

Good Governance: The Conceptual and Contextual Perspectives

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Abstract: A discourse on good governance at any level requires a clear understanding of the concept as one may erroneously assume that everyone understands what good governance means. Thus, this paper not only evaluates the definitions of the concept of good governance, but also contextualized it within the perspectives of what constitutes public interest, the leader's idiosyncrasy; political party ideologies and the expectations of donor agencies. The study is qualitative and as such its data were documentary and the content analysis approach was used to analyze the data. Anchored on the good governance theory and the cultural theory of governance, this paper found that while good governance has been variously conceptualized, it has not been contextualized in the Nigerian milieu and that the concept serves as a measurement scale in the hands of donor agencies for the evaluation of their performances as tied to their operational objectives in the developing and less developed nations. The study recommended among others that Nigerian political leaders should leverage on the donor agencies' idea of governance to deliver development to their people and also evaluate their performance while the political parties should reinvent political party ideologies that reflect current realities for the resolution of the myriad societal ills bedeviling Nigeria.

Keywords: Conceptualization; Contextualization Governance; Good Governance theory; Nigeria

Introduction

In contemporary Nigeria, a discourse on good governance is convivial, given her current economic, political, and social dimensions especially with regard to issues of state and governance. Development scholars have pointed out that good governance is a prerequisite for successful development which every country craves for. However, the meaning of the concept has been changing overtime. This is why

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a discourse on “Good Governance” has to be in cognizance of the paradigm shift in good governance discourse.

In the 1980s for instance, the concept of good governance was taken up from a more normative perspective, with emphasis on development criteria which sought to guide the repair of the failures of the decreasingly legitimate top down governance structures, by focusing on alternative modes of actor constellations helping to resolve common issues from different perspectives (Pierre, 2000; Hill, 2013). By the 1990s it was used from a more analytical perspective in the social sciences as a mean of assessing public policy arrangements (Kooiman, 2003). This perspective drives this discourse hence in the exact words of Anton (n.d), good governance as a concept has been in existence since the end of the cold war and its meaning has been changing in response to issues of dire importance. Hence before 1990, the International Monetary Fund (1997) used the concept to describe the economic standing of creditor countries. But in 1998, a study on Africa found out that even national economy that conformed to reasonable rules of economic management did not necessarily develop positively whenever negative governmental and administrative influences were present. In keeping with the paradigm shift consequent upon the evolving nature of the concept of good governance, the World Bank responded to that finding and formulated a more positive and proactive strategy for good governance that addressed four areas: the management of the public administration, responsibility and accountability in the public sector, legal framework conditions, and the transparency of public activities. Within this period, good governance was extendedly conceptualized to be applied to the political system, the exercise of governmental authority, and the ability of a government to formulate and implement political designs. But in 2002, the World Bank Institute developed governance indicators that included corruption control as its rider. The concept was expatiated by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, the United Nation, and the European Union (Anton, n.d).

The OECD (2009) asserted that governance had acquired a key status as late as 1997. The European Union, on its part, mentions the term ‘good governance’ in three documents – the Cotonou Agreement of 2000, the EU Commission's communication on 'Governance in Developing Countries' of 2003, and the European Consensus on Development Policy of December 2005 (EU, 2014), and the concept of good governance was used to describe the political conduct of governments. It is worthy of note that, good governance has been a key item of the UN Development Programme since 1999 (UNDP, 2014). Consequent upon the changes in the meaning

of the concept of good governance, it becomes necessary, not just to examine the definitions of good governance as are awash in the literature but to be more critical in evaluating their contexts. Hence, Mashupye & Shadrack (2009) observed that ‘good governance’ is a value-laden concept that is characteristically nebulous; enabling it to connote different things to different people, depending on the context in which it is used bearing in mind that while concepts are ‘tools of thinking’ contexts are ‘the environments or frameworks in which the concepts operate’. It connotes that the conviviality of the concept of good governance, notwithstanding, its meaning is lucid and lucidity in the meanings of a concept is fundamentally important for shaping debate and enriching discourses (Pauw, 1999). This is because the concept of good governance has become popular in recent decades, in response to the notion that ‘more effective governance regimes or systems need to be created to overcome government failure, market failure and system failure or a combination of the three (Rogers & Hall 2003). More importantly, major donors and international financial institutions are increasingly basing their aid and loans on policies that ensure “good governance (UNESCAP, 2009).

