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Challenges of Good Governance in Nigeria (2011-2019)

Okechukwu Richard, Oji[1]

[1]Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu State, Nigeria.
Corresponding author: drokeyoji@yahoo.com

ABTRACT

This paper critically explores the challenges of good governance in Nigeria. Good governance is the quest of nations all over the world; it implies accountability, transparency, prevalence of the rule of law and popular participation. There is strong evidence that good governance matters in accelerating development and in reducing poverty in most countries of the world. Advocates have linked the advancement of a variety of issues to improved governance. Nigeria is a developing nation that has encountered significant governance challenges since its inception in 1960. These challenges have been manifested in the form of corruption, political instability, weak institutions, and lack of accountability, which have had a negative impact on the country's progress and have contributed to a range of social, economic, and political issues. The main objective of this study therefore, is to assess the practice and challenges of good governance in Nigeria. The paper employs a qualitative methodology that heavily relies on secondary sources of data from books, journals, and web-based materials, among others. The study found that good governance practices in Nigeria were hindered by various factors, such as, corruption, legitimacy crisis, disregard for constitutional provisions, and weak institutions which have led to mass poverty, deplorable living conditions, crimes and general insecurity as people struggle to survive under the harsh conditions of poverty. The study therefore recommends for strengthening of weak institutions, strong reinforcing of accountability and transparency in governmental institutions, enhance effective fight against corruption and those caught must be prosecuted and brought to justice regardless of position, class or tribe. The study suggests also, that the government should respect the rule of law and obey the constitutional provisions in order to entrench and safeguard stability in governance in Nigeria. Finally it suggests for use of modern security strategies in dealing with the menace of insecurity.

Keywords: Good governance, principles of good governance, challenges, Nigeria

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INTRODUCTION

Governance is usually viewed in both broad and narrow perspectives depending on individual scholar's orientation and situation on ground. Generally, governance denotes a multifaceted concept encompassing all aspects of the exercise of authority through formal and informal institutions in the management of both man and man-made resources of the state. Jega (2007) observes that good, responsive, responsible, and accountable governance is required everywhere in order to harness and develop natural resources as well as meet the basic needs of the people. Governance is aimed at touching people's lives in positive and concrete ways. This often requires the creation of a broad consensus platform that will incorporate and empower the people so as to be co-partners in the process of national development and societal transformation.

Governance therefore involves an integration of efforts of individuals who have been elected or appointed to carry out the will of the state or realize the objectives for which the modern state has been constituted. Good governance for instance binds the state to the pursuit of those policies and programmes that will impact on the lives of the citizens. The quality of governance in any political system has usually affects the form and content of socio-economic transformation or national development (Nwoye, 2005). Good governance has the potential to increase the quality of public service with the ultimate aim of increasing economic growth. This implies that having good governance in a given state is part and parcel of democratic rights of the citizens. However, lack of good governance will lead to numerous challenges such as political, economic and social problems that affect the quality of life of the nation. It is also the major impediments of development in any given state.

Among the most important dimensions of the changes sweeping through Africa since the end of the cold war is the rising salience of good governance. Nwankwo (2009) averred that the inhospitable circumstances under which this region of the world operated in the period have been linked either as cause or effect to bad governance in contradistinction to good governance. These inhospitable circumstances included conflictive issues of widespread human rights abuses, violent internal conflicts, severe economic traumas, high level public indebtedness, capital flight, military incursions, corruption and fiscal imprudence, abject poverty of great majority of the populace, infrastructural decay, etc. all these culminated in to say the least, the backwardness of the region in all development indices since independence. That is to say that bad governance is responsible in large part for the regions mediocre development performance. It is however, justifiable to say that good governance matters for development. The effects of good governance on a state cannot be over emphasized. It is imperative to note that the growth and development of a state is dependent on the way or manner the government sets out its ruler-ship, authority and control (Maduekwe et al., 2019).

Nigeria is composed of 36 states and a Federal Capital Territory, Abuja and 774 local governments. Despite the abundance of human and material deposits in several parts of the country, majority of the people still wallow in abject poverty, which manifests in high levels of unemployment, falling health, educational standards and poor economic financing which have knelt a hard blow on national development. The persistent poverty, unemployment, environmental challenges and other forms of social degradation cannot be divorced from poor economic management and a near absence of transparency and accountability in governance in Nigeria.

The great hope, enthusiasm and expectations many Nigerians expressed following the restoration of democratic rule in the country in May 1999 was not unconnected with the inert desire for an improved economy which will ultimately bring about national development in Nigeria. Unfortunately, the hope of the people especially at the grassroots has continued to be dashed over 24 years of unbroken democratic governance in Nigeria. For instance, the high hopes nurtured by the average Nigerian that per capita income would have increased tremendously; production diversified to non-oil sector; poverty reduced to the barest minimum; economic opportunities provided for self-development; enabling environment provided as well as environmental sustainability have virtually remained elusive (Oni, 2014). The inability of the Nigerian state to realize her cherished goals and vision has basically been attributed to the nature of governance in the country.

Dunu (2013) posited that Nigeria like most other democratic states embedded the ethics of good governance as possible benchmarks for democratic governance that is specified in the 1999 constitution. Nevertheless, regardless of this constitutional provision, as well as the huge financial resources, and substantial potentials of the country, good governance continues to be evasive to Nigeria (Dunu, 2013). According to Oke (2010) governance in present Nigeria is such that has depicted and presented a charade of the commonly acclaimed indicator of good governance; democracy the official governmental practice has been hijacked by the ruthless ruling class to the point that peoples now experience misery instead of faith, uncertainty instead of certainty, agony and premature death instead of long life and high life expectancy, deception instead of hope, deficiency instead of efficiency, militarization instead of civility, tyranny instead of rule of law, political selection instead of election etc. Majority of the so-called leaders have stripped naked the rules of civil engagement, discarded the constitution and have allowed disharmony to be in control. The enlightening statement by Lord Acton (1834-1902) that: “power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely” seem to have fallen on deaf ears with reference to the Nigerian political entity.

