

## GOOD GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: THE GAP BETWEEN RHETORIC AND REALITY

**ILEPE JOHNSON AKINTUNDE**  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
RUFUS GIWA POLYTECHNIC  
P.M.B 1019, OWO, ONDO STATE.  
Email: [imoukay@yahoo.com](mailto:imoukay@yahoo.com)

### Abstract

*The Nigerian state as governance template has been dominated by vexatious problem of underdevelopment since the post-colonial history. Good governance and development as an intertwined concept have largely been elusive resulting from leadership problems, weak institutions, pervasive corruption, existence of multiple centres of loyalty base regime, ethnic and religious interest among others. The paper deploying secondary source of data to scrutinize the extent to which Nigeria has been effectively governed. Whilst there have been some highlands of sincerity and integrity among leaders, there have nevertheless been a preponderance of abysmal leadership in our most populous state in Africa. It is the contention of this paper that the country has not been properly governed. The paper therefore recommended that the “change” mantra upon which the president rode to win the 2015 presidential election be rather realistic rather than rhetoric towards actualizing socio-political cum economic development.*

**Key words: Good Governance, development, Nigeria, Corruption, Underdevelopment**

### INTRODUCTION

The concept of good governance has become a popular catch phrase which politicians and administrators in Nigeria easily deploy to draw upon support base from the generality of the people. The concept is suggested to be a means to development through good representation and governance which has been evasive in much of post-independence history of Nigeria and in particular the forty republics. While governance has been effectively deployed elsewhere as it were in Tanzania currently under president John Magufuli owing to the type of leadership he represents in terms of prudent resources management accountability and responsiveness, the same cannot be said of Nigeria.

Leadership problems, weak institutions pervasive corruption, ethnic and regional base loyalty and interest, and a general amoral public sphere have all colluded to prevent efficient governance and by extension rapid development upon which Odione Akharine (2007-10) defined Nigerian political state as a bizarre. While Kescelma (1996:616) described the state as an unfinished project characterized by instability and uncertainties. Nigerian state is like a diabetic patient whose excess sugar in its blood stream serves no purpose (Ameh, 2007).

Successive regimes and Nigeria leaders merely pay lip service to the twin concepts of good governance and development. They only mouth ideas to gain access to political power and public offices after which they invariably become either too lethargic to walk the talk or are swallowed or arrested by what was now become known as the “system”. The system is a euphemism for dysfunctional state of affairs of Nigeria’s public institutions and the public domain which have been perverted by plebendalism. The consequence of this poor attitude to governance is fairly well-known. It includes mass poverty, economic stagnation, political instability, corruption, unemployment, insurgency and terrorism, social unrest and conflict, abuse of power and the principle of the rule of law, all of which reinforces one another. Mass poverty and wide gap between

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the few rich and the large poor has been the result of a state with massive potentials but which has ironically experienced a steady decline since oil windfall peaked more than three decades ago. The slow and disarticulated growth in concert with rising population and mass unemployment have deposited dramatic increases in the poverty levels of Nigeria state thereby causing social and political instability.

Indeed, flagging growth, rising poverty and deep rooted economic inequality constitute a direct cause of social instability whether ethnic conflicts, religious bigot, or separatist agitation or agenda in Nigeria, the cause can be completely put down to economic decline. The resurfaced and persistent herdsmen/Fulani menace, kidnapping and terrorism could partly be put down to the availability of idle and unemployed youths. The Niger-Delta problem, a resource propelled debate is squarely within the general parameters of deprivation (Aghedo, 2015).

However, the most dangerous and negative challenge that have frustrated governance in Nigeria is the widespread problem of endemic corruption. Corruption has become a contagious and alignment socio-economic and political problem enervating the development aspirations of the state. It permeates every strata of the society, reduces the values system and has been institutionalized. Even, the present government led by president Buhari, that was majorly voted into power in 2015 on anti-corruption slogan is not left out of this endemic virus as evident in some of her top officials been fingered in the act while the president look the other way round as agitations for their investigations and prosecutions felt into the deaf air of the presidency. See the below table as justification of the above assertion.

