

# Good Governance: Challenges And Prospects

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**Abstract:** *This paper examined the framework of good governance and its prospects and challenges. The methodology adopted was qualitative in nature and secondary sources were used to elicit data for this paper. The secondary source included Books, Magazines, Journals and Newspapers etc. Good governance emerged as a powerful idea when multilateral and bilateral agencies like World Bank, UNDP, OECD, ADB, etc realized that it is a citizen friendly, citizen caring and responsive administration. In absence of good governance, no development schemes can bring any improvement in the quality life of the citizens. On the other hand, if the power of the state, exercised in improper ways then the poor will suffer the most, as poor governance generates and reinforces corruption, poverty etc. It is essential to strengthen the governance and it is also the precondition for to improve the lives of the poor. The concept of good governance plays important role in the modern governmental system. No doubt people are now a day's very conscious and they are always aware about the day to day functioning of the government. So, the government has to satisfy the general people and good governance creates an environment for this. Nigeria's democratic experience of past five decades after independence has clearly established that good governance must aim at expansion of social opportunities and removal of poverty. The challenges to good governance include: Ending of poverty, ignorance, disease and inequality of opportunities. Therefore, the study sees good governance as securing justice, empowerment, employment and efficient delivery of services.*

**Keywords:** *Good Governance, Accountability, Transparency, Prospects, Challenges*

## I. INTRODUCTION

As one of the fastest growing developing nations globally, Nigeria is expected to show leadership in the delivery of public service. This stems from the fact that good governance is crucial for political stability, economic efficiency, long-term economic growth and raising the quality of life for all citizens.

Good governance is an issue central to the developmental efforts of most multilateral bodies, chief of which is the World Bank. The World Bank's focus on governance reflects the worldwide drive towards political and economic liberalization. This has led to an increased emphasis on greater state responsiveness and accountability, which are crucial for fostering political stability and economic development. An examination of the World Bank's portrayal of good governance provides further insight into what it means for developing nations.

It defines the subject matter as follows: "Good governance is epitomised by predictable, open and enlightened

policy-making, a bureaucracy imbued with professional ethos acting in furtherance of the public good, the rule of law, transparency, and a strong civil society participating in public affairs (World Bank, 1998).

Poor governance on the other hand, is characterised by arbitrary policy making, unaccountable bureaucracies, un-enforced and or unjust legal systems, the abuse of executive power, a civil society unengaged in public life, and widespread corruption.

In addition, The World Bank's 1994 report titled "From Crisis to Sustainable Growth pinpoints the relevance of good governance to the development of a nation's economy. The report states that efforts to create an enabling environment and to build capacities will be wasted if the political context is not favourable. It emphasised the fact that better governance will be achieved if there is political renewal. This in essence means an attack on corruption from the highest to the lowest level ((World Bank, 1998).

The Bretton Woods institution emphatically states that good governance can only be achieved if those in authority set good examples by strengthening accountability, encouraging public debate, and nurturing a free press (Arora, 2017).

The above points paint a vivid picture of what good governance is all about and provides a basis for analysing the areas of success or failure of good governance in Nigeria. It provides a means of assessing governance both in the public and private sectors. Looking at the above definition we can easily identify the shortcomings of governance to include the repeated instances of abuse of executive power and disregard for the rule of law in our nascent democracy.

The incidents of widespread corruption and instances of arbitrariness in policymaking as well as an unaccountable bureaucracy are the antithesis of good governance in the country. Added to this is a slowly improving but jaded judicial system, in most instances lacking the willpower to curtail the excesses of the executive arm of government both at national and sub-national levels. These amongst others are major issues that need to be dealt with in order to achieve good governance in Nigeria.

## II. CONCEPTUAL EXPOSITIONS

Before we proceed in this discourse, it is imperative that we provide some insights into the meaning of some terms that are germane to the understanding of the concept of good governance. We shall examine in a broad context the meaning of governance and related terms such as governance, corporate governance, accountability, etc. These terms though mainly derivatives of the concept of governance have gained currency in recent times and are delicately separated mainly in the context in which they are used or applied.