And indeed there has been an upsurge of armed robbery, kidnapping, increased rate of corruption, decaying infrastructures and the seemingly never-ending ethnic and tribal political conflict regarding the presidency, and most sympathetic, the rising cases of insecurity occasioned by the activities of the Boko Haram Islamic sect, ISWAP, bandits, and Fulani herders attacks. In terms of the welfare of the citizens, the performance of Nigeria is below expectations. Today inflation is running at two digits with consequential effects on the quality of life of the citizens. The naira exchange rate in 1999 was $1 to N85, while in May 2007, it was $1 to N120, by 2012, it was $I to N160 and by 2015, it had further depreciated to $I to N1200. The country still records very high unemployment rate. Today, infrastructural decay has reduced economic capacity to less than 30%, as the economy is now generator driven because public electricity has virtually grounded. Recently, the Minister of State for power declared that at least 120 million Nigerians; out of an estimated population of 180 million do not have access to electricity (The Guardian Newspapers, June, 2013). If commitment to public good by efficient delivery of service to the people for the enhancement of the citizens' welfare is what defines good governance, then the last twenty four years has witnessed nothing but bad governance which breeds social ills in society.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual analysis

Governance

The concept of "governance" is not new. It is as old as human civilization. Ozigbo (2000) cited in Okpaga (2009) opined that before one discusses good governance, it is first necessary to examine the context of the term governance. According to him, governance denotes how people are ruled and how the affairs of the state are administered and regulated. Governance refers therefore, to how the politics of a nation is carried out. Governance can be used in several contexts such as corporate governance, international governance, national governance and local governance. Generally, governance, according to the World Bank (1989) is the exercise of political power in the management of a nation's affairs or the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development. Simply put "governance" means the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented). On this premise, Ansah (2007) viewed governance as encompassing a state's institutional and structural arrangements, decision-making process and implementation capacity and the relationship between government officials and the public. Governance consists of two essential elements of the state, namely the structure of the state and the procedures of the legislative, judicial and those of the executive and administrative bodies at all the tiers of government.

Moreover, governance in a political sense is a more complex activity. Secondly, political governance is service oriented. Although governance is related to politics, it is conceptually different. However, as a human phenomenon, governance is exercised within a given socio-cultural context and belongs to a broader department of politics. While politics is the authoritative allocation of values or who gets what, when and how (Lasswell, 1936), governance is the process and mechanisms of allocating the values without jeopardizing the principle of equity, justice and fairness. Therefore, it is through the practical application of the authority and the processes of governance that the powers of the state acquire meaning and substance. However, governance could be good or bad. Democratic governance is good governance while an autocratic government is bad.

Governance in the context of this work is defined as the process of allocating resources, through the instrumentalities of the state, for the attainment of public good. Hence, governance is largely about problem identification and solving. By governance therefore, we mean the manner in which power is exercised by government in the management and distribution of a country's social and economic resources. The nature and manner of this distribution makes governance a bad or a good one. Thus, when resources are distributed to promote inequality or to achieve personal or group ambitions, the essence of governance which coincides with the essence of politics and essence of the state is defeated. Therefore, resources must be distributed responsibly, equitably and fairly for the realization of the essence of the state. It is significant to note however, that good governance as a norm cannot make sense unless it is predicated on the presupposition that the experience and knowledge of bad governance is possible and real. On this basis, the norm of good governance is the political ethic that intends to challenge and replace the reality of bad governance (Mogobe, 2003).

Concept of good governance

Good governance as a basic development agenda has got significant momentum in the world especially in the last decade and has become the issue that attracts the attentions of different political scientists, economists, lawyers, politicians, international, regional and national organizations and various donor agencies. The notion of good governance is relatively new. It surfaced in 1989 in the World Bank's report on Sub-Saharan Africa, which characterized the crisis in the region as a "crisis of governance" (World Bank, 1989). It then represented an important departure from previous policy, largely prompted by the experience in Africa. The main thrust behind its introduction in the World Bank's corporate policies resides in the continuing lack of effectiveness of aid, the feeble commitment to reform of recipient governments and the persistence of endemic corruption in developing countries. In addressing governance, the World Bank calls into question the ability, capacity and willingness of political authorities to govern effectively in the common interest. There is heightened awareness that the quality of a country's governance system is a key determinant of the ability to pursue sustainable economic and social development (Santiso, 2001, p.20). Thus, following the failure of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in developing countries where policies are effectively prepared but not implemented properly due to bad or even mal-governance, the issue of good governance has emerged as one of the critical conditions if development agendas are to hit their intended targets.

Nevertheless, there is no single and exhaustive definition of “good governance,” nor is there a delimitation of its scope that commands universal acceptance. The term is used with great flexibility; this is an advantage, but also a source of some difficulty at the operational level. Depending on the context and the overriding objective sought, good governance has been said at various times to encompass: full respect of human rights, the rule of law, effective participation, multi-actor partnerships, political pluralism, transparent and accountable processes and institutions, an efficient and effective public sector, legitimacy, access to knowledge, information and education, political empowerment of people, equity, sustainability, and attitudes and values that foster responsibility, solidarity and tolerance.

Good governance, as a concept, is applicable to all sections of society such as the government, legislature, judiciary, media, private sector, corporate sector, trade unions and lastly non-government organizations (NGOs). Public accountability and transparency are as relevant for the one as for the other. It is only when all these and various other sections of society conduct their affairs in a socially responsible manner that the objective of achieving larger good of the largest number of people in society can be achieved (Madhav, 2007). United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1996) sees good governance as a commitment and the capability to effectively address the allocation and management of resources to respond to collective problems. It assures that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making (OECD, 2001).

In the Nigerian context, good governance calls for constitutional rule and a true federal system. Remarkably, it is only when we appraise the manner in which the affairs of a country are run that we can discern which government is good or bad or which has been a success or failure. Failure of governance implies that those in political control have not properly managed the economy and other social institutions. According to the World Bank (1992) bad governance has many features, among which are: failure to make a clear separation between what is public and what is private, hence a tendency to divert public resources for private gain; failure to establish a predictable framework for law and government behaviour in a manner that is conducive to development, or arbitrariness in the application of rules and laws. Bad governance is contrapuntal to a nation’s socio-economic and political development. Therefore, resources of the state must be managed in such a manner as to achieve the desired level of socio-economic progress for all members of the political community. It is important to note that the resource utilized must also be commensurate with the level of development attained. In short, good governance is about the performance capacity of a government or as it relates to leadership capability. Failure of governance therefore, could expressly mean failure of leadership. Indeed, the best governors are those who met their society in a condition of social and political nadir and are able to save the society or lift it up from doldrums to the position of fame and prosperity.