**Table 1: A Group –The Civil Society Network against Corruption (C.S.N.A.C)**

S/N	Name	Status	Allegations	Financial involvement	Rmks
1.	Mr Babachir Lawal	SGF	Violation of law and due process/award of contract to self company	\$8m	Suspension
2.	Mr Ayo Oke	D-cr National Intelligent Agency (N.I.A)	Discovery of Huge sum of money in private building (Hoursborn Towel Lagos) through TGP off by whistle-blower April, 19, 2017	\$43m	Suspension
3.	Mr Abba Kyari	Chief of Staff to Mr President	Abuse of office for personal gain/award of contract to highly indebted company "Valliant offshore contractors limited against AMCON recommendation 2) Interfering with EFCC investigation of fraud involving saliana energy		Not investigated
4.	Tukur Buratai	Chief of Army Staff	False asset declaration to the code of conduct Bureau and ownership of Dubai		-

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			against code of public office holders dated 17 <sup>th</sup> July, 2016		
5.	Okechukwu Enelamah	Minister of Trade and Investment	Re-investigation of money laundering allegation and telecommunication service provider (M.T.N) by EFCC on illegal repatriation	\$13.92b	-
6.	Mr Mike Okiro	Chairman, Police Service Commission	Diversion of public fund and phantom Trip in 2013. Joint petition by C.S.N.A & Network on police reform (N.D.P.R.N) 2 <sup>nd</sup> September, 2016	\$133 million and \$4.6 million as personal gratification	Not investigated
7.	Dambazua	Minister of interior	Possession of real estate in United State of America, (2) Billings in Abuja July 22, 2016 Report by Sahara reporters amount worth beyond personal saving as a military officer. You will also recall that his name was allegedly removed from the list of indicted arms procurement corruption sandal		Not investigated

Source: Premium Times, Tuesday, August 15, 2017. [www.premiumtimesng.com/news](http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news) by EvelynsOkokwu

There will be no meaningful governance and development if this crisis is not thoroughly dealt with. As Akindele (1990), posited that the crisis runs deep throughout the general facets of Nigeria: Election rigging, perversion of ethnicity, insistence on bribes as pre-condition for performing legitimate duties, bureaucratic indulgence in receiving bribes, downright looting of public treasury cum money laundering by the elected and appointed politicians all constitute corruption.

In Nigeria is to exist her present underdevelopment conundrum and pursue development via good governance, then she must be prepared to clamp down on certain social-political and economic subcultures which have be detrimental to her developmental aspiration. In this light, certain questions become essentially germane. Can Nigeria exist her present underdeveloped states? Why are Nigerian political graduates not committed to transformative leadership despite campaign promises? These are some of the critical questions confronting development experts and their answers can go a long way in ameliorating the present crisis.

## CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

### *Good governance*

When the institutions of a state are transparent, accountable, its governance terrain is then referred as good.

These critical institutions include the legislature bureaucracy, Executive, Judiciary, Mass-media and other agencies of government. The process include important activities like elections, legal procedures, execution of project which should be free from corruption and other form of socio-economic and political perversion or manipulation.

The extent to which a nation achieves this height is a key measure of its credibility and legitimacy status in the comity of nations. Good governance enhances the operation of the elements of democracy like public participation, constitutionalism, and the rule of law. Indeed, the bench mark has been representative legislative which provides effective oversight on the executive and an independent judiciary which interpreted the law without state interference. It means governing the nation in the best possible way and in line with international standard.

The concept of good governance within the confines of democracy pursue the frontier of progress and growth by deploying its force to act on lofty ideas like power eradication, environmental conservation, and gender fairness. It also ensures that the ethical segment of civil society and the media anchors these agenda while ensuring that the wishes and aspiration of the weakest people in the society are brought to perspective. The essence of good governance can hardly be over-emphasized as a foundation of democracy and drivers of development. It is therefore the totality of accountability, transparency, rule of law, equitability, inclusivity, and commitment to the need of the people.

