

## CITIZEN ADVOCACY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

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**Abstract**

Citizen advocacy for good governance has been indispensable actors in advocating for the democratization process in Nigeria. As agents of social change Germane mass reorientation and mobilization, the group helped in the sustenance and deepening of democratic governance by providing the critical socio-economic and political services to Nigerians in both Urban and Rural Areas. Citizen Advocacy for good governance has been engaged in enlightening, training and sensitizing citizens in different sector and empowering citizens for actions and engagements in the public realm. The paper uses the descriptive research methodology. The data for the study were sourced from secondary materials. Liberal and social contract theories were adopted for the study. The paper discovered that citizens advocacy for good governance seek a citizenry that is informed, knowledgeable, awareness, conscious and participating in societal life and the public realm is the hall mark of the good governance. It provides avenues for initiatives and efforts that raise confidence, self-esteem, capacity and sense of efficacy of citizens to intervene and change their circumstances or those of others. Such citizen mobilization and engagements raise their interests in public affairs and the public realm. The paper recommends that adequate constitutional provision on funding of the group should be made. Also citizen's advocacy for good governance should be de-urbanize by ensuring that it is located or headquarter in Rural Area instead of Urban Centers.

**Key Words:** Citizen, advocacy, good governance, governance, Nigeria

**Introduction**

In recent times, there has been worldwide recognition that without active citizenship, which comprises both voting and active participation in civil society, good governance is fragile. In a modern society, many actors were involved in governance. Whilst government is certainly the major actor, various roles of civil society, particularly those related to enhancing active citizen participation are indispensable, these roles are played by mass media, multi-national corporations, NGOs, research institutes, religious leaders, finance institutions and political parties etc. are nonetheless important.

Good governance involves far more than the power of the state or the strength of political will. The rule of law, transparency, and accountability are not merely technical questions of administrative procedure or institutional design. They are outcomes of democratizing processes driven not only by committed leadership, but also by the participation of, and contention among, groups and interests in society—processes that are most effective when sustained and restrained by legitimate, effective institutions. Never have these concerns been linked to more momentous opportunities.

In the Fall of 2002 the 191 Member States of the United Nations committed themselves to eight Millennium Development Goals: eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and empowering women, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability, and developing a global partnership for development. As daunting as these goals are in technical and resource terms, they are no less challenging to ember States' abilities to mobilize people and resources, to make and implement difficult policy choices, and to involve their citizens in initiatives that will shape their futures.

Good governance signifies open, inclusive, accountable, and effective public institutions. Promoting good governance is a key strategic objective of the global development agenda. Poor governance has opposite characteristics and is at the heart of corruption. For more than a decade, governments and donors have recognized the importance of promoting good governance and fighting corruption, and have been implementing good governance and anticorruption reforms. However, the effectiveness of good governance and anticorruption programs needs improvement.

Poor governance is being increasingly considered as one of the problems of most evils in societies, principles, indicators or criteria of 'good governance' have also been identified. In Nigeria, many

advocacy NGOs are getting more involved in the process of cultivation of a participatory culture through civic education in the communities and by partnering with civic educators in schools. The paper starts with a brief review of literature on the meanings of governance, characteristics of good governance, meanings of Citizens advocacy, and the relationship between civil society and governance. This is followed by theoretical framework and the methodology. The findings of the study will then be discussed. Given the limitations of case studies, particularly in the ability to make generalization, it is hoped that the findings of the paper could add values to the literature and policy formulation related to the issues of governance locally and internationally.