## III. GOVERNANCE

The term governance is not new and means different things to different people. Its actual meaning depends on the level of governance being considered, the goals to be achieved and the approach being followed. According to Devi (2015) on Corporate Governance, Governance is defined as that separate process of management or leadership that make decisions, which define expectations, grant power, or verify performance. In a business context, governance is the act of developing consistent and cohesive policies, processes, decisions and rights for a given area of responsibility.

The British Council emphasises that governance involves interaction between formal institutions and those in civil society. In essence, it refers to a situation or process whereby elements in society wield power, authority and influence and enact policies and decisions concerning public life and social upliftment.

Devi (2015) posits that the main targets of governance could be listed as follows:

The quest for principles, rules, procedures and good practices that allow organisations to be efficaciously run within the constraints of evolving and changing institutions

The design, implementation and follow-up of functional mechanisms for representation, voting, accountability, transparency, countervailing, monitoring, incentives and standards of performance.

The management of conflict of interests and enforceable decision authority.

Like many other intuitive and unscientific terms, governance does not yield itself to a precise definition. A working definition put forward by Chinmayee (2013) presents governance as “the regime of laws, administrative rules, judicial rulings, and practices that constrain, prescribe, and enable government activity, where such activity denotes the production and delivery of publicly supported goods and services.

Governance refers to the running of the state, considering the mechanisms by which the government should work efficiently. Academic and political involvement in governance dates back only three decades implying that it is a relatively nascent field of study. Governance deals with governing structures and attempts to cope with a set of distinctive issues that overlap with Economics, Political science, International Relations and Law.

Nwogu (2017) believes that governance deals with organisations in representative democracies, and brings the following levels of analysis into sharp focus:

The institutional design; electoral system, representation mechanisms, the structure of separation of powers and the exercise of authority in a given state or country.

The founding charter or constitution, bill of rights and the legal system of the underlying political system. In other words, the very essence of the political structures and the guiding principles of that society (Ranjan, 2016).

The processes by which government officials, representatives, and the judiciary are appointed, monitored and replaced; the design of the governmental bureaucracy and its management.

The fiduciary role, agency relationships, agenda-building, accountability and transparency, as well as the whole array of checks and balances

The integrity of the judiciary; law enforcement and property rights

The role of collective action: participation and opposition, political parties, groups of interest, veto-players, gatekeepers, and the media

Rent-seeking, soft budgeting, political-clientelism, state-capture, tunnelling (financial fraud committed by an organisation's own management or major shareholders) and corruption.

Although most definitions of governance are focused at the central government, it is pertinent to point out that in reality governance is not limited to the central government only. It involves governance in smaller units within the state such as the local councils, provinces or states, legislative branches, government agencies, governors or mayors' offices, defence and security structures and the like (Uke, 2016).

#### IV. CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Corporate governance is a multi-faceted subject. Its definitions are as numerous as its many pundits. It has been defined as a generic term, which describes the ways in which rights and responsibilities are shared between the various corporate participants, especially management and shareholders. An important theme of corporate governance is the issue of accountability and fiduciary duty, essentially advocating the implementation of guidelines and mechanisms to ensure good behaviour and protect shareholders (Enyioko & Onwusoro, 2014).

The corporate governance structure spells out the rules and procedures for making decisions on corporate affairs. It also provides the structure through which the company objectives are set, as well as the means of attaining and monitoring the performance of those objectives. Corporate governance is the mechanism by which individuals are motivated to align their actual behaviours with the needs and aspirations of their organisations.

Current preoccupation with corporate governance can be traced to two major events in recent times. The first is the East Asian Crisis of 1997, which affected the economies of Thailand, Indonesia, South Korea, Malaysia and Philippines as a result of foreign capital flight. The relatively poor climate of corporate governance in these economies underscored the weaknesses of their institutions. The second most important event driving the growing interest in corporate governance was the corporate crisis of 2001-2002 highlighted by the collapse of large US firms such as Enron Corporation and WorldCom and the resultant scandal in other corporations like Arthur Andersen, Global Crossing and Tyco. Recently in Nigeria, the Cadbury earnings overstatement debacle has led to a clarion call for improved corporate governance in the country (Enyioko & Onwusoro, 2014).