From modernization perspective, it was viewed as a transitionarycum evolutionary process in which nations develop through a series of growth stages and becomes civilized and modern. This position suggests that the future or developing countries could be understood in terms of present advance and industrialized society. Modernizations and nation building were to be driven, by the application of national control over people, resources and the environment. This thinking is premised on commitment to economic, growth, recognition of the fact that society change is effective and positive when divine by autonomous institutions and the desire to assimilate technology and adapt them to improve the lives of the local people i.e the adaptive state capacity. mechanization.

Against the modernization perspective, the liberal reformist argued that development encompasses a complexity of welfare goals, elimination of poverty, increase in employment, increase equality and sustenance of human rights. New term like'' inclusive growth'' and integrated rural development were spurned.

The above liberal perspective has come with severe attack by the leftist and radical depend they writers who condemned the structural framework of contemporary world economy for creating poverty in the underdeveloped world and the capitalist world system which gave vent to the development of underdevelopment in the peripheral status. Frank, 1971, Sweezy, 1982 stall. This view pushed for a radical change in the conception and means to the developmental agenda.

To them, Development is seen as the attainment of those conditions that will aid the accomplishment of the absolute potential of human personality (McClean,1996:138) Thus economic indices like Gross National Product(G.N.P), Average real income per head are only intermediary means to an end are not end in themselves in long run, reduction in poverty, inequality, and employment are critical.

Also crucial for development agencies are:-improvement in certain social indicators like provision of Housing, increase in quality of life e.t.c. (Brundtland 1987) argued that sustainable development tries to achieve growth without impending the ability of future generation to achieve their only needs.

## **THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS LEADERSHIP THEORY**

A political approach to institutions and their leadership in a noun when an approach i.e capable of capturing institutions as political area's (Mintzberg,1983,1985) It will them be extremely logical that as searcher focus on cause and effect of political behaviour displayed by political actors, e.5 Ferris & judge 1991,prefer,1992.Allen&Angel,1981) The formation of coherent theory of leadership in certain terrain of politics remain elusive even if the need for such views are well recognized (House &Aditya,1997)

The study of leadership is one of the oldest areas of scientific enquiry in the behaviour sciences and remains very active. When we assess the volume compiled by brass (1990) we shall better appreciate the breath, people and intensiveness of scholarly interest in leadership.

Although, house and Aditya 1997..455 argued for the theoretical and empirical investigation of leaders political behaviour and suggest "It is rather amazing that there is no grand theory of political leadership in complex institutions and societies given the fact that social psychologist have long studied power and influence processes in institutions.

As part of development of a model of political theory of leadership, we must define what we mean by leadership and organizational politics.

First, when we refer to leadership, we utilized the definition proposed by(House 1995.413) of general leadership "that is behaviour that gives purpose, meaning and guidance to collector by articulating the collective vision that appeals to ideological values, matured and self-perceptions of followers" House further status that the outcome s of such behaviour are heightened awareness of organizational values, unusual level of effort, and the foregoing that one discussed in this model could be used for self-serving purpose by leaders. one ought to focus on those aspects because such self-serving behaviour are not a part of our definition of leadership but we must acknowledge however that such behaviour likely exists and encourage interested researchers to undertake studying this as a compliment to the present perspective if is also likely that leadership behaviour has important positive impacts on the leader.

## **APPLICATION OF THEORY**

The application of leadership theory to good governance and development in this academics discourse is to emphasize the significance behavioral approach to the study of politics, and the institution of government. The general behaviour political actors in public policies analysis and their values and mission in the political arena's nationally and internationally goes a long way in the determination and actualization of national objective of a state.

Government as institutions is a process whereby the will of the state are formulation expressed, and enforced. Therefore, the political will to authoritatively allocate the collective values through the inputs and output mechanism process for the good of the society and in line with the social contract theory must not be compromised. The president as the arrow head of government in synergy with the legislative and judiciary arms of government are responsible and liable for the provision of good governance that will usher in a sustainable socio-economic and political development and good quality of life of the citizenry.

