monumental challenges; these challenges are by far not insurmountable with sheer will. Good governance is not rocket science and even a country suffering from the various contradictions that Nigeria suffers can come out better at the end of the line. However, for that to happen, the people must be ready to play their role in the making of a state. The people who enjoy popular sovereignty must understand the power they have and must use it to its optimum best.

Legitimacy crisis emerges only if the people allow the perpetuation of a class of leaders who do not have their mandate. We understand that out of the over 58 years of statehood, Nigeria has not enjoyed more than three decades of civil rule. Although democracy is an evolutionary process, the people must understand that until they install in government people who understand their plights and are accountable to them, they will never have it right. Therefore, it becomes sacrosanct for them to guard their sovereignty by any means necessary and possible.

A system does not fight itself, most especially if the profiteers of such system are the ones manning the wheel of such a system. However, no system is a whole in itself; a system is a collective as no part of a system is greater than the other. Therefore, for the Nigerian state to function properly, and by properly we mean the deliverance of good governance, the people who are at the receiving end of governance must form clusters of communities to demand accountability from those manning the ship of state. Similarly, the media must work with the people if they are truly the fourth estate of the realm to bring to bear issues and help join hands with the people to demand accountability. The media must take a nationalistic posture and assist the public in bringing wrongdoers to the court of public justice to bend those who think the state is their prebend to understand that the state exists for all and not to satisfy the interest of just a few.

Religion must take its proper place in society. The whole essence of religion is to provide guidance and direction for the people, to dictate the rights and wrongs and to provide some sort of moral compass. The pulpit must be used as a stage to speak truth to power without favour or fear. The pulpit should not shame itself with taking sides and rather than become an epitome of truth and guidance become instead the epitome of sentiments and biases. Religion must work to unite the people against the evil of those who profit from the peoples disintegration. The people also need to refuse to be used by the pulpit to play to the fanners of sentiment and religious bigotry and must see beyond what they are told as they must read in-between the lines and act accordingly.

As a way forward, this paper strongly aligns itself with the thoughts of Egwemi (2012) when he opined that the war on corruption is not a one man or one institution affair. In this wise, every Nigerian has a role to play. Also all relevant institutions must build a synergy in the fight against corruption. It is only when every individual and institution works together that corruption can be tackled in a holistic and all-embracing manner. It is then that the monster will be tamed. Until the monster of corruption is tamed, efforts at national development will continue to be futile. Similarly, Nathaniel(2014) opined that corruption is inimical to African development. Therefore, it is imperative as a measure to holistically and collectively stand against this dreaded monster that continues to bring down this country to its precipice.

Conclusion:

Governance and its deliverance is not a one-way traffic. In the public parlance, it is said that it takes two to tangle. There are so many contradictions that exist within the Nigerian state. These contradictions are not challenges that the state cannot tackle head on and find lasting solutions to, but the people have a role to play. A people only get the kind of governance they deserve. When a people aspire for more – a better and more responsive governance; when they demand accountability; when they demand the deliverables of governance; they will get it. But docile citizenship does not bring about good governance; it rather reinforces the perpetuation of bad governance.

Over the years, corruption, ethnicism, religiosity, legitimacy crisis, among others, have aided the crisis of bad governance in Nigeria. This paper suggests therefore that all Nigerians, irrespective of their creed, religion or ethnic divide, must see themselves as the ones at the receiving end of bad governance and should unite so as to bring peace, progress and development to the Nigerian state through engaged and active citizen participation. They must refuse by all means to be used as pawns. Instead, they must demand equal stake as people in an equal partnership and who deserve respect just as much. Only then can we make this country the dream of all.

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