#### V. COMPONENTS OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

According to U.N Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) Good Governance has eight characteristics (Nwogu, 2017):

- ✓ **PARTICIPATION:** Participation in administration by both men and women is the key cornerstone of good governance. Participation may be direct or indirect.
- ✓ **RULE OF LAW:** Good Governance requires fair legal frameworks that are enforced impartially. It also requires protection of human rights, independent and impartial police force, and bureaucracy.
- ✓ **TRANSPARENCY:** It means that information is freely available and directly accessible to those who will be affected by such decisions and their enforcement. Right to Information Act of Nigeria plays a very effective role in this regard.
- ✓ **RESPONSIVENESS:** Good Governance requires that institution and process try to serve all stakeholders within a reasonable timeframe.
- ✓ **CONSENSUS ORIENTED:** Good Governance requires reaching a broad consensus in a society on what is in the

best interest of community and how this can be achieved in a sustainable and prudent manner.

- ✓ **EQUITY AND INCLUSIVENESS:** A society's wellbeing depends on the overall development of its people including women, poor, as well as economically and socially backward people without which real progress of the society cannot be achieved. Their proper representation in the decision-making process is very important.
- ✓ **EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY:** Good governance means the process and institutions produce results that meet the needs of stake holders while making the best use of resources at their disposal.
- ✓ **ACCOUNTABILITY:** Accountability is a key requirement of good governance. Every governmental system whether it is public or private should be accountable to the people. Accountability cannot be enforced without transparency and rule of law.

#### World's Vision in Terms of Governance

According to experts from the OECD, Governments across the world are bringing quantifiable goals and measures into their planning, budgeting, management and oversight process. The overarching purpose is to bring about good governance, improve service delivery and foster economic growth across nations. Countries are seeking to adapt their governmental systems and territorial policies to respond to changing societal and market needs. Issues of accountability and transparency as well as efficiency are constantly reoccurring in the discourse surrounding the evaluation of public officers and governments (Nwogu, 2017).

#### VI. THE FORCES DRIVING/SHAPING GOVERNANCE ACROSS THE GLOBE CURRENTLY

The trend globally is to make government and governance more effective and efficient. To this end, public office holders are increasingly expected to adopt a strategic and managerial approach in delivering public service. The key factor driving or shaping governance across the globe emanates from the realisation that it has become a gauge of political and economic development and a barometer for measuring public affairs management (Das, 2014).

Evidence from research reveals that many countries have come to accept good governance as a veritable mechanism for enhancing the legitimacy of the public realm. It has also become an analytical framework or approach to comparative politics. It is also a means of assessing the performance of different regimes of government.

In Nigeria, governance though suboptimal is believed to have improved comparatively under a democratically elected government. Recent efforts aimed at combating corruption (a major drawback of governance) appears to have yielded some results as the country climbed a notch in the corruption index from the second most corrupt to the third position amongst nations of the world.

Thus, governance is constantly being used by international investors, multilateral bodies including the World Bank as well as Nigerian investors at home and in the

Diaspora in assessing the Nigerian business climate. It is a key factor for attracting or repelling foreign investments, as investors are anxious to know the extent to which the rule of law is upheld, property rights enforced, and judicial systems effective. It is also being used by key multilateral organizations like the World Bank as criteria for extending aid to developing countries (Das, 2014).

## VII. RECENT TRENDS IN GOVERNANCE: LESSONS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES

At this point it is pertinent to launch into a critical examination of the practice of governance across different countries. Whilst it is true that no one country has been able to achieve the ultimate in good governance, there are examples of concerted and deliberate attempts by several nations to uphold the basic principles of this concept. The result of this overt effort to maintain good governance in the public and private domain has yielded immeasurable profits for most of these countries (Arora, 2017).