Therefore, this paper does not only evaluate the various definitions of the concept of good governance, but also extends its scope to the externalities that cause shift from the conventional definition of good governance and such externalities may be regarded as the environment in which the concept of good governance is asserted. This is due to the differences in culture, approach and expectations of people of different climes and times. This discourse is anchored on two theories of governance viz: the good governance theory and cultural theory of governance. While the good governance theory lends credence to the conceptual definitions of good governance, the cultural theory on the other hand, illuminates the externalities that culminated to the contextualization of good governance.

Methodology

Nigeria has been in the news for developmental crisis since independence, but currently being referred to as the poverty capital of the world is unimaginable given her rich endowment in both human and material resources. Aside huge youth population, the country has nothing less than 43 natural minerals. Despite these resources, hunger, poverty, inequity, unemployment has continued to fester around her despite the promises of good governance from every political party and politician we have seen. At a time when some people are complaining of hardship in the

country as a result of bad governance, others are seen celebrating the government. This confusing state calls for clarification of what good governance is to the world in general and what it means to us as a people. To do that, we made use of already-made information available on the internet, in journal articles, magazines, newspapers and the news and with the content analysis approach, we expect to find out why what the world call good governance differs from what we (Nigerians) regard as good governance.

Good Governance: A Conceptual Perspective

An understanding of the concept 'Governance' will be of great assistance to the understanding of good governance concept. In both political and academic discourse the concept 'governance' has been used to refer to the task of running a government, or any other appropriate entity. The Webster's Third New International Dictionary (1986) defined governance as "the act or process of governing, via authoritative direction and control". By implication, the focus is on the effectiveness of the executive branch of government. The British Council cited in Mariano (n.d) sees "governance" as involving the interaction between the formal institutions and those in civil society. Implying that governance is a process whereby elements in society wield power, authority and influence and enact policies and decisions concerning public life and social upliftment (Governance Barometer, n.d). Fourie & Jordan (2017) was very succinct when they averred that governance is the exercise of authority, direction and control of an organization to ensure that its goals are achieved. It refers to who is in charge of what; who sets the direction and the parameters within which the direction is to be pursued; who makes decisions; who sets performance indicators, monitoring of progress and evaluates results; and, who is accountable to whom and for what. To United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific- UNESCAP (2009), governance is the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented). In this regard, governance, not only encompasses but transcends the collective meaning of related concepts like the state, government, regime and good government, hence an integral part of the meaning of "governance are the elements and principles underlying "good governance.

According to Healey & Mark in Sahni, & Uma (2003) good governance implies a high level of organizational effectiveness in relation to policy-formulation and the policies actually pursued, especially in the conduct of economic policy and its

contribution to growth, stability and popular welfare, implying accountability, transparency, participation, openness and the rule of law. By implication, good governance portrays good management, good performance and good stewardship of public money. From this perspective, it suffices that good governance is an indeterminate term that describes how public institutions conduct public affairs and manage public resources. The concept pays attention to the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented or not implemented (UNESCAP, 2009). The attention paid to the process of decision making and its implementation is in cognizance of abuse of human rights, corruption, lack of transparency, lack of responsiveness, and lack of accountability that pervade Africa and Nigeria is not excluded. These variables, kalbaq (2015) regard as elements of bad governance which are the root causes of all evil and suffering within our societies and are the complete opposite of the elements of good governance.

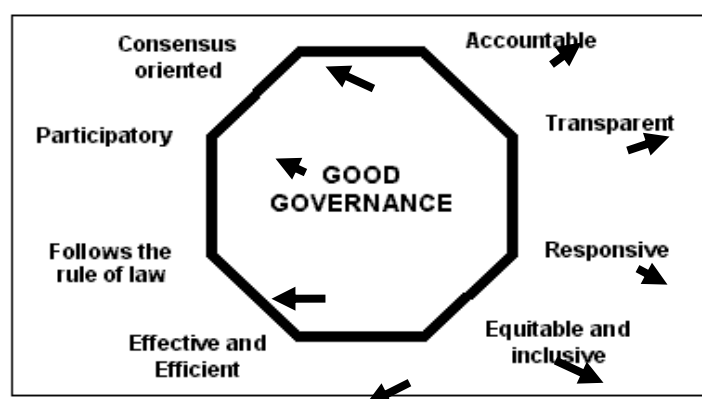
However, in an attempt to avert bad governance, development researchers and practitioners have focused on “good governance” as both means of achieving development and a development objective in itself. Thus, as an international development organization, the World Bank see good governance as “epitomized by predictable, open and enlightened policy making; a bureaucracy imbued with a professional ethos; an executive arm of government accountable for its actions; and a strong civil society participating in public affairs; and all behaving under the rule of law. It is characterized by participation, consensus orientation, rule of law, transparency, accountability, responsiveness, effectiveness and efficiency, equity and inclusiveness (World Bank, 1994).