Consequently, the action and inaction, the decision and policies of those who occupy political offices in the various institutions goes a long way at determining the fortune of the state or otherwise.

The above facts on the theory of leadership to governance underscore the dialectics that characterize the absence from duty of president Buhari for 100 day on medical checkup in United Kingdom for an undisclosed illness and the subsequent furor generated by the “Resume or Resign protest in the state capital of Nigeria”.

## **GOVERNANCE AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: ELUSIVE AGENDA**

Nigeria was influenced by the transformative impacts of the global “third wave” of democratization of the late 80’s and early 90’s Huntington (1991). Before this period, governance in Nigeria oscillated between one civilian administrative at one time and military regime at another period. The military rule that dominated the greatest part of Nigeria’s political space as an independent state gave into the popular demand of democratization in on May 29, 1999. Nigeria has therefore witnessed uninterrupted civil rule. Hence, it is the intension of this paper to interrogate what has been the impact of civil rule on socio-economic development in Nigeria, Analyzing the interface of governance, the character of civil rule, socio-economic challenges and the pattern and dimensions of corruption in Nigeria’s since 1999. Will deeper in our understanding of those challenges and provide likely panacea to minimize the menace.

The simultaneity of democracy, good governance and development in Nigeria is conditioned not only by democratic consolidation, but also by commitment to providing public goods in which political elites should play decisive roles.

This presentation of the above analysis in this work is a crucial addition to the ongoing debate on corruption as well as how best to transform Nigeria’s economic potentials into reality for sustainable development and positive change in the country in line with the change mantra of the present government in power.

Indeed, democratic governance could overcome its challenges so as to be able to achieve and sustain social and economic development. The huge infractions on the nation resources arising from endemic corruption and the perceive lack of political will to tackle it genuinely has served to show that the nation’s political leadership is largely moral.

The quest for and struggle by Nigerian for democratic government are conceived as means to two important ends. (Joseph 2005) that is one that is aimed not only at doing away with expressive and autocratic governments, but also demands for government with a material value to improve the living standards of the people especially challenges provoked by long years of autocratic military regimes and sustained by the current political dispensation in the country has become one the expectation Nigerians.

Theoretically, democratic governance represent a rare windows of opportunity to rebuild failing institutions of governance and state-building as well as to proffer remedy to the monumental failures of the past regimes. Empirically, democratic governance should present a platform to plant liberal democratic values or institutional mechanisms capable of regulating governance processes and minimize the excessed of political elites. The existence or structurally weak regulatory institutions in governance of a country like Nigeria; where it has been very difficult to translate the national economic potentials to realistic sustainable development, raises more troubling questions that ignites concerns (Owogbemi, 2012).

The inability to perform adequate emanates from the apparent structural log in governance as well as the ineffective institutions that are weak and controversial over the discharge of their responsibilities for instance, there is a constitutional deficiency in the 1999 constitution of the Nigeria state order whose responsibility it is to investigate and prosecute economic financial crimes suspects. This constitutional lay or lacuna created a lot of hindrances not only for regulatory institution like national assembly, E.F.C.C and

I.C.P.C but also inhibits the prosecution process through delay and perhaps the eventual release of suspects without adequate rewards for their financial and economic lawlessness (Ribadu 2007) once the national assembly was taken over investigation of an alleged corrupt practice, the E.F.C.C would have to wait for the outcome of the legislative enquiring before taking any further step to addressing the graft issue. In this instance, we have witnessed a situation whereby Nigerians had to wait endlessly to hear the outcome of the whole scenario, which at times might end up in cover up and/or controversial judgement (Abiola and Mariangwe, 2012 Beyond the above constitutional impediment, appointments of the head of these anti-corruption agencies as well as the election of those of the upper and lower legislative chambers of parliament in Nigeria are done and influenced respectively by the president with the exception of this 8<sup>th</sup> national assembly in the upper house).