The concept, good governance emerged mainly because of practices of bad governance characterized by corruption, unaccountable governments and lack of respect for human rights. And this had become increasingly dangerous, the need to intervene in such cases had become urgent, and thus, the issue has become essential ingredient in any socio-political agenda and development discourse throughout the world. Good governance is not a matter of government only but a situation of multiple crisscrossing relationships in which different and various actors in the public and private sectors at national and international levels play various roles, sometimes mutually reinforcing and complementary, sometimes conflicting, but always following the same principles and practices that are agreed as constituents of good governance.

Essential features of good governance

According to Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (UNESCO, 2005) good governance has eight major characteristics. It is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law:

1) Participation: Participation by both men and women is key corner stone of good governance. Participation could be either direct is through legitimate intermediate institutions or representatives. It is important to point and that representative democracy does not necessarily mean that the concerns of the most vulnerable in society would be taken in to consideration in decision making participations needs to be informed and organized. This means freedom of association and expression on the one hand and an organized civil society on the other hand.

2) Rule of law: Good governance fair legal frame works that are enforced impartially. It also requires an independent judiciary and an impartial and in corruptible police force. Governance does not imply arbitrary use of authority.

3) Transparency: Transparency means that decisions taken and their enforcement are done in a manner that follows rules and regulations. It also means that information is freely available and directly accessible to those who will be affected by such decisions and their enforcement. It also means that enough information is provided and that it is provided in easily understandable forms and media.
4) Responsiveness: Good governance require that institutions and processes for to serve all stakeholders within a reasonable time frame. In the present times the emphases is more on institutions being responsive to the needs of all those who are going to be affected by their actions.
5) Consensus oriented: There are several actors and as many view point in a given society. Good governance requires meditation of the different interests in society to reach a broad consensus in society on what is in the best interest of the whole community and how this can be achieved. It also requires a broad and long – term perspective on what is needed for sustainable human development and how to achieve the goals of such development. This can only result from an understanding of the historical, cultural and social contests of a given society or community.
6) Equity and inclusiveness: A society's well-being depends on ensuring that all its members feel that they have a stake in it and do not feel excluded from the mainstream of society this requires all groups but particularly the most vulnerable have opportunities and improve or maintain their well-being.
7) Effectiveness and efficiency: Good governance means that process and institutions produce results that meet the need of society while making the best use of resources at their disposal. The concept of efficiency in the context of good governance also covers the sustainable use of natural resources and the protection of the Environment.
8) Accountability: It is key requirement of good governance. Not only governmental institutions but also the private sector and civil society organizations must be accountable to the public and to their institutional stake holders. Who is accountable to who varies depending on is whether decision as actions taken is internal or external to an organization or an institution is accountable to those who will be affected by its decisions of actions. Accountability cannot be enforced without transparency and the rule of low. However it is an idea to action in its totality but has to come close to achieve. Each of these characteristics intersects with and reinforces one another, creating a comprehensive framework for analyzing the effectiveness of governance at every level, from local to global (UNDP, 1997).

Historical background of Nigeria

Nigeria officially the Federal Republic of Nigeria, is a country in West Africa. It is situated between the Sahel to the north and the Gulf of Guinea to the south in the Atlantic Ocean. It covers an area of 923,769 square kilometers (356,669 sq mi). With a population of more than 250 million, it is the most populous country in Africa, and the world's sixth-most populous country. Nigeria borders Niger in the north, Chad in the northwest, Cameroun in the east, and Benin in the west. Nigeria is a federal republic comprising 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory, where the capital, Abuja, is located. The largest city in Nigeria is Lagos, one of the largest metropolitan areas in the world and the largest in Africa.

Nigeria has been home to several indigenous pre-colonial states and kingdoms since the second millennium BC, with the Nok civilization in the 15th century BC marking the first internal unification. The modern state originated with British colonization in the 19th century, taking its present territorial shape with the merging of the Southern Nigeria protectorate and the Northern Nigeria protectorate in 1914. The British set up administrative and legal structures while practicing indirect rule through traditional chiefdoms. Nigeria became a formally independent federation on 1 October 1960. It experienced a civil war from 1967 to 1970, followed by a succession of military dictatorships and democratically elected civilian governments until achieving a stable government in the 1999 Nigerian presidential election, with the election of Olusegun Obasanjo of the People's Democratic Party. However, the country frequently experiences electoral fraud, and corruption is rampant in various levels of Nigerian politics.

Nigeria is a multinational state inhabited by more than 250 ethnic groups speaking 500 distinct languages, all identifying with a wide variety of cultures. The three largest ethnic groups are the Hausa in the north, Yoruba in the west and Igbo in the east, together constituting over 60% of the total population. The official language is English, chosen to facilitate linguistic unity at the national level. Nigeria's constitution ensures de jure freedom of religion, and it is home to some of the world's largest Muslim and Christian populations. Nigeria is divided roughly in half between Muslims, who live mostly in the North part of the country, and Christian, who live mostly in the South; indigenous religious, such as those native to the Igbo and Yoruba ethnicities, are in the minority.

The country Nigeria is a complex conglomeration of diversities. Its unique position as an Anglophone country completely enveloped by 3 Francophone countries: Benin, Niger and Cameroon, attests to the obvious uniqueness of its geographic position in Africa. In other words, Nigeria is a giant Anglophone island in sea of Francophone countries. It further intimidates the same neighbours and others beyond with its staggering population, nicknamed giant of Africa primarily because of this massive population and partly because of its economic potential (Aregbesola, 2011).

After independence, the new political elite had the duty of not only institutionalizing the democratic process but for developing a political culture, which would buttress the inherited institutions from the British colonial authority. There were therefore, high hopes at independence of Nigeria emerging as a fertile and large field for the growth of democracy and good governance in Africa. However, by the end of 1965, it became obvious that the future of democracy and good governance in the country had become bleak. In January, 1966, the military aborted the new democratic experiment in a bloody coup d'état. The first republic was short-lived, ending with the coup d'état of January 15, 1966. Between this period and October 1, 1979 when civilian rule returned, the country was administered by the military. The return to democratic rule ushered in a federal constitution characterized by multi-partism, independence of judiciary, separation of powers, among other features. This experience was, however, truncated again by the military precisely on December 31, 1983, and the country remained firmly under military rule until May 29, 1999 when another democratic experiment began.