According to Fukuyama (2013), there are two dimensions to qualify governance as good or bad: the capacity of the state and the bureaucracy’s autonomy. They both complement, in the sense that when the state is more capable, for instance through the collection of taxes, there should be more autonomy because the bureaucrats are able to conduct things well without being instructed with a lot of details. In less capable states, however, less discretion and more rules setting are desirable. Another way to think about good governance is through outcomes. Since governments carry out goals like the provision of public goods to its citizens, there is no better way to think about good governance other than through deliverables, which are precisely the one demanded by citizens, like adequate security, standard health care services, quality education, portable water, the enforcement of contracts, protection of property, protection of the environment and their ability to vote and get paid fair wages (Rotberg, 2014).

In Rothstein's book "The quality of government: corruption, social trust, and inequality in international perspective" he relates good governance to the concept of impartiality, which is basically when the bureaucrats perform their tasks following the public interest rather than their self-interest (Rothstein, 2011). Similarly, good governance might be approximated to provision of public services in an efficient manner, higher participation given to certain groups in the population like the poor and the minorities, the guarantee that citizens have the opportunity of checks and balances on the government, the establishment and enforcement of norms for the protection of the citizens and their property and the existence of independent judiciary systems (Grindle, 2004). Given the many variables in Grindle's definition, identification of the characteristics of good governance becomes necessary.

Characteristics of Good Governance

The topical nature of the concept of good governance as well as the changes in its meaning has necessitated that its features be isolated and discussed. Thus, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) has identified the following as the major characteristics of good governance. These features are that good governance is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. It assures that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into consideration and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of society. These characteristics are diagrammatically represented by UNESCAP (2009) thus:



Source: UNESCAP (2009). *What is good governance?* www.unescap.org/resources/what-good-governance

1. Participation: Good governance is participatory. Anyone affected by or interested in a decision should have the opportunity to participate in the process for making that decision. Participation by both men and women is a key cornerstone of good governance. Participation could be either direct or through legitimate and trusted intermediate institutions or representatives. It is important to point out that representative democracy does not necessarily mean that the concerns of the most vulnerable in society would be taken into consideration in decision making. Participation 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 follows the rule of law. This means that decisions are consistent with relevant legislation or common law. Good governance requires fair legal frameworks that are enforced impartially. It also requires full protection of human rights, particularly those of minorities. Impartial enforcement of laws requires an independent judiciary and an impartial and incorruptible police force.

3. Transparency: Good governance is transparent, hence people should be able to follow and understand the decision-making process. 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. This means that they will be able to clearly see how and why a decision was made, what information, advice and consultation council considered, and which legislative requirements was followed.

4. Responsiveness: Good governance is responsive, thus requiring that institutions and processes should try to serve all stakeholders within a reasonable timeframe. Thus, to ensure good governance, government should always try to serve the needs of the entire community while balancing competing interests in a timely, appropriate and responsive manner.

5. Consensus Oriented: There are several actors and as many view points in a given society. Good governance requires mediation of the different interests in society to reach a broad consensus in society on what is in the best interest of the general public and how this can be achieved. This can only result from an understanding of the historical, cultural and social contexts 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 to improve or maintain their well being.

7. Effectiveness and Efficiency: Good governance means that processes and institutions produce results that meet the needs of society while making the best use of resources at their disposal. In this regard, government should implement decisions and follow processes that make the best use of the available people, resources and time to ensure the best possible results for their community. 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: Accountable is a key requirement of good governance that should not only focus on governmental institutions but also the private sector and civil society organizations must be accountable to the public and to their institutional stakeholders. This is because an organization or an institution is accountable to those who will be affected by its decisions or actions. But because accountability cannot be enforced without transparency and the rule of law, it becomes pertinent that government or organization leaders live up to their obligation to report, explain and be answerable for the consequences of decisions it has made on behalf of the community it represents (UNESCAP, 2009; www.goodgovernance.org). However, The UNDP added another one to make it nine.

9. Strategic Vision: Leaders and the public should have a broad and long-term perspective on good governance and human development, together with a sense of what is needed for such development. There should also be an understanding of the historical, cultural and social complexities in which that perspective is grounded (UNDP 1997).