The implications of these formal and informal presidential in cursion or duties are that the heads of the respective anti-graft agencies are subjected to the execution whips and manipulation of the execution president in the discharge of their constitutional responsibilities. This situation accounted for the allegations against the E.F.C.C performance under former president Olusegun Obasanjo as the (Ribadu) led anti-corruption agency was accused of selective investigation and prosecution of suspected fraud in Nigeria. Recent constitutional crisis concerning the persistent refusal of magu's Confirmation as Head of E.F.C.C by the Nigerian Senate and subsequent litigation and request for the constitutional interpretation of section 171 of the 1999 constitution vis-à-vis section 2(3) of the E.F.C.C Act which lawyers has given diverse opinion to confuse the presidency.

Nigeria has lost its pride of place in Africa continent to corruption, wasteful and mismanagement of resources and patient-client politics. Other challenges of Nigerian state that impedes on good government is underdevelopmentalism expressed in terms of infrastructural decadence, poverty, inequality, violence, declining life expectancy, unemployment, insecurity of lives/properties and high debt profile.

Another serious challenge bareful to development and good governance is state clientelisation. This is a situation where Nigeria state and its agents function as clients and taken instructions from their principal/God father outside the formal state apparatus. It is a patron-clients venture where agents occupies seat in the allocation of large and values of the society for selfish interest state clientelisation suggest a programme of state reconstructive to protect and promote the interest of the few-elites. Premise on the above and more, authors, and international communities have described Nigeria as a failing state, patron-client state fragile, weak (Ebohon 2013:35).

## **THE NATURE OF NIGERIAN'S STATE, DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNANCE TEMPLATE**

There is a nexus between good governance and development seuel to the nature, logic and character of Nigeria state. This is largely due to the fact of how fragile, weak, irresponsible, patron-client and dependent a state is, goes a long way to determine the governance pattern in that state.

It will surface to state here the words of Mrs Obey Ezekwesill (2013) in her keynote address in Portharcout themed literature and the creative economy" she said "Nigeria is perhaps the best known example of African paradox. It is a country which has struggled with the development process over the last 53years of her independence as the 6<sup>th</sup> largest producer of oil in the world, it has earned more than half a trillion dollars in oil export since the discovery of that commodity in the south-south region of this country where we are gathered today. Unfortunately, the massive revenue from oil has been a source of enormous sorrow to citizens due to poor government by our political elite over the many decades since its discoveries".

She went further today that Nigeria has therefore tragically failed to translate rich resources endowment to improvement in the standard of living of her citizens resulting from bad governance, hence; we today have 69 percent of over 170million of our citizens in the poverty bracket according to the latest data from the National bureau of statistics.

Even though, the last one decade has witnessed an increase in our economic growth rate to an average of seven percent per annum regrettably, this has not resulted in poverty reduction, the poor governance or its more virulent manifestation, public corruption is of course the fundamental reason for Nigeria's poor economic performance. She also states that Nigeria's problem is bad governance. It is not the intention of this paper to outline the corrupt practice that have bedeviled the system but establish the nexus between the character of state governance and development in Nigeria.

### **GOOD GOVERNANCE: FROM RHETORIC TO REALITY/RECOMMENDATIONS.**

This paper have established a dialectical link between governance styles and achievement of socio-economic development in Nigeria, the impacts of the later on the former is largely dependent on the conduct within the institution of governance which either weaken or strengthen state capacity to realize its vision and mission. It is one thing to formulate policy decision, but another thing to develop the technical and management capacity to implement them as the case in Nigeria. Have we forgotten vision 2010? Shifted to vision 2013 and 2015 respectively? old operation feed the nation (O.F.N) and green revolution?, poverty reduction programme, national economic empowerment and development strategy (NEEDS) it is ignominious that one would be in a high sea and uses saliva to wash his or her hand.