This time, however, the military did not willingly relinquish power as in 1979, but for so many reasons which included the crisis generated by the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election believed to have been won by late Chief M.K.O Abiola. This singular issue shook the nation to its foundation. The crisis precipitated by Ibrahim Babangida, the military president who "dribbled" Nigerians through long-drawn grandiose and elaborate but dubious and cunning policies and programmes designed mainly for self-perpetuation in power and ended up annulling an election adjudged the freest ever. The problem spiraled on under the tyrannical and despotic regime of General Sani Abacha who rail-roaded himself into power after Babangida had been forced to "step aside." In the circumstances, Nigerians were determined more than ever to chase the military out of power. The deep commitment of the people for the enthronement of democratic rule paid off as the military under the leadership of General Abdulsalam Abubakar, who ascended into power upon the sudden death of Abacha, willingly relinquished power.

The military, subsequently, held on to power for almost 33 years after the 1966 coup except for some flashes of civil rule between 1979 and 1983; and 1987-1989. In 1979, Nigeria adopted the Presidential system of government modeled after the American system in preference to the British parliamentary system. Nigerian's short-lived democratic experiment after independence could be attributed to the following factors among others:

(i) iBreakdown of the rules of the game of politics, which profusely polluted the political stadium and made politics as dangerous for players as well as spectators.

(ii) Gross misuse of political power among public officers including impudent political and economic decisions in allocation of scarce but locatable resources.

(iii) Erosion of the rights of individuals.

(iv) Disenfranchisement of the Nigerian populace through blatant rigging of elections.

(v) Conspicuous consumption of politicians amidst the abject poverty of the masses.

(vi) Excessively powerful regional governments, which threatened the relatively weak federal centre (Elaigwu, 2011).

These challenges made it difficult for the first democratic government in Nigeria under the Prime Minister of Abubakar Tafawa Balewa to build a solid democratic culture and good governance. Indeed, for a country that was granted independence without a strong economic base as well as porous democratic culture it was expected that the military and 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. As Mohammed (2008) cited in Yio (2011) observed, in this phase, success and goal attainment depend on how quick the leaders and the society learn to work on the basis of democratic principles and practices.

Unfortunately, in Nigeria, politics were not driven by nationalistic and class consciousness but by primordial sentiments of ethnicity, religion, regionalism, etc with the consequent deepening of poverty and underdevelopment in the country.

Democratic politics and good governance did not fare better in the Second Republic as well as the Third Republic. But since 29 May, 1999, when the Fourth Republic was ushered in, politicians in government have continued to use the phrase "dividends of democracy" which refer to the provisions of material welfare to the people, such as roads, rural electrification, potable water, improved educational and health facilities, housing, amongst others. However, it is pertinent to note that democracy and good governance in Nigeria and elsewhere in the world cannot be achieved through the mere provisions of material welfare such as roads, jobs, food, electricity, education, health care services and others since they are even easier to provide under authoritarian rule. As Elaigwu (2011) observed, in Britain, issues of economic distribution were handled before political rights. The success of the "Asian Tigers" lies in their utilization of authoritarian political structures for aggressive economic development. Democratization followed later.

The Nigerian state and governance crisis

For the purposes of this study, I shall limit my discussion of crisis of governance in Nigeria to select principles of good governance which include rule of law, accountability and transparency.

Rule of law

One of the major ingredients of democracy anywhere in the world is its adherence to the rule of law which gives both ruler and ruled the opportunity to determine their destiny with the stipulated law of the state. A state's constitution and an overarching rule of law guarantee successful governance and a protection of life and property within a democracy (Yagboyaju and Akinola, 2019). In fact, it is the rule of law that gives democracy the bite it possesses, and also affords the people the chance to contend for public offices in a well-organized and responsible election. Within an established judiciary, the rule of law offers the legal structure for adjudication of disputes and oversees the activities of the executive arm of government.

In Nigerian democracy, the judiciary has oftentimes reneged on its duties - especially to check the activities of the executive. A few illustrations here are adequate. Within the First Republic (1960-1966), the judiciary took sides with the executive in the adjudication of the 1965 election petitions. The same scenario played out in the Second Republic (1979-1983) and throughout the military dictatorship. The judiciary served to rubber-stamp the decisions of military tribunals. The Fourth Republic (1999 till the present) has recorded many cases of the judiciary impugning the law. Worth mentioning is the case of President Buhari's dismissal of the Chief Justice of the Nation (CJN) - Chief Justice Onoghen on frivolous grounds. The Judiciary was unable to muster a united front in addressing the issue. This failure influenced the Chief executive to appoint an Islamic Justice as the CJN (Asiegbu, 2022).

However, since return to civil rule in 1999, there were many break of law particularly by those that occupied or holds the political power. Lawal, Imokhuede and Johnson (2012) observed that the leaders in Nigeria do not show respect to the rule of law, especially, judicial decisions. This hampers the judiciary to effectively discharge its duties. The political executives still undermine the independence of the judiciary through patronage appointments, and judicial administration is characterized by weak enforcement capacity. Therefore, the respect for rule of law or absence of it can be understand from some practical issues, for instance, the second arrest of Biafra Radio director, Nnamdi Kanu, and the former National Security Adviser to previous administration, Sambo Dasuki in spite of subsisting bail. The recent raid of the homes of some judges (Justices Walter Onnoghen and Sylvanus Ngwuta of the Supreme Court as well as the homes of Justices Adebiyi Ademola, Muazu Pindiga and Nnamdi Dimgba of the Federal High Court) was describes as evidence of absence, or lack of respect for the rule of law and the principles of separation of powers by the Buhari;s administration; thereby only interested in using the apparatus of state to harass the real and perceived enemies (Adeyanju, 2017).

The next instance illustrates the apex court's compromise of the integrity of the judiciary in its adjudication of the winner of the 2018 gubernatorial election in Imo state. The Supreme Court of justice declared Mr. Hope Uzodimma winner, in an election that placed Uzodimma in the fourth position. In an unguarded moment, Mr. Uzodimma admitted to the public that the Chief of Staff - Abba Kyari - facilitated the arrangement. Apart from one chief Justice of the apex court who retracted his position in a retrial, the apex court maintained its position. The outcome is similar to the apex court's decision in the case of President Buhari's non-possession of the First School Leaving Certificate (FSLC). Nigeria's judiciary was written off as no more than a miscarriage of justice. In all the cases, the judiciary fully approved the actions of the executive.