### Statement of the Problem

The crisis of governance has, of course been created by the failure of the Nigerian state. Once the authority of the state depends upon a monopoly of the control of force, contest over who exercises the prerogative of governance easily turns into either a covert or an overt war among contending factions. People still need to meet the requirements of life. This structurally -defective pattern of governance is characterized mostly by centralization which has manifested itself not only in the allocation and distribution of human, financial and material resources. National governments in African Countries, and with special reference to Nigeria, have also intruded in one way or the other in the activities of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including religions organizations. They have subjected these organizations to state control. All efforts at decentralization of decision-making power and allocation, as well as distribution of resources, have been frustrated by central government in Africa. State control of national resources and the monopoly of decision making power have regarded socio-economic development. IN the specific case of Nigeria, at a time when a good number of developing countries in Asia and Lain America are recovering and are experiencing and appreciable growth, its economic and social crises have been deepening and worsening. The failure of the state administration is the major causes of these problems.

### Conceptual clarification

#### Citizens Advocacy

The concept of citizen advocacy is accredited to Adam Ferguson (1723-1816) a Scottish philosopher and historian. He saw the emergence of citizen advocacy as a way to change the corrupt practices of the feudal system which unfairly appropriated land into the hands of a few by strengthening individual liberties. Although we can truly trace the roots of citizen advocacy to Ancient Greece; political theorist like Thomas Paine and George Hegel, nevertheless, are among the early scholars who helped influenced and developed the notion of citizen advocacy as a domain parallel to but separate from the state (Cerothers, 1999 cited in Ghaus-Pasha, 2004). The concept of citizen advocacy is therefore not new. However, in the recent past, citizen advocacy activities have increased in size, scope and capacity. This surge according to Thang (2013) is due to globalization, preference for democratic governance, advancement in telecommunication and economic integration. Modern day academic construct of civil societies, however, gained popularity with the emergence of capitalism. Capitalism brought about a clearer distinction between political and non-political spheres and thus prepared the grounds for the emergence of citizen advocacy as a domain independent from the state. Many theorists thus see citizen advocacy as a 'space' independent of the state and the market. In her view, Ghaus-Pasha (2004), believes democracy and increasing gaps in social services as a result of structural adjustment programmes, opened the space for increased citizen advocacy activities. And within this citizen advocacy space, are a range of formal and informal organisations called CSOs (UNDP, 2006). White (1996) as cited in Thang (2013) elaborates this by describing civil societies as an intermediate associational realm between the state and individuals, populated by organisations and groups that are separate from the state, enjoy autonomy in relation to the state, and are formed voluntarily by members of society to protect or advance their interests or values. There are divergent views on what CSOs are. This apparent semantic and perceptual confusion possibly emanates from the various forms CSOs take, and also, the many activities they perform. CIVICUS (n.d.) report on the state of citizen advocacy thus concluded that no definition can capture the complexity and fluid nature of citizen advocacies. Even defining the concept, identifying its essential features, and designing a strategy to assess its state is in itself, a complex and potentially controversial process (Fioramonti & Heinrich, 2007 cited in Thang, 2013).

Citizens advocacy is defines as a process through which people influence and share control over development initiatives. In other words it refers to when people's participation makes a difference within the decision making processes or policy outcomes of government (Cole & Caputo 1984). Thus it means more empowerment of the local people. More empowerment of people means more accountable, transparent and predictable government, and this is what makes people's participation with local

throughout this Chapter has revealed that just empowering local people is not enough to achieve good governance. Governing agencies, that is, officials that are working in local governing institutions, also need to change their attitudes to welcome people to the decision making tables (Sobol 2008).

One of the advocacy groups, civil society organization (CSO) are often assumed to be institutions that facilitate communication between citizens and policy makers. However, CSO advocacy is only as effective as the space allowed by government, the resources available from funders, and their own internal capacity. This manifested through the advocacy and service delivery roles of CSOs working in Human Immunodeficiency virus (HIV) prevention and mitigation. It is argued that donor and government treatment of civil society as service delivery organizations, rather than as organizations that participate in democratic norms, have shaped how civil society organizations work to mitigate and prevent HIV (Chukwuma 2005). He observed that, modern interpretations of the term advocacy groups focus on "Political space where voluntary associations explicitly seeking to shape the rules that govern social life". According to Chukwuma, these associations includes "academic institutions, business forums, clan and kinship circles, consumer advocates, development cooperation initiatives, environmental movements, ethnic lobbies, foundations, human rights promoters, labour unions, local community groups, relief organizations, peace movements, professional bodies, religions institutions, think tanks, women's networks, youth associations and more"

Diamond (1999) further indicates that, citizen advocacy as part of an "extended state", by which the ruling class (or the state) is able to maintain hegemony over its citizens.