In any liberal democratic selling, the principal of the rule of law is a sine-aqua-non for good governance, there is no doubt that there will be conflicting interest in a state but that has to be regulated through effective institutional mechanism such as courts and other anti-graft agencies. In Nigeria, it has been serial abuse of the court since 1999 with exception of late president Musa Yaradua administration. This incessancy violation of judicial institution became reenacted with impunity under president Buhari administration against the rule of the law it has dependently touted on so many occasions. As part of his commitment to fighting corruption, several officials of the past administration accused of mismanagement of public funds were charged to court, prominent among, them was the former national security adviser (SamboDasuki) who is facing multiple charges for alleged diversion of \$2.1b and illegally possession of fire arms, although granted bail on at least six different occasions by various courts, the Nigeria government has persistently refused to comply with court orders.

In the wake of his trial, a federal high court in Abuja, preside by justice Adeniyi Ademola in 2015 ordered the release of Dasuki's passport and granted him permission to travel abroad for three weeks on medical grounds. Despite the order made in November 3, the D.SS refused to release him.

Similarly, a former minister of state for finance (Bashir Yuguda), former Sokoto governor (AttahiruBafarawa) and three others were granted bail on December 21, 2015 by the federal capital territory high court in sum of #250 million each and two sureties in like sum. They were charged to court on a 22 court charge for alleged diversion of funds, misappropriate and breach of trust to the tune of #19.4b by the E.F.C.C, deposit fulfilling all conditions for bail set by justice Peter Affen, the D.S.S equally deprived the. Perhaps the most absurd of violation of human right by the Buhari administration is the treatment of Ibrahim El.Zakzaky, a leader of a Shiite group, I.M.N, who has been in detention without any trial for order 17 months, and having lost 347 members to the wash between his group and the military on the 14<sup>th</sup>dec. 2015. Just to mention few among others ([www.premiumtimesng.com/news](http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news) August 14 2017).



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In Nigeria today, Nigerians are alienated so much that they take to so many atrocities and crimes to succeed, they fuel fulfilled dying in another country than Nigeria. The concomitant rise in ethnic militias, hospitality and restiveness, kidnapping are traceable to the state of illusion and delusioned through bad governance as opined by the frustration and aggression theorist.

Obasanjo (1994) said “Nigeria is a country that is potentially great, yet almost permanently in crisis, regularly threatened with disintegration and mismanaged, forever talking about democracy but retreating from democracy”

It is quite alarming that Obasanjo himself later assumed the leadership of the country and was heinously accused of highhandedness, gross inefficiency and alienation of the masses. Except Nigeria goes to the drawing board to restructure both the structure of the state and its institutions, we should forget dreaming of attaining the height of the Asian tigers, Europe and North America.

Aside the abuse of rule of law and issue of weak state institution, corruption is argue ably central to the problem of socio-economic development. Hence, this problem must be addressed by checkmating the excesses of and enforcing the legal restraints on the authority of government officials as well as increase the principle of accountability.

Political leadership must re-focus, re-emphasize and pursue with vigor the vision as well as the mission of democratic governance which incidentally tallies with the aspiration for and the struggle by Nigerians for true democracy as against ordinarily civil rule. These steps are summed up in what I called “political will” and “determination” these are required because no leader can wage affective war on corruption especially when party members, political allies and associates were not immune from corrupt practice.

Finally, there is an urgent need for empirically grounded transformation agenda so as to formulate and implement policies that would stimulate and create the much desire socio-economic progress and stop dintelization. This will stand in contradiction to contemporary realities in the country where the “change mantra” are more real in rhetoric than reality.

## CONCLUSION

The overarching submission of this paper is that governance milieu in Nigeria is dysfunctional to the extent that it is invariably unable to drive development. Nigeria leaders for decades have spoken dividend of democracy, good governance but have largely been unable to effectively realize the ethos and core tenant of good governance, therefore, problem of corruption must be addressed without selective obedient to court order or persecution of political opposition. The ultimate recommendation would be a trial over hauling of our institutional mode and make them hold leaders accountable. While the present anti-corruption drive of Muhamadu Buhari should be total and the expected “change” must indeed being from government by way of demonstrating leadership by example, failure to all these measure and above recommendations leaves the Nigerian society highly vulnerable to human security stresses.

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