Accountability

Lack of accountability is another significant issue facing Nigeria's governance system. Accountability, in terms of ethics and governance, is equated with answerability, culpability, liability, and the expectation of account-giving. The concept of public accountability demands that politicians and public servants who are entrusted with public resources must be answerable for their fiscal and social responsibilities to the people who provided the resources and who assigned the responsibilities to them. According to Bovens (2007, p.453) public accountability means that government and its employees are accountable and their activities are open to the public. In essence, records of government activities should be open to the people unless it involves security of the country. From this definition of public accountability, it is clear that the public entities that utilize public resources have an obligation to account for the way these resources are allocated, used and the results these spending have achieved. In other words, the main objectives of all public accountability initiatives are to ensure that public money is spent most economically and efficiently; that there is minimum of wastage or theft and that public actually benefit from public finance.

In Nigeria, the state of public accountability from independence till date is highly disheartening. In fact, it is a form of rhetoric. The level of accountability is very poor in Nigeria because the attributes of accessibility, comprehensiveness, relevance, quality, reliability and timely disclosure of economic, social and political information about government activities are completely non available or partially available for the citizens to assess the performance of public officers mostly the political office holders. Those in power are often not held accountable for their actions, and the lack of oversight and transparency has created a culture of impunity. This has resulted in a system where the powerful can act without fear of consequence, and the rights and freedoms of the people are often disregarded. Apparently, there exists a linkage between absence of integrity, unaccountability, and transparency in governance, massive corruption and the attendant consequences of abject poverty and insecurity that plagued Nigeria in the twenty-four years of transition to democracy.

Onya and Elemanya (2016) point out that the confessional statement made by APC member and Former Chairman of Appropriation Committee representing the people of Kiru-Bebeji Federal Constituency of Kano state, Hon. Abdulmumin in a press conference after being relieved of his position by his colleagues, stated categorically how the “House of Representative hideout a systemic corruption”. To further confirm the issue, he listed how they shared the funds by confessed in the following order, even though none of the above accusers were either invited or arrested by the anti-corruption agencies (Table 1).

Table 1: List of Beneficiaries

Names/portfolios	Amount
Hon Abdulmumini Jubrin	N650 million
Speaker Yakubu Dogara	N1.5 billion
His Deputy Yusuf Lasun	N800 million
House Majority Leader Femi Gbajabiamila	N1.2 billion
Deputy Majority Leader Buba Jubrin	N1.2 billion
House Whip Alhassan Ado Doguwa	N1.2 billion
Deputy House Whip	N700 million
House Minority Leader Leo Ogor	N1.2 billion
Deputy Minority Leader Onyema	N800 million
Minority Whip	N700 million
Deputy Minority Whip	N700 million

Source: Adopted from Onya and Elemanya, (2016), and improved by the Researcher, 2024.

At the states level, the corrupt practices accompanied by the lack of accountability and transparency in spending public funds remain the order of the day particularly among the state governors. The huge amount of money that goes to the state governments from 2015 to date cannot be accounted for by many among them. It can be recalled that, apart from the monthly allocation to the states that is constant, bailout and London-Paris club Funds were equally shared to state governments across the country, but compare to the issues on ground in many states across the country is really pathetic. As matter of fact, in some states, paying worker's salary alone became headache, not to talk of even infrastructural or socio-economic development and wellbeing of the state's members. In line with this, Budgit (2017) observed that the allocation, utilization and spending of public funds remain unclear, uncoordinated, and brazen, given most of the state government's inability to acknowledge the presence or wishes of the same Nigerians who voted for them and in whose names these funds are disbursed. It have been recorded that, in March 2017, the Finance Minister said “the initial disbursement of Paris Club fund to the states was subject to an agreement by state governments that 50% of any amount received would be allocated for the payment of salaries and pensions.” A few days later, it was reported that seven governors have been linked with the alleged diversion of part of the N 388. 304bn London Paris Club refunds into two accounts opened by the Nigeria Governors Forum (NGF).

To justify the statement above, on 5th April 2017, the Adamawa state government refused a Freedom of Information request from a citizen seeking details on how the first tranche of the Paris Club refunds received was spent. This sentiment was further re-echoed within the same month, by a spokesperson of Delta state Governor Ifeanyi Okowa who said that “the Federal Government had no power to instruct states on how to disburse their Paris London Club refund, as the money belongs to the states; it was not a gift, nor a bailout” (Budgit, 2017). All these indicated that most of the state governments do not concern much about the welfare and socio-economic well-being of their people, but rather interested in diverting the public funds into their private affairs, particular due to their selfish nature, motivated by corrupt mindsets, lack of accountability and transparency within the system, thereby making life difficult for a common man across the states and the country as a whole.

Transparency

Transparency is a difficult concept to define. In politics, transparency may mean citizens' unimpeded access to information about the activities of government. In economics and finance, transparency has been defined very broadly as “a process by which information about existing conditions, decisions, and actions is made accessible, visible and understandable". In the national security and arms control field, transparency is defined more narrowly as involving the systematic provision of information on specific aspects of military activities under informal or formal international arrangements. Transparency refers to unfettered access by the public to timely and reliable information on decisions and performance in the public sector. Transparency symbolizes a mechanism of promoting good governance and public trust in a democratic and modern public administration. It refers to accountability, openness, and communication. Transparency and openness are the pillars of the government in a democratic country.

The definition of government transparency is a government that is open and accessible to its citizens, irrespective of any criteria or time. The principle of transparency is a controlling element against maladministration and corruption and the promoter of good governance and accountability toward protection of public interest and citizens' rights. The usefulness of transparency cannot be overemphasized. But before that, there is need to also note at this point that transparency which has been described as openness and information sharing, particularly, those information that are of public interest, is also difficult to be located within the public service setting as a result of excessive confidentiality and unnecessary secrecy in service. It is usually difficult to get useful and vital information that could be used in controlling and checkmating the activities of the public servants. Once information is unavailable, then transparency becomes unachievable. In the realm of politics, government is supposed to act as the agents of its citizens. Thus, the wave of corruption scandals from the 1990s to date, in Nigeria, indicates that many government officials serve private rather than public ends when no one is watching.