It is in keeping with the above adumbrated characteristics of good governance that Anton (nd) informs that the substrate of good governance asserts that (1) Governance refers not only to the conduct of government but also to the selection of political players and the dynamics of making and implementing political decisions, (2) Political decision-making is not the preserve of governmental authority but involves the civil society and the private sector as well; (3) In countries with a fragile government potential, the importance of structures that are informal and anterior to the state rises correspondingly (4) Good governance refers to the quality of political processes and decision-making organs (5) Good governance means power and

authority conferred by a sovereign people (6) Ultimately, good governance aims to secure sustainable development and the welfare of the people.

Having x-rayed the characteristics of good governance, the next section will inform the above listed features of good governance are hardly visible in Nigeria even when every single government used it both in their campaign and in government.

The Cultural Theory of Good Governance

This paper is anchored on good governance theory and cultural theory of governance. The choice of the two theories is to allow one (the good governance theory) to explain the conceptualization of good governance and the second theory (the cultural theory of governance (Thompson, Ellis & Wildavsky, 1990) to explain the externalities that makes the contextualization of good governance worthwhile. Therefore, good governance theory sets some basic principles according to which government must be run (Minogue, Polidano and Hulme, 1998). In fact, the theory develops from a set of principles or policies first introduced by the World Bank in relating with and in assisting developing or third world countries. These principles include includes accountability, control, responsiveness, transparency, public participation, economy, efficiency etc. Adherence to these principles will reveal that good governance is about how the public sector in third world countries will be responsive to the needs of the people, having realized that for a government to be regarded as good it, will not only be efficient, it must make accountability between the state and its citizens a core task (Bjork and Johansson, 2001). In the Nigerian experience, accountability seems to be on sabbatical hence the most relevant of the governance theories to the Nigerian governance situation is the good governance theory. Its tenets can be used as searchlight for good governance and its principles can be adopted as indices for assessment of governance in Nigeria (Ekundayo, 2017).

However, any discourse on good governance cannot be completed without reference to culture. Cultural theory of governance is a prominent approach to scrutinize government of developing or undeveloped countries (Asaduzzaman & Virtanen 2016). This theory is associated with the Rigg's theory of Prismatic Society and influenced by the work of Parsons (1951), who described a "traditional way of life" as including ethnocentricity; primordial rather than functional associations; the sanctification of customs beliefs, and practices; the discouragement of individualism; an emphasis on authority by birth rather than merit; customary rather than contractual relations; supematuralism; the unwillingness to accept personal

responsibility for development; and social rather than legal sanctions. “Until people (particularly leaders) can escape a traditional way of life, they cannot substantially improve governance and living conditions (Werlin 2003).

The reintroduction of cultural theory as an important tool for political analysis is closely linked to some key issues of contemporary politics: the changing behaviour of consumers and voters, the loosening of traditional social relations as well as of political affiliations and the transformation of society towards new cultural group patterns reopened the question of Political Culture(s) as a basis for democratic governance in the advanced societies (Gibbins 1989, Gibbins & Reimer, 1999). Therefore, the cultural theory of governance infers that ethnic proclivity and primordial consideration has left question marks on good governance pursuit in Nigeria hence the externalities that come with heterogeneous society like Nigeria.

Good Governance: The Contextual Perspective

The importance of good governance comes from its relationship with the development of a country and the reduction of poverty, in particular. Setting an agenda for reaching good governance is of huge interest but also a complex task, hence while governments believe they apply the elements/principles of good governance in their decision-making, cultural differences do cause conflict especially in a heterogeneous society like Nigeria with diverse religion, language, culture, history and belief systems (Grindle, 2004).

However heterogeneous, the Nigerian society has the need to secure sustainable development and the welfare of the people cannot be compromised. Hence people of different tribes, languages, colour, history and customs have need for those things that make live worth living provided for them by the government whom they entered into *contract* with. This is done through governance, which the UNDP defines as *the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels, comprising the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences*. By implication governance is administered at three levels: Economic governance which includes decision-making processes that affect a country's economic activities and its relationships with other economies, with major implications for equity, poverty and quality of life; Political governance which is the process of decision-making to formulate policy; and

administrative governance which is the system of policy implementation (Waziri, 2009).