In its policy engagement with citizen advocacy, the UNDP (2001, cited in UNDP, 2006) defines Citizen advocacy as non-state actors whose aims are neither to generate profits nor to seek governing power. Citizen advocacy thus unite people to advance shared goals and interests. Perhaps the most concise definition of Citizen advocacy is that provided by Court et al (2006) in the following: Any organization that works in the arena between the household, the private sector, and the state, to negotiate matters of public concern', Citizen advocacy include a very wide range of institutions and operate at many different levels, including the global, regional, national and local. Citizen advocacy includes NGOs, community groups, research institutes, think tanks, advocacy groups, trade unions, academic institutions, parts of the media, professional associations, and faith-based institutions.

#### The concept of Good Governance

Governance has been considered as an umbrella concept as the content of the concept varies enormously between one theory and the other (Brown 2007). Primarily the notion of governance has been conceptualized in two different ways. In the classical way governance has been viewed as an instrumental concept. Supporters of this view defined it as an instrument or process of implementation of government decisions. UNESCAP (2008, p. 1) defined governance as 'the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented)'. Similarly Shelly (2000) defined governance as a process that is dedicated to achieve three great objectives through an effective and people-oriented mechanism of bureaucracy: alleviation of poverty, creation of productive employment and social integration.

- Accordingly, Langlands (2004) defined governance as good management, which underpins good performance, good stewardship of public money, good public engagement and, ultimately, good outcomes. In this sense, governance means an effective process of decision making for implementing government programs and services. On the other hand, in more current terms governance has been viewed as a normative concept. Supporters of this view defined it as reform (Minogue 1997), outcome (Barten e2002) or a shift (Geddes 2005) of government (Marayam, 2000) considered that the word 'governance has come to be seen as an alternative to government' (Rhodes, 2000) Where in government a political actor is the only role player for service delivery, in governance this responsibility is shared between the state, people and private sectors (Roelofs 2009). Rhodes (2000) contemplated the word governance 'can be used as a blanket term to signify a change in the meaning of government'. In connection with defining the word, he showed seven separate uses of the word 'governance'. These elements are Rule of Law, Transparency, Responsiveness, Equity, minimizing state authority, and vertical networking, Participation.

However within all these seven uses the basic and common elements are: participation of all

2000). Thus governance means a significant change in the meaning of government, entails a new way of governing with less intervention of state and more engagement of people in the system of public service delivery. In addition he described 'governance as the result of interactive social-political forms of governing' (Rhodes 2000, p. 58).

Different scholars and international agencies have defined the term good governance in different ways. Besancon (2003) defines good governance in a very simple way, as the level of goodness or quality of governance. Likewise, Santiso (2001) broadly illustrated good governance, as a 'quality' of governance that focused on the further requirements of the process of decision-making and public policy formulation. Conversely, Minogue (1997, p. 21) pointed the term as a 'reform strategy' of governance, where that strategy was particularly used to 'strengthen the institutions of local society with the objective of making government more accountable, more open, transparent and more democratic'.

Simply, good governance means executing a coherent governing plan for the nation based on the interests and priorities of people. The belief that every citizen is entitled to an equal say in the conduct of public affairs is the heart of good governance (Narayan 2000). Thus, while 'governance' appears as more close to government in relation to its service delivery process, 'good governance' appears as a broader concept. Good governance has come to be seen as more close to people and practice of all democratic norms for the welfare of people.