The Nigerian society is filled with stories of wrong practices such as stories of ghost workers on the pay roll of Ministries, Extra-ministerial Departments and Parastatals, frauds, embezzlements and setting ablaze of offices housing sensitive documents and corruption are found everywhere in the country (Okwoli, 2004). For instance, the Punch Newspapers in its February 7, 2001 edition captioned "Again, the federal government and Ghost Workers", quoted the Minster of Information and National Orientation, Professor Jerry Gana, as saying that the federal government had been paying N6.4 billion monthly for the settlement of "ghost" workers' salaries'. According to Bello (2001), huge amount of Naira is lost through one financial malpractice or the other in Nigeria, which to say the least, drains the nation's meager resources through fraudulent means with far-reaching and attendant consequences on the development or even socio-economic or political programmes of the nation. The mess the country is in especially in the realm of corruption now seems to have practically isolated the country from the progressive world. It has staved off investors from a country which badly needs an upward economic progression giving the country a negative image especially, in the news media of the developed world and brought to its nationals who do not believe that the country should be an island, some measure or contempt and ridicule.

Challenges of good governance in Nigeria

Bad leadership

A number of scholars have lampooned the ineptitude of Nigeria's leadership (Achebe, 1988). If we divide Nigeria's democracy into four republics; the First Republic (1960-1966) never lasted long before the military scuttled it; the Second Republic (1979-1983) was much shorter; the Aborted Third 'Republic' (1983 and 1984) need not be considered a "republic" because the military dictators combined military rule and some form of representation of the people; the Fourth Republic (1999 till the present) has been so far the longest republic (Asiegbu, 2022). All through the republics (First, Second, Fourth), the leadership has proved incapable of steering the affairs of the Nigerian state.

Notable for its natural endowment in terms of oil and liquefied natural gas reserves, the leadership has failed to improve the state's poverty index by a great margin. In 2021, Nigeria was designated the World capital of poverty. Not only has the leadership mismanaged the "cheap capital from those natural endowments" (Agbakoba, 2019, p. 297) it has allowed the endowments to waste away. Leadership has failed to reconstruct its dilapidating refineries, allowing them to waste away. Nigeria's ongoing project of new refinery is surprisingly located in Niger, a neighbouring country! Most of the nation's industries were shut down between 2015 and 2016 (Vanguard Newspapers, 2003, p.16). Until the discovery of oil reserves in meaningful quantity, Nigeria invested previously in agriculture and exported some cash crops. However, the discovery of oil and gas reserves led the leadership into abandoning agriculture. Yet, it has proved incapable of feeding her population; offer its citizens the basic needs of healthcare, basic education, housing, etc.

Albeit, elected on the promise of counterterrorism, the Buhari leadership failed to deliver on his election promises. Indeed, several parts of the Nigerian state were engaged in tensions of pronounced insecurity of lives and property. The leadership's announcement of the utter defeat of the Boko Haram terrorists was after all a political strategy. For the terrorist group has not only established links with the North African Al-Qaeda, it has amassed armaments for the establishment of the Islamic state of West Africa. Buhari leadership's rejection of restructuring of the Nigerian polity and devolution of political power has provoked some ethnic nations to argue for self-determination. The outcome of the failure to restructure the state breeds ethnic restiveness, insecurity and the quest of some ethnic nations to carve themselves out from Nigeria. The specter of Islamic sectarian violence has gradually spread over the continent. The goals of the Islamic sects are to overthrow elected governments in a wave of a renewed Jihad. If France had to intervene in Mali to forestall the Islamic sect from overthrowing a democratically elected government, Nigeria only requires good governance to defeat its own politically bred Boko Haram terrorists - the nightmare of the Nigerian state.

Disregard for constitutional provisions

The civilian government of the Fourth Republic clearly operates ignoring the concepts upon which democratic governance and national development could be built. This has been one of the serious challenges to democratic governance since the collapse of the First Republic. For instance, the decision of Council of State, an executive arm of Obasanjo government and of which the President was the Chairman, to undertake local government reforms on the 18th of June 2003 (Weekly Trust, 6-12 September, 2003) was as most unconstitutional and a violation of the principles of Rule of Law and Separation of Powers. This is because local government reforms is purely a constitutional matter and, therefore, beyond the capacity of the executive. Only the National Assembly, the Legislative organ of the government, has the constitutional mandate and capacity to do so (Musa, 2013). In another development, the President was reported to have minute separately to the National Assembly on a document on new revenue sharing formula forwarded to him by the Revenue Mobilization and Fiscal Allocation Commission (RMFACT) (Daily Trust, Friday, 17th October, 2003). This actually contravened section 162 sub-section 2 of the 1999 Constitution that requires the President to write a full memo not just to minute to the two houses. This showed his level of disrespect for the two chambers of the National Assembly.

At the level of the National Assembly, the fixing of allowances and wages is the constitutional responsibility of the Revenue Mobilization and Fiscal Allocation Commission (RMFAC). However, this Constitutional provision was abused when the Honourable law makers kicked aside their role of law-making in favour of the infamous debate on their furniture allowances and other self-serving sundry issues. This immediately led to loss of confidence and credibility on the members of the National Assembly from Nigerians.

Instances of constitutional breach by the Presidency were too numerous for this presentation. However, we could discuss some more instances that had direct implication on national security and development. For example, the abduction and detention of Dr. Ngige, the Anambra state Governor, by his political god father Chief Chris Uba, on the orders of Obasanjo on July, 10th 2003 (Newswatch Magazine, 4th August, 2003), was a clear violation and a threat to national security.