In the emerging markets for example, it has become a crucial factor in the designation of key countries as financial centres or hubs. This is simply because the perception of good governance in a country increases its attractiveness to foreign investors and gives it competitive advantage over others in the quest for global economic market share. We shall briefly examine a few examples of the recent strategies adopted across different economic blocs to drive good governance:

## VIII. GOOD GOVERNANCE IN OECD COUNTRIES

The OECD as an intergovernmental organisation recognises the importance of good governance and emphasises it across member states. The OECD is committed to its avowed goal of achieving the highest sustainable economic growth, high levels of employment and rising standard of living in member nations, whilst maintaining financial stability and thus contributing to the development of the world economy. In pursuance of this objective, the OECD established a directorate named the Governance and Territorial Development (GOV) to assist member countries to achieve the highest standards of effective governance in a rapidly changing economic and social environment. The system enables an analysis of how governments manage the public sector, improve service delivery and make policy implementation more coherent (Arora, 2017).

GOV has been designed based on the principle that good governance is vital to long-term economic, social and environmental development. It provides comparative data and analysis, develops recommendations on best practices, facilitates peer review, and identifies emerging challenges such as e-government. It also involves promoting understanding of the dynamics of public management and territorial development policies in different societal and market conditions, with a view to achieving the long-term interest of all citizens. The results of these analyses are hoisted in the public domain and made available to policymakers,

academics and practitioners worldwide through country studies, analytical reports and policy briefs.

The OECD also works with non-member countries across the world, engaging in policy dialogue and assessing public administration reform progress whilst advising on improving governance at the central government level. The impetus for this paradigm shift in the OECD arises from the recognition of the fact that the role of the state as a direct product and service provider as well as market player had been diminishing among its member states.

It also realised the fact that the role of the state in setting the framework in which markets operate is becoming more crucial now than ever. This is in the light of the rapid globalisation process and increasing interdependence of countries the world over. It noted that Governance had become a key component of national competitiveness. And that regulatory policy is an integral part of good governance, which also includes efficient government and well-functioning markets. Quality regulations govern rights and obligations; promote competition, open markets as well as social and environmental objectives. It therefore set up a Regulatory Reform Programme aimed at improving the quality of regulation in member states as well as non-member countries (Chinmayee, 2013).

## IX. EMERGING MARKETS (SINGAPORE, MALAYSIA, ETC)

As previously mentioned in the text, most emerging market nations place a strong emphasis on good governance. However, this decision was borne out of a rather bitter and painful experience. Experts have mentioned that lack of good governance typified by cronyism and corruption contributed significantly to the Asian economic meltdown of 1997. A study by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in 1998 involving 260 corporate firms in the affected countries concluded that poor corporate governance was one of the major contributors to the build-up of vulnerabilities in the affected countries that finally culminated in the crisis (World Bank, 1998).

The study also suggests that weaknesses in governance owe much to highly concentrated ownership structure, excessive government interventions, under-developed capital markets, and weak legal and regulatory framework for investor protection. Consequently, and post the Asian Crisis, nations in the emerging markets are beginning to place a crucial emphasis on adopting best practices and instilling the principles of good public and corporate governance.

In South Korea for example, following the crises, the drive to build a financial hub has been anchored on good governance based on regulatory reform, investor protection, financial innovation and competition, among other things. Examples of other emerging markets with increasing emphasis on governance include Singapore, the world's leading maritime hub, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Dubai to name a few.



## X. SUB - SAHARAN AFRICA

Sub-Saharan African countries have been the focus in recent times even as the subject of governance became more prominent in global discourse. The sub-region's penchant for dictatorial regimes, political conflicts, endemic corruption and disregard for rule of law is an evidence of the impact of poor governance earlier defined in this text. The million-dollar question is why is the region so deeply entrenched in the quagmire of bad governance? Many scholars have attempted to answer this question in different ways. But perhaps the most germane of these answers is the fact that poor governance in Africa or the sub-Saharan region is deeply rooted in the historical evolution of its component states.

Rotberg (2004) highlighted the fact that in comparison with any other region of the colonised world, tropical or sub-Saharan Africa was always likely to face especially difficult problems of state construction. He went on to mention in particular that the basis for state creation in the pre-colonial tropical African period was at best feeble and at most times non-existent. According to him, this is a key factor limiting the stability of nation states in the sub-region. The weakness in African state formation and cohesiveness stems from the very uneven fit between such indigenous basis for statehood which the continent possessed and the imposed structures of colonial rule.