Therefore, in governance, the people's differences are taken care of but where such care is elusive, the concept of good governance comes handy. But in this paper, we shall not situate and scrutinize 'good governance' from this three perspective, instead, we shall look at good governance in the context of i) what constitutes public interest; ii) personal idiosyncrasy of the leader; iii) political party ideology; iv) and the expectations of development/donor agencies. This list is not exhaustive, but an elucidation of these perspectives will be helpful.

i. What Constitute Public Interest

The conventional definitions of good governance notwithstanding, what constitutes public interest are difficult to fathom. In this regard, what may be considered as in the interest of the public is also ambiguous. While nearly everyone claims that aiding the common well-being or general welfare of the people is positive, there is little, if any, consensus on what exactly constitutes the public interest. This lead to conflict of interest, because public interest mean different things to different people or can be applied in different ways in different circumstances. One of such cases of conflict of interest is where a decision would advance the interests of one group, sector or geographical division of the community at the expense of the interests of another. Such a decision can be in the public interest in certain circumstances (The Tide, 2016). For example, earmarking one billion dollars for execution of war against insurgency in the North East of the country may be a very good effort at winning the war against insurgency which is ideal but spending such whooping sum of money on a particular group in a country who self-inflicted the pain on themselves, raises question of equity and fairness, especially at a time when the IPOB group who is not kidnapping school girls and are not destroying lives and properties are proscribed and their leader declared wanted. This group is from the region that fought almost three year war that ended some 38 years ago and such amount has never been expended in rebuilding, reconstructing and/or rehabilitating their region. This particular case will affect what we call good governance, because for those in the North East Nigeria, a billion dollars (about N305, 000,000,000.00) to prosecute the war against Boko Haram (which the same federal government said they have won) will be regarded as 'good governance', whereas the South–East region who fought for cessation and were defeated some 38 years ago and has never received such gesture and to make the matter worst, the incumbent president led teams in executing the war; by implication, he has first hand information on the havoc his team wrecked

in this region, yet, while the children of the men they killed asked for their right to self rule, they were proscribed and disbanded. Simply put, they were silenced. To this group, the One billion Naira earmarked for fighting Boko Haram does not herald 'good governance', unless such gesture is extended to them to rebuild their region. This may affect the meaning of good governance as a concept.

ii. Personal Idiosyncrasy of the Leader

What constitute good governance can hardly be discerned without recourse to the idiosyncrasy of the leader of the society. This assertion is in keeping with the fact that "good governance" is an index for measuring performance in the public sphere, by implication, the leader sets the terms for the evaluation and sometimes he shields himself from counter opinions and aligns himself with the political jobbers who shower accolades on him. For instance, why it seems as if much was not done about corruption during the Goodluck Jonathan-led administration may be because of his personal belief that "stealing is not corruption, instead, a crime punishable by law. But that corruption is the inability of the institution, or the perversion of the institutions established by law to prevent stealing, or punishes it when it happens" (Nwakanma, 2015). However, the fact that the President Muhammadu Buhari and Vice-President Prof Yemi Osinbajo campaigned on the promise of "Change" and garnered over 15m votes to win the election (one may add with avowed commitment to tackle corruption, unemployment and insecurity) shows that what the leader may regard as 'good governance' may differ from what the people regard as good governance. In this instance, at a time when allegation of corruption from government and public officials were pervasive with attendant insecurity and youth unemployment, the former president Jonathan's idea of corruption and how to curtail it by strengthening the institutions that are suppose to checkmate the act was not appealing to the public who reacted by voting him out and voting in the man who told them that corruption was everywhere and has eaten deep into the future of their generation and has got to stop; and offered himself as the ideal candidate to tackle corruption in Nigeria headlong. Contemporarily, the Jonathan supporters have not seen anything good in the President Buhari's administration especially with regard to his war against corruption, while the people supporting Buahri extols him for exposing the corrupt officials and confiscating their stolen wealth and returning same to the national treasury. In this regard what is good governance to one leader may not be to the other leader, and more importantly, this belief shapes public policies and influences the implementation. This may also affect the meaning and

understanding of the concept of good governance, especially in lieu of the observed fact that what a leader may consider good governance may differ from what the people views as good governance.

iii. Political Party Ideology

Governance is all about welfare of the people and good governance is about government being committed to their own view of public welfare. Both are about politics and governance. In politics, political leaders must be concerned with convincing the masses that policies they make are the right ones and they must have personal and general reasons for making these policies. This is where political ideology comes in. Across the globe, political parties are identified by their ideology which defines the policies and programmes they pursue, when they lead and govern (Proshare, 2014). In Nigeria for instance, there is no room for independent candidature. This means that for anybody to run for a political position, such a person must first and foremost be a member of a political party. By implication, Nigeria runs a party politics and therefore, whatever policy they make or implement the influence of the ruling political party must be felt. This is why, immediately after the individual leader's idiosyncrasy, we consider it right to examine the political party's ideology. This is in tandem with Rose-Ackerman (1988) assertion that political life is partly a contest between conflicting interests seeking to use the coercive power of the state for their own benefit and also an arena for discussion where political learning occurs, where minds can be changed, and politics becomes "a common problem-solving venture. The learning occurs within the