Unprecedented and massive corruption

One of the most critical governance issues in Nigeria is corruption. Nigeria has been consistently rated among the most corrupt countries in the world by Transparency International in its Corruption Perception Index. In 2011, Nigeria was ranked 143 out of 183 countries. In 2012, Nigeria was rated 139 out of 176 countries and in 2013, Nigeria was placed at the 144 position out of 177 countries. In 2014, Nigeria was rated 136 out of 174 countries. Although from 2014 to today, Nigeria has not made any improvement and has remained I36 in the corruption perception index (Transparency International, 2017). Corruption has permeated every aspect of Nigerian society and has become a norm. It has not only affected the functioning of governmental institutions but also the private sector, resulting in a lack of trust in public institutions and a decrease in foreign investment. Corruption in Nigeria is systemic and deeply entrenched, with bribery being demanded and paid for services that should be provided by the government. The lack of accountability and oversight has created an environment in which individuals in power can act with impunity, leading to a culture of corruption. This is the stark reality of Nigeria after more than twenty years journey into democracy. The social and economic living conditions of Nigerians especially those at the base of the social pyramid have deteriorated over the years of the transition to democracy.

Action Aid Nigeria (2015) in a report on corruption and poverty in Nigeria identified certain manifestations of corruption in Nigeria to include inflation of public expenditure, bribery and corruption fraud, and office of the First Lady of President and State Governors which became conduit pipes for siphoning public funds. The report further identified the actors involved in corruption to include the officials in the executive, the legislature, the judiciary, law enforcement agencies, civil servants and public officers, politicians, political parties and the private sector.

Corruption became endemic within the executive with impunity for example, the Bauchi state executive refuse to account about #1,013 billion meant for the Ecological Fund of the state while the balance of the #95 million meant for the Sakwa village erosion went down the drain (Analysis, March, 2003). Executive corruption became pervasive in the system depicting in diversion of public funds, and unaccounted money.

Cases of corruption also relate to the Legislature in the administration under the Peoples' Democratic Party and the current ruling All Progressives' Congress. For example in a report by Premium Times News (2019), the National Assembly engaged in various scandals of contract awards, fraud and sleazes amounting to billions of naira and dollars over two decades of law making from 1999-2019. According to the report #1.8trillion was spent in maintenance of the National Assembly. In a breakdown of the budget allocation of the National Assembly reveals a disturbing story of mass embezzlement within the period. In 2018 Senator Shehu Sani of Kaduna Central revealed that senators' running cost stood at #13.5million monthly despite allegations that senators paid themselves additional allowances without approval by the

Revenue Mobilization and Fiscal Commission. At the State Houses of Assembly, members received #6billion per annum (Premium Times, 2019). From this astonishing revelation therefore no wonder politicians and political parties fight to the tooth to win elections and control state power at all costs.

That corruption is an endemic cancer within the civil service in Nigeria is incontestable. In fact the systemic decay in the civil service of this country today can be attributable to corruption most notably bribery to solicit for undeserved favour or to get access to rights. On 29th of August, 2019 the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission conducted a probe of $16billion power scandal involving Head of Finance, Marvel Emefiele and Head of Compensation to Communities, Eze M.C. Odigbo of the Niger Delta Power Holding Company for supervising the failed $16billion power project. The two officials were further accused of not accounting for #850million paid for compensation to communities where components of the power projects were sited (The Nation Newspapers, 29th August, 2019).

In the Private sector, according to Magu, corrupt practices were also prevalent, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission arrested two-hundred Internet fraudsters and recovered #14million from wire transfers (The Nation Newspapers, 2019).

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 disconnect between the governed and the governors, the rulers and the ruled, they both seems to have different points of alignment. Since the rebirth of democracy, many leaders have emerged against the people 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 good governance.

Poverty and deplorable living conditions

The word poverty provokes strong emotions and many questions. It is a chronic and debilitating condition that results from multiple adverse synergistic risk factors and affects the mind, body, and soul (Ojukwu, 2013). Poverty is multi-dimensional and interlocking, and its dimensions are mutually reinforcing. It defines various levels of want and deprivations that constrain a person from fully realizing his or her potentials in society which include lack of food (hunger), lack of money, lack of shelter, indebtedness, unhygienic insecure environment, limited access to medical facilities, electricity, water and other basic services (Action Aid, 2015). Thus, it means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. Poverty is about powerlessness, lack of representation in decision making in the society and lack of freedom to express oneself. What appears to be a consensus is that the prevalence of poverty is a negation of human development.

According to Ale (2012) under democratic governance of the Fourth Republic, although the poverty level reduced from 70% in 1999 to 54.7% in 2004, however in 2010 there was an upward shift to 60.9% and it is expected to increase further because of such factors as corruption and poor political governance. In fact, under the present democratic dispensation, while the economy has been growing positively, the rate of poverty has been increasing. The attendant implication of this misnomer are practical existence of all manner of crimes such as kidnapping, armed robbery, prostitution, sexual slavery, pen-robbery, and electioneering bickering and hooliganism. Poverty is definitely not just a problem for the poor, but for the non-poor as well, indeed for society as a whole. The large number of people in poverty in Nigeria and elsewhere implies that resources are inefficiently used and therefore increases the risk of social upheavals and political instability. Poverty widens income and social inequality and as the gap between the rich and the poor becomes increasingly obvious to the poor, they become restless and instability becomes the rule rather than the exception.

General insecurity, increasing crime waves and banditry

From religious crises to post election violence to armed banditry and kidnapping for ransom; with the proliferation of illegal arms across Nigeria's borders and the growth of bandits' camps in the Northwestern parts, the story is a lamenting wave of insecurity, and the developed, more sophisticated and organized Boko-Haram insurgency and terrorism to the expansion of farmer-herder violence into Southern parts, and the emergence of the Eastern Nigeria Network (ESN) in the South East; indeed the level of insecurity in Nigeria is multifaceted as such one cannot accurately categorize the patterns.

It is noteworthy that foreign investments seek out a peaceful and a welcoming atmosphere. Investors are wary of those regions embroiled in violence. The Global and Peace Index has continuously downgraded Nigeria as one of the restive nations. Out of 158 countries, Nigeria ranked 117th in 2007, 129th in 2008/2009, and 146th in 2012. Thus, Nigeria has once been ranked with Sudan, Iraq, and even Somalia (Omilusi, 2013; Asiegbu, 2022). A state, which lacks the capacity to secure life and property in its territory, is a failed state. He maintains the view that the loss of state security services implies the non-existence of the state. As he put it, the state plays the role of the "guarantor of last resort of personal safety, liberty and property of the citizen". He distinguishes between the external and internal aspects of security.

Further, he specifies the two dimensions of the internal spectrum of the security of the state: state security and the people's security. Relating to the people, (Omilusi, 2013; Asiegbu, 2022) explains that security in no way refers to any use of arms. Rather, it consists in meeting the citizens' needs - the social, economic, political, cultural, and human rights. To assure the people's security in times of need is "the only and best guarantee of security of the state" (Omilusi, 2013, pp.1-9). The external dimension of the security of the state refers to foreign armed invasion of a state. Following the thought, Omilusi (2013) and Nzongala-Ntalaja (2013, pp.96-97) insist human security is double-pronged. In the first place, it refers to a shield against violence and in the second, it refers to provision of access to people's rights to education, initial healthcare, supply of the basic amenities, right to clean environment, ready response to disasters like the provision of COVID-19 palliatives, etc. Nigeria boasts of various levels of state security institutions and services.

Nigeria's economy depends entirely on oil. The South-South region of the state is the locus for tremendous oil reserves in the country. Ethnic strife's among different ethnic nations did envelope the region in the past. The flaring of gas, the nonchalance of various corporations about the environmental pollution of the region - together drew the ire of the region to engage in wanton destruction of the corporations' equipment, kidnapping, blowing up the oil pipelines, etc. Constituting a threat to the state's economy, the Yar' Adua Presidency granted the various warring factions' amnesty. Only recently, some groups have renewed their threats to go on a rampage.

Since its emergence in 2009, Boko-Haram has continued to gain territories in the Northeastern parts of Nigeria most notably Borno state and the neighboring states (Musa, 2013). Presently, Boko Haram terrorists remain the highest threat to Nigerian state. The Northerners are wont to trace the emergence of Boko Haram in Nigeria to injustices perpetrated against the Northern region. Yet, the North has been ruling the country for decades! Unaware of the dangers it posed to the nation, the Federal government (FG) handled the initial emergence of Boko Haram with woolly gloves until the group built up its own armory.

Following in the heels of Boko Haram are the Fulani herders. Although the herders did not belong to any of the agents of security, the FG never deals them any hard blow. The Fulani pastoralists have generated unrest in most parts of the Nigerian state. They maim, rape, kill, kidnap and plunder. Buhari-government and the rampaging Fulani ethnic nation have lost sight of the modern mechanized way of herding cows. The rejection of the peaceful modern avenues of pastoralism has made their activities suspicious. Other regions of the Nigerian state have rejected the Fulani occupation of their ungoverned spaces within their ancestral lands. That the Buhari-led FG turns a blind eye on their activities places the Fulani herders above the law.

The emergence of Eastern Nigeria Network (ESN) and Amotekun are traceable to the obnoxious activities of the Fulani herders (Asiegbu, 2022).

Weak institutions

Another significant governance issue in Nigeria is weak institutions facing Nigeria's governance system. The country's institutions, such as the police, judiciary, and bureaucracy, are often understaffed, underfunded, and lacking in training and resources. This has resulted in a system where those in power can act with impunity, and the rule of law is often ignored. This creates an opportunity for public officials to embezzle funds without fear of repercussion or punishment. Institutional weakness and failure has led to high level of disregard for constitutionalism, flagrant abuses of citizens' rights, and the rule by law, not of law (Omotola, 2008a, p.53). Furthermore, the monumental failure of the police as state institution to ensure security and maintain law and order across the country is evident by the proliferation of vigilante groups which are effectively taking over the important state role of law enforcement, adjudication and 'dispensation of justice' and at the same time "protect and extort from local communities" (Ginifer and Ismail, 2005, p.2). The persistence of such intractable institutional inadequacies in Nigeria and by extension Africa which Nzongola-Ntalaja described as "malfunctioning of democracy" informed the view by a section of Western scholarship "that Africa is not 'mature' for democracy"

(Omotola, 2008a, p.46). Worse still, major political actors hardly operate within the limit of constitutional provisions, as they employ extra-constitutional mechanisms to pursue their selfish interests, including the struggle for power elongation and abuse of power of incumbency to frustrate opposition forces (Omotola, 2008b, p.58). Nigeria is degenerating into a society without a discernible legalistic framework for law enforcement agencies or judicial system. In Nigeria, anyone that is favored in political patronage can basically get away with most crimes, and some of these crimes involve money laundering, uncontrollable theft of government money and other illegal crimes (Omotoye, 2011). The institutions set up to ensure accountability and transparency in Nigeria is fragile. Most of these agencies have failed to effectively carry out their assigned roles. For instance, economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has been severally alleged of corruption and other sharp practices. The same allegation is also applicable to the police, Judiciary, legislature and other similar agencies. These are challenges that must be addressed if Nigeria is to enjoy good governance in the future.

Conclusion

Conclusively, governance issues in Nigeria are complex and multifaceted, affecting every aspect of the country's development. Corruption, political instability, weak institutions, and lack of accountability are some of the most significant issues that require urgent attention. Obviously, many complex issues exist but can be managed. Accountability, transparency, fairness, and responsibility are essential components of effective governance, ensuring that those in power act in the best interests of society. A conceptual framework based on these strategies can guide policy and programme development, as well as research on governance systems, and can help identify areas for improvement. By applying these strategies, governments and citizens can work together to create governance systems that are transparent, equitable, and responsive to the needs of society. Nigeria must take necessary measures to address these issues, including reinforcing accountability and transparency in governmental institutions, developing strong democratic institutions, strengthening weak institutions, and establishing independent oversight bodies to promote accountability. The successful implementation of these measures will undoubtedly lead to a more stable and prosperous Nigeria. The paper recommends that:

Recommendations

(a) There must be effective fight against corruption and those caught must be prosecuted and brought to justice regardless of position, class or tribe.

(b) The Government must have the political will to use modern security strategies in dealing with the menace of insecurity in the country and funds meant for security must be given to the Military and other security agencies for purchase of modern equipment, training and welfare.

© The legislative and executive organs of the government must, as a matter of urgency, respect the Rule of Law and obey the constitutional provisions in order to entrench and safeguard stability in governance in Nigeria. Nigerians must ensure democracy in the choice of candidates for elections and reject any unsuitable candidates in their local constituencies to ensure probity and genuine representation.

(d) Lastly, the government must ensure that effective poverty reduction strategies are put in place. Local governments must be allowed to function independently without control by State Governors in order to provide meaningful service delivery and much needed employment opportunities to the citizens.

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