African leaders however, are more to blame for their inability to deliver good governance over the years. Nations in the continent have been plagued with corrupt leaders who hardly respect the rule of law and have been known to deliberately weaken democratic and social structures that promote good governance. They are usually intolerant of the opposition, suppressive of the media and manipulate electoral laws and guidelines to extend their stay in the seat of power.

Consequently, and across Africa, the notion of good governance is not a term that can be easily used to describe the various regimes of government from Cairo to Durban. Most African nations cannot stand the litmus test of accountability, transparency, and respect for the rule of law, a fair and just legal system, delivery of human rights, economic growth and improved living standards. Poverty and corruption are twin evils that have held the region captive for too long a time. The preponderance of poverty is a key challenge to good governance in some of these nations, Nigeria inclusive.

The story is however changing gradually across the continent. The driving force behind the turn of events is the widespread economic and political reform sweeping across the world. Economic and political reforms are a product of the new world order and the rapid integration of global economies fostered by liberalisation & deregulation, free flow of capital, information technology, and increasing interdependence of nations. Nations increasingly resemble corporate entities and are determined to remain competitively relevant and gain valuable market share in the global economy. They are striving to conform to global best practices that would make them attractive and give them the desired edge over other competing nations.

Whilst Ghana is ahead in terms of political & social reforms in West Africa, Nigeria is vigorously pursuing economic reforms. Ghana is marginally ahead of Nigeria

having accepted the notion of reform a little bit earlier. Its civil service, educational system and bureaucracy are reportedly ahead of the curve. Small wonder that in its golden jubilee celebration, recently marked colourfully, the Ghanaian president was quick to point out that his country was a star for others in the sub region to follow. Whilst the country may still be relatively poor in terms of economic resources and wealth per capita, its reputation as a far more honest and transparent country than Nigeria cannot be ignored (Devi, 2015).

Nigeria on the other hand, has only recently, embarked on a deliberate attempt to address the issue of corruption. However, it is becoming increasingly difficult to separate the corruption watchdogs from the apron strings of the executive arm of government. The task of making these agencies independent must be accomplished if the country is to be taken seriously by the global community. The fact that the Senate, the highest law-making body emphasised recently, the need for the autonomy and independence of the anti-corruption agency is a step in the right direction. In terms of economic and political reforms in Nigeria, it is perhaps relevant to state here that the nation has relatively been more successful in the former rather than the latter.

Although the basic structure of the economy has remained largely unchanged, we are beginning to see a rapid climb in the area of non-oil sector growth in the last couple of years since the reform was introduced. Non-oil sector spiked 8.93% in 2006, compared to a negative growth of -4.67% for the oil sector in the same period. This is a sign of the relative effectiveness of the reforms on the economy especially since one its key planks were to achieve economic diversification and non-oil sector led growth.

However, whilst it is true that the basic structure of the economy has not significantly changed with the continued reliance on oil exports, it is worthy of note that for the first time in its history as an oil nation, Nigeria is currently saving excess oil earnings. The norm in the past has been to squander surplus oil revenues in massive wage reviews as in the Udoji awards of the early seventies; or to spread the money around in bogus aid projects across key African states.

## XI. CHALLENGES & PROSPECTS OF GOOD GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

Having dwelt extensively on the concept of good governance and its antecedents across various economic blocs it is pertinent for us to zero in on how this all-important concept has evolved in Nigeria over the last few years, how it is faring currently and how it is likely to pan out in the future.

Besides, Nigeria's long history of military rule makes it an unlikely environment for good governance. This is mainly because democracy or representative government is the fertile soil on which good governance can be cultivated and nurtured. An unrepresentative government that does not derive its power from the people can hardly be held accountable for its actions.