#### Theoretical issues

##### Social Contract theory

Social contract theory is a philosophical postulation which hinges on the ideological plank that the state is a product of the peoples' will who voluntarily surrendered their will to the state under a legally binding contractual agreement with the notion that the state will in turn provide certain fundamental goods and services to the citizens. The history of social contract theory in modern political parlance is rooted in the writings of earliest political philosophers like Thomas Hobbes, Immanuel Kant, Jean Jacques Rousseau, among others. These group of scholars opined that the modern state is a product of a covenant, a compact and social organic contracted element with apparatus of state power and authority.

The logic import of this theory is that the people, by whose contrivance, government was instituted, ought to determine how they should be governed. The constitution of the state is supreme and therefore is the constitution of the people germane for the promotion of democracy and good governance. Democratically, the terms and conditions of the social contract are equally specified in the constitution which is the *modus operandi* for citizen- government relations. Basically, the state is to provide security, accountability, good leadership, social and economic welfare services, promote effective and efficient justice distribution, curtail discrimination, provide political orientation through civic education, promote and protect fundamental human rights and freedom of speech among others.

On the other hand, the citizens are expected to obey the constitution by maintaining law and order, respect constituted authority, vote during elections, and protect state infrastructure. In this perspective, Tocqueville (1969) argued that democratic laws when obeyed, generally tend to "promote the welfare of the greatest possible number; for they emanates from the majority of the citizens, who although are subject to error cannot have an interest opposed to their own advantage" Tocqueville's view demonstrates how citizen advocacy for good governance enhance democratic consolidation.

##### Critiques of Social Contract Theory

One of the main defects of the social contract theory is that it is historically false. It claims to be a historical explanation of the origin of the State, but it has no foundation in history. In the whole range of human history we do not find men living in a State of nature without social relationships, nor do we find any evidence of a social contract which created the society and the State. In short, there is no historical evidence of a social contract in human past It is historically impossible to believe that men living in the State of nature, and knowing nothing about political institutions and organisations, should suddenly and deliberately agree to set up a State. What history teaches us is that "the State is a growth and not a manufacture."

The sociological explanation of this theory is also unscientific and false. It asserts that men lived an isolated and independent life in the State of nature, and that they voluntarily contracted to establish the society and State, in which also the individual remained as a free and independent unit. But social history has clearly demonstrated that in primitive society the family or tribe was the social unit and not

His position in the society was determined by his birth. His birth was his social status. It is only centuries after, i.e., in modern society, that the individual has become the social unit and enjoys freedom and rights granted by the State. While history shows that the evolution of society and civilisation has been from status to contract, from birth position to free choice, the Contract Theory reverses this historical process by asserting that it was from contract to status. "The individual", writes Sir Henry Maine "has been steadily substituted for the family as the unit of which civil laws take account... The movement has been from one of status to one of contract"

The basic assumption of the contract theory is wrong. A sudden transition from a lawless and, as Hobbes says, even non-moral and warlike condition of the State of nature cannot change into the law-abiding and peaceful community in the State is not possible. Such a sudden change in habits, character and conduct of the people is impossible in human life and society. It requires a long period of training, education, social control and development to bring about this transition. The psychological basis of the contract theory is also unsound.

The social contract theory is full of several logical fallacies. Firstly, it presupposes equality among men in the State of nature. This assumption is not correct. Inequality is quite natural and not equality. Secondly, it presumes that men possessed natural rights and freedom in the natural State. But rights and liberty cannot exist in the State of nature. Liberty implies rights and rights imply duties and assume common consciousness of social ends and purposes.

Yet the very definition of the State of nature denotes that there were no common consciousness of social ends and purposes. Men lived separately and independently of each other and had no common life at all. Natural right was not a right—a claim recognised by others for common good—but natural force. Man's freedom was limited by his own power, which was unequal. He had, therefore, no liberty and no rights in the State of nature. They exist only in civil society or State, where there is common social consciousness and a common authority to defend rights and enforce duties. Lastly, the whole concept of the State of nature and of the law of nature is wrong.

It is based on the belief that the State is an artificial or mechanical invention of man, while the pre-political condition of man, viz; the State of nature, was his natural condition. Similarly, the law of nature is said to be in the very nature of man, while the law of the State is man-made. But this distinction between the original State of nature and its natural law, on the one side, and the State and law, on the other, is illogical and unsound.

The State is as natural to human life as any other primitive condition, and its laws rise from the very nature of man. Far from being artificial, the State and society are the very expressions of human nature, because, as Aristotle long ago said, "Man is by nature an animal. Man is a part of nature; and every human law and institution is based on human needs, instincts and desires which arise from the very nature of his body and mind. Hence the basic defect of the contract theory is that it gives an artificial and mechanical explanation of the origin of the State and society. The State is a natural growth and not an artificial device.

#### Relevance of the Theory to the Study

Within the context of the social contract theory, civil society acts as a watchdog between the state and the citizens in keeping to the terms of the social contract. Civil society organizations are therefore seen as the third sector because they stand in between the state, business and family. Besides, with the exercise and location of all powers and authority with state, a third party is needed to ensure that there is accountability and respect for the constitution. This ultimately helps to curtail the emergence of dictatorial or authoritarian regimes and further promote democracy and good governance germane for the welfare of all the people. It is within this theoretical plank that this study adopts this theory in this study. The reasons for adopting this theory is because it will help explain the changes and continuities in civil society and democratic governance trails in Nigeria by laying bare the ideological trajectories of the Nigerian state and the extent to which the third sector had since the emergence of the fourth republic performed its responsibilities within the ambits of the law. For a holistic analysis, remarks to other theories are also made where necessary.

#### Citizens Advocacy for Good Governance in Nigeria: Aim and Objectives

Citizens advocacy for good governance is a voluntary, non-profit and NGO founded in 1999. The role of citizen advocacy in democratic governance revolve round civic engagement, sensitization, election monitoring, media watch, budget tracking, provision of socio-economic services, legislative advocacy,

Mercy 2012, Fadakinte 2013. Citizen's advocacy has played immense roles in civic engagements, research and documentations. Also, it has organized seminars and symposium for elected representatives, political parties and members of the public on several issues bordering on democracy and development. The staff of citizens advocacy also joined other civil society organizations in the December 2012 fuel subsidy snafu protests in Nigeria.

Citizen advocacy for good governance has also helped in the provision of basic economic and social services to Nigerians in both urban and rural areas. They provide soft loans and agricultural incentives to members of the public, provide employment opportunities and basic social amenities like schools, clinics, pipe borne water and other essential services (Shedrack 2015, Mercy 2012). They provides soft loans to women (Smith 2015). They also provide business seminars and symposium to business women on how to grow their businesses and to access loans and they helped to build and renovate schools, Markets and Primary health centers (PE Okwoli, 2015). The aim of citizen advocacy for good governance is to advocate for accountability, transparency and good governance, restraining state abuses, resisting the untamed effects of market forces and strengthening public scrutiny. The objectives of the civil society organizations (CSO) group is to advocate for policy improvements, accountability, transparency, openness; challenge of poor policies, inefficiency, Implement small-scale community infrastructures. Advocacy for infrastructure improvements, conduct literacy programmes, health awareness programmes, welfare programmes for the physically challenged, orphans and elderly; campaigns against human trafficking, implementing projects of HIV/AIDs, malaria rollback, maternal mortality, campaigns of immunization, entrepreneurial training, skills training and business development, enhancing access to credit, self-employment, skills development, job placement, equipment support programmes, emergency support services as relief for displaced persons, safety needs for the vulnerable, strengthening community organizations for emergency preparedness and rehabilitation, conflict Management Emerging relief for displaced, peace negotiation, agreements monitoring, mediation, protection of vulnerable, human rights monitoring, securing hostages peace building, citizen awareness, enlightenment and mobilization for peace.

#### Strategies And Methodologies Of Citizen Advocacy For Good Governance

The group has tended to deploy the under listed strategies and methods in the engagements with the state and society in Nigeria:

Building public awareness on specified problems or challenges and cultivating public opinion on issues, advocacy and agitation for desired policies and state actions, campaigns and mobilization of citizens in support of specified demands, creating attention about existing problems, setbacks, abuses and deplorable conditions, building grassroots involvement, monitoring practices, conduct and actions in specified areas of interest to expose challenges, building pressures on state and corporate bodies for desired change, demanding redress of neglect, marginality and abuse, seeking access, dialogue and influence with government agencies on the resolutions of public problems and changes desired, providing assistance, services and support to target groups such as women, the poor, unemployed and youth.

The citizen advocacy for good governance has been engaged in advocacy through information, sensitization and enlightenment of alternatives in programmes, actions and interventions to existing policy and practices. It has been able to build some platforms for discussing, clarifying and recommending solutions to existing problems. The group particularly inform and mobilize citizens along the lines of what should be done or ought to be done. It has also been a network to harness and coordinate efforts, build synergies and generate greater impact.

#### Achievement of Citizens advocacy for Good Governance in Nigeria Citizen Efficacy and Empowerment

The citizens advocacy for good governance seek a citizenry that is informed, knowledgeable, aware, conscious and participating in societal life and the public realm. It provides avenues for initiatives and efforts that raise confidence, self-esteem, capacity and sense of efficacy of citizens to intervene and change their circumstances or those of others. Such citizen mobilization and engagements raise their interests in public affairs and the public realm. Citizen advocacy for good governance has been engaged in enlightening, training and sensitizing citizens in different sectors and empowering citizens for actions and engagements in the public realm (Hirst, 2012).

It has been at the vanguard of building citizen initiatives for collective actions on social and existential challenges. It identify issues and initiatives related to special and basic needs and problems and construct

### Rights and Freedoms

The citizen advocacy has been quite active in the protection of citizen and group rights and freedoms as provided in the constitution and laws. It has mounted programmes of training and awareness on understanding and exercising rights and freedoms. The group has also created or provided access to justice, or litigated and prosecuted cases on behalf of vulnerable and disadvantaged citizens. The group particularly, seek to ensure government adherence to the constitution and guarantees of citizen rights, freedoms and welfare (Roelofs 2009).

### Building National Platforms for Popular Actions

Citizens Advocacy was able to build vast networks, national platforms and concerts for action, where critical issues on which they are agreed arise. It periodically construct platforms for mobilization for concerted popular actions, among disparate elements as well as the ordinary youth, women, artisans, workers and traders. It also build alliances among diverse stakeholders for responding to issues of national interest or specific challenges of governance. Citizen advocacy has constructed concerts and platforms of national action in the areas of minimum wage and petroleum products subsidies (Mercy, 2012).

### Building Good Governance

The Citizens advocacy has been active in the struggle for good governance. It has been in the forefront of the struggle for accountability, transparency and the campaigns against funds mismanagement, corruption and financial recklessness. The advocacy group agitate for openness and information on governmental affairs. It also seek dialogue on governance issues and agitate for governance systems to address citizen needs, aspirations and challenges. The group has monitored governance issues and brought excesses to public scrutiny. It is also a major platform for oversight and checks and balances. More specifically, it has monitored the conduct of public officials, and public agencies and exposed misconduct, abuses, excesses and improprieties. The group has sought sanctions and even supported court litigation against exposed or implicated public officials. It impacts vital competence, experience and learning to members and society at large. These relate to the need for joint cooperative efforts, the primacy of group and national interests, the issue basis of activism, and the need (Fadakinte, 2013).

### Social Services and Welfare

Citizen advocacy for good governance is directly providing certain social services or supporting state provision in diverse areas ranging from education, gender (girl empowerment, protection against sexual violence) to micro-credit, economic empowerment, employment services and social welfare for the aged, prisoners, physically challenged and other vulnerable citizens. The group advocate for the provision of basic needs, the affordability of social services and public subsidization of social services at least for the poor and vulnerable.

The group has been agitating, advocating and active in seeking access to finance, job opportunities and employment. it has become active participants in the micro-credit finance sector through accessing and managing micro credits and supervising funded projects. Because of their grass root and community locations, they have been more successful in loans retrieval and funds management and have thus become trusted agents and consultants to state governments, corporate organizations and international organizations. It has also been active in the areas of skills, entrepreneurship and business development for youth and women (Osaghae, 1997).

### Problems of Citizens Advocacy for Good Governance

The following are major problems of citizen advocacy for good governance

**Lack of Funds:** The group is suffering from paucity of funds. Government does not give cent percent grants in aid or make delay in sanctions of grants for numerous programmes. It has to make matching contributions which it sometimes unable to manage and is, therefore, unable to avail itself of the grants. Now a day's charity is not so strong in the minds and hearts of the people as it was in the ancient society. This was another reason for languish of funds for the group

**Lack of Dedicated Leadership:** Leadership qualities of the leaders in citizens advocacy determine the quality and condition of the services rendered. Especially dedicated leadership, 'Leadership for the sake of Leadership' is a most important governing factor in this regard. The group faced the crisis of leadership as the leaders who pioneered voluntary action and worked for it with spirit of devotion and dedication choose to enter politics to find berths in legislatures and parliament thus creating a vacuum for dedication leadership. With some expectations the leadership is concentrated in the hands of elderly people. The style of functioning of these elderly people exhibits authoritarianism and frustrates younger

expressed and practiced (Mehta et al., 2010).

**Inadequate Trained Personnel:** It is believed that the personnel working in citizens advocacy may be of personnel working in such organizations is a sense of dedication and commitment and interest in the social services. The group is handicapped by poor knowledge of the workings of government and the corporate or business sector. Lack the experience, competence, contacts and confidence to liaise and work with the ministries, departments and agencies of government at the state and federal levels. Many of the personnel Therefore, it is very difficult to get trained persons who are either willing or trained to work in the rural society where most work. Moreover, these professionally trained persons have high expectations in terms of salaries, status, opportunities for their growth in the career of their choice. Moreover, the group due to lack of funds cannot able to spent some more funds for giving training to the personnel employed in the organization.

**Misuse of Funds:** It is the matter of fact that some unscrupulous elements have made fortunes by floating citizens advocacy for their personnel gains and managing grants from the government. It is a common experience that there have been serious charges of misuse and misappropriation of funds received as grant-in-aid form the government, foreign donors and raised through their own resources. The group by virtue of engagements in consulting, economic interests, direct provision of services and semi-commercial activities has become a lucrative commercial and dominant arm (Paffenholz& Spark 2006). The group act as subcontractors and agents to international NGOs and corporate organizations, and have been recipients of large funding support. The citizen advocacy for good is now lucrative, thriving and profitable. The emergent business, commercial and consultancy orientation is weakening the voluntary, selfless and sacrificial orientation and the focus on social assistance, welfare and support to the weak, vulnerable and less advantaged groups. There are now many self-interested, profit making, exploitative and un-altruistic organizations that are operating. The legitimacy of the Citizens advocacy for good governance and particularly the NGO sector is weak. First the NGOs receive large funds but are not accountable or held accountable except to external supporters and management. Thus accountability to local constituencies and members and the public is weak (Shedrack, 2015).

**Monopolization of leadership:** It has been observed that there is a growing tendency towards monopolization and interlocking of leadership at the top level of voluntary action groups and organizations as is reflected in the same person being the president in one organization, secretary in the other, treasurer in the third and a member of the executive in the fourth. This interlocking of leadership can be advantageous in formulating, coordinated policies, programmes and activities, facilitating exchange of technical know-how and experience and mobilizing people for a common goal. But the greatest disadvantage of such leadership is that fresh blood is not allowed to flow into the organization and leadership (Okwoli, 2015).

**Lack of Public Participation:** NGOs like citizens advocacy for good governance are meant to provide opportunities to the citizens for democratic participation but they have not been able to fulfill this obligation due to the method and manner in which they function, and failed to attract people, interested in construction work and develop channels for people's enthusiastic participation. Some of the factors responsible for such a state of affairs are general backwardness of the people, absence of adequate number of dedicated persons, over emphasis on targets and time bound programmes, political interference and vested interests, easy availability of funds without proper planning and assessment of felt needs and safeguards for the community, distrust of agencies and workers who do not have a base in the community and are unable to win its support and lack of decentralization which could give a feeling of being partners in development rather than development being thrust from above.

#### Conclusion

In order to sustained democratization in Nigeria and dividends of good democratic governance delivered to people, civil society like citizens advocacy for good governance need to be properly repositioned and strengthened. Strengthening civil society is therefore imperative so that they can improve upon the current poor existing structures. Thus, for citizen advocacy for good governance to be virile this to be achieved, the following recommendations should be adopted.

##### i. Funding

Poor funding has been a major problem sapping the vitality of the group in Nigeria. Citizens advocacy for good governance depend largely on external source usually foreign donor agencies to finance their activities. In fact, virtually all the donor agencies have vested interest in certain areas of the nation and thus, money released for projects does not in many cases reflect the pressing needs of the people instead

the group should be made. This could be achieved by creating a consolidated or national trust fund integrated in the national budget where registered civil society organizations citizens advocacy for good governance in Nigeria can apply for fund annually. When this is done, it will help reduce over dependency on external donor agencies with their stringent conditionality and narrow interest. As the common saying of he who pays the piper dictates the tune syndrome is not good as currently obtained in Nigeria.

ii. Urban and Elitist nature

Citizens advocacy for good governance is greatly highly concentrated in urban centers with high number of educated elites as members. This has led to high rates of illiteracy and poor democratic culture among the rural poor. The effects of these can be seen in the staggering proportion of invalid votes and ethno-religious cum communal clashes in different parts of Nigeria. A way out of this ruse is to de-urbanize citizens advocacy for good governance in Nigeria by ensuring that CSO concerned with human rights, women empowerment, poverty reduction, civic education are located or headquarter in rural areas instead of urban centers. Closely related to the above is the issue of elitism. There is need for the integration of rural dwellers in civil society to actively participate in advocacy.

iii. Capacity building

The capacity of the citizen advocacy in supporting the development and governance process has to be strengthened. The complexities and intricacies of contemporary development challenges require greater manpower and organizational abilities, knowledge and capacity. There is need for greater capacity in research, data gathering, information, communication, monitoring, advocacy and mobilization skills. The group would have to effectively disseminate results, reports and findings of their researches, investigations, activities and projects to governments and the citizenry.

Citizens advocacy for good governance may need some self-regulation, oversight and self-cleansing through ad hoc agencies set up by concerts and networks within relevant sectors. There is need to weed out self-interested, profiteering, corrupt and non-altruistic persons and organizations that masquerade as CSOs. This is necessary to build a sector whose integrity, legitimacy, accountability and management attracts confidence and support.

The researchers of this paper limit themselves to the citizen Advocacy and good governance in Nigeria with emphasis on the civil society organizations as their search light.

The study recommends that, in order to ensure that civil society plays more viable and pragmatic role in the good governance in Nigeria, especially in the future, emphasis must be geared towards proper funding of civil society organization to reduce their over dependence on foreign donors often with skewed interests. Also the training and the retraining o civil society leaders, advocates, and non-members is highly imperative and germane in the democratic system in Nigeria.

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