However, in the last eight years of democracy we have seen some deliberate attempts to improve governance. The major initiatives aimed at improving governance in this democratic dispensation include but are not limited to the following:

- ✓ Civil service or public sector reforms
- ✓ Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI)
- ✓ Due Process
- ✓ Fiscal Responsibility Act
- ✓ Servicom: Service Compact with all Nigerians
- ✓ EFCC: Economic & Financial Crimes Commission
- ✓ Independent Corrupt Practices and other related Crimes Commission (ICPC)

Time and space would not permit a detailed critique of these initiatives and their impact on governance. Notwithstanding, a few of them are examined later in the text in the context of the challenges and prospects of good governance in Nigeria.

The major challenges and prospects of good governance in Nigeria are briefly discussed below:

## XII. RESPECT FOR RULE OF LAW

International and local observers of Nigeria's political evolution are concerned that Nigeria's fledgling experiment with representative democracy faces a number of threats. One of such threats is respect for the rule of law and its impact on the efficacy of the judiciary as the third branch of government. It is quite normal to read about what appears to be a widespread disregard of court orders in this new democracy in the newspapers on a daily basis. This trend has persisted in the last eight years of the current administration.

The brazen disregard for the rule of law displayed in recent times leaves room for doubt as to whether the transition to representative democracy has truly permeated into the psyche of the political actors in government at all levels.

Nothing typifies the blatant disregard for the rule of law and due process than the slew of gubernatorial impeachments that razed through the land in the last couple of years. From Plateau to Bayelsa, Oyo to Ekiti, Anambra to Adamawa states. Nigerian lawmakers literally reinvented and patented the act of impeachment to a fine art. We have witnessed an enduring battle between a judiciary fighting to stay relevant by upturning contrived impeachments and a legislature determined to abuse the essence of the very office, which they hold.

Hardly anyone needs a homily on the relevance of a vibrant and respected judiciary in a constitutional polity. Okafor (2005) reiterated the fact that African constitutions in general including Nigeria's are filled with idealistic provisions pertaining to the need and role of an independent judiciary. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) recognizes and emphasizes the fundamental importance of good governance, which encompasses the rule of law. We must not forget however, that the concept and practice of the rule of law predate the colonial order on the continent, for African traditional political institutions generally incorporated various forms of the rule of law (popularly known as native laws and customs) as opposed to the whims and caprices of the leaders of the day.

## XIII. BUREAUCRACY & GOVERNANCE

Nigeria's struggle to maintain good governance cannot be successful unless the public service system or bureaucracy is reformed. In other words, civil service reforms are a necessary component of good governance. A well-run civil service/bureaucracy enhances the efficiency of government and its delivery of service to the citizenry.

According to Mhone (2003), there is an assumption that deep-seated and structural reform of the public service is a necessary complement to the creation of an external environment that is primarily geared towards servicing the needs of the market. In essence, this promotes an external environment that enhances rationality based on unfettered markets. Thus, the pursuit and implementation of structural adjustment and stabilization programmes has often been accompanied by the call for civil service reform, which includes rightsizing to achieve a lean and efficient service, and a robust culture of merit, professionalism, impartiality, honesty, and accountability.

The bureaucratic structure in Nigeria is off-centre and lacking both in focus and character. It is corruption ridden, mediocre and dysfunctional. There have been recent attempts to reform and instill some form of discipline, direction and focus. The first step taken was the rightsizing of the workforce and elimination of ghost workers from the payroll, ostensibly to reduce the bloated payroll of the government.

However, the major problem lies in attracting the right quality of personnel to run the civil service. In the early years, the civil service attracted some of the best minds because of the conditions of service, patriotism, prestige, job stability and access to training. But, in recent years it has failed to attract and retain the right kind of staff because of its uncompetitive remuneration compared with the private sector. The entrenchment of nepotism, ethnic considerations and favouritism as against meritocracy also meant that unlike the private sector, career advancement was not correlated to job performance. Consequently, some of the best and brightest minds have been frustrated out of the service.

## XIV. INSTITUTION BUILDING

This concerns the degree to which adequate institutional and organizational mechanisms exist to facilitate good and democratic governance in terms of relations between society and the state. The major challenge of good governance in Nigeria is the absence of institutions for promoting good governance. However, mention must be made of recent initiatives by the government.

### *SOME OF THESE INITIATIVES ARE*

- ✓ Servicom: The establishment of Servicom which means Service Compact with all Nigerians is a step in the right direction. Servicom is a social contract between the Federal Republic of Nigeria and its people. It is meant to give Nigerians the right to demand good service. Whilst it is not possible now to evaluate the effect of this initiative on public service, it is strongly suggested that it should be given more prominence in the public domain. The more the people are aware of their right to demand good

service, the more they are likely to require it from public office holders. This will not only increase the chances of success of the initiative but will also make it more effective.

- ✓ Bureau of Public Sector Reforms (BPSR): This is the agency charged with the responsibility of managing the process of reforming the public service. It is not within the purview of this paper to analyse the work done so far by the BPSR. However, it must be pointed out here that reforms transcend rightsizing of the workforce; and includes a complete restructuring of existing structures and an attitudinal change in the performance of public service.

#### XV. REGULATORY BURDEN

This depicts aspects of Federal legislation, regulation, or policy or practices that could be made more efficient without diminishing the intended level of protections. The need to re-evaluate regulations that are capable of impeding domestic competitiveness cannot be over-emphasised. Developing nations oftentimes establish regulations ostensibly aimed at protecting local industries and systems. However, some of these regulations sometimes conflict with international practices that would otherwise be beneficial to the country. A key example is the string of import prohibitions and high tariffs for key commodities, which puts Nigeria in conflict with the WTO covenant to which it is a signatory. Regulatory burden requires reviewing such policies and regulations without undermining the strategic purpose for which they had been instituted.

#### XVI. CORRUPTION & TRANSPARENCY

Corruption & Transparency are the two most critical issues in the ongoing debate on good governance whether in the public or private sector. Experts posit that there is an inverse relationship between economic empowerment in terms of income per capita and the level of corruption. In other words, countries with a high degree of corruption usually have lower income per capita and hence a vastly poor populace.

A major factor in the fight against corruption is that of instilling the spirit of transparency in governance. A high degree of transparency guarantees low corruption levels and is a sine qua non for good governance. In essence, it is virtually impossible to have good governance in the public sector without adopting transparency as the *modus operandi*.

Transparency is a key plank of good governance in all its ramifications. It gives the followers a sense of trust and holds the leaders accountable for their actions especially in fiduciary matters.

#### XVII. ETHOS AND SOCIETAL VALUE SYSTEM

Governance in this context relates to the manner in which ruling elites and the citizens see themselves embedded in society and the level of accountability expected of them. This

is both an attitudinal problem and an institutionalized mechanism of participation, consultation and accountability. It focuses on the societal value system and level of morality. A decadent and corrupt society will not expect much in the area of accountability from their leaders. The leaders themselves will freely abuse their position and exploit the populace satisfying only a few cronies and vested interests. Such a society is open to violent conflicts, lawless behaviour, and anarchy. Unfortunately, many African states, Nigeria inclusive, bear these traits and are tottering and moving slowly towards the precipice and they could easily fall into the abyss of failed states.

#### XVIII. ROLE OF VISIONARY LEADERSHIP

The importance of leadership in all fields of human endeavour cannot be overemphasised. Visionary and exemplary leadership is central to the delivery of good governance in any society. History is replete with the impact of visionary leadership on the destiny of key nations of the world. The great East Asian economic miracle was made possible by the visionary leadership provided by the leaders of respective nations in that economic bloc.

Nigeria has hardly delivered bold visionary leadership in its many years after independence. However, the economic reform introduced by the current administration is capable of changing the destiny of the nation. And in spite of the general perception that the reforms were more externally driven, credit should be given to the present leadership for the drive with which the reforms have been pursued in the face of mounted opposition from vested interests.

In addition to the above, it must be emphasised that it would take a far more visionary, competent leadership imbued with wisdom and patriotism to propel the nation to the league of Newly Industrialising countries (NICs). Good governance is only possible when there are well-designed objectives and goals supported by robust and competent institutions capable of implementing policies and programs. There must also be surveillance mechanisms for measuring deviation from set targets and immediately taking remedial actions to bring plans back on course. The design and implementation of the first phase of NEEDS is a relatively moderate and soft example of what strong leadership can do for a country.

A more vigorous and comprehensive approach should be adopted which defines a clear long-term vision for the country and where it wants to be twenty-five years from now. Most nations that have become shining economic success stories were greatly aided by their unrelenting and consistent focus on implementing their economic and social blueprint as encapsulated in their National Vision. Without a doubt, Nigeria needs a lesson or two in the exemplary leadership so vividly demonstrated by such nations; for the simple reason that in this country, too many beautiful and well-designed plans have become ornamental objects on the mantelpiece of the planners with millions of taxpayers' money flushed down the drain.

## XIX. THE WAY FORWARD: ESTABLISHING BUILDING BLOCKS FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE

In concluding this paper, the vexing question of what constitutes good governance must be revisited. The answer to this is myriad but can be examined through the trained lenses of observers in the fields of study where governance has been a core issue of discourse.

For a legal expert, good governance is delivered by an administration that can guarantee decisions in respect of procedures and laws; for a management expert, it is an administration that responds to technical criteria based on efficiency; for a historian, it is an administration which knows how to guarantee political stability during a given period; for a sociologist, it is an administration that represents and takes into account the needs of the different social classes (Devi, 2015).

## XX. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The foregoing suggests that for good governance to be achieved in Nigeria the following critical steps must be religiously followed and strictly adhered to:

### RESPECT FOR RULE OF LAW

Nigerian public office holders at the central, state and municipal levels must adhere strictly to and show respect for due process and the rule of law. The judiciary must remain and be seen to be independent in all its ramifications. Court orders should not under any circumstances be flagrantly disobeyed whilst judicial officers must desist also from issuing arbitrary court orders. The patience and discipline to follow due process must be imbued into our national psyche, whilst government officials and public office holders must lead by example by conforming to established procedures. They must refrain from using their positions to exert more than their fair share and or suppress others not so privileged.

### EFFICIENCY IS KEY

Public office holders must make concerted effort to discharge their duties efficiently by adopting a managerial and business-like approach. One of the most prominent problems frustrating good governance is the notion and tacit acceptance that the public sector cannot be managed as efficiently as the private sector. This misconception is so deeply entrenched that anyone seen to be bucking the trend is almost likely to be either heroised or vilified, depending on whose ox is gored.

However, efficiency in governance is not something that should attract so much attention, but should be taken as the minimum standard expected of all office holders. Adopting a private sector approach of managerial efficiency and strategic leadership in governance is the catalyst to effective bureaucracy and strong nation building. Managers in both the public and private sectors attend the same business schools and share similar curriculum. It is therefore absurd that there should be such a wide gulf between the performance of individuals in the public and private domain.

## GOOD GOVERNANCE GUARANTEES POLITICAL STABILITY

It is a statement of fact that governance cannot be effective in a situation of political conflict and instability. At any given period in time, governance especially at the central level must be conducted in a manner that ensures political stability as well as peace and security. Actions of government officials that heighten political risk level must be avoided at all costs. Specifically, government cannot be seen to be encouraging anarchy by supporting or showing any degree of sympathy to those who constitute an obstacle to political stability.

A key example of this is the niggling issue of Godfathers and their role in the present democratic structure. The case of Anambra state where the government ignored the denigration of the office of the governor in spite of incidence of kidnapping, arson and demand for unrestricted access to the state's treasury remains a sore point in our political history. In a normal and sane setting such individuals or persons would at least be prosecuted and made to feel the heavy hand of the law.

## RECOGNITION OF THE NEEDS OF THE DIFFERENT SOCIAL CLASSES IN THE SOCIETY IS VITAL

In the well-known theory of socioeconomic class, many scholars view societies as stratifying into a hierarchical system based on economic status, wealth, or income. In terms of economic wealth, status or income, the Nigerian society is split along three broad economic classes, a small group of the wealthy or affluent, an upcoming but relatively narrow middle class and a wider population of low-income earners. Good governance must take into consideration the varying needs of this widely dispersed group of people in society and seek to bridge their yawning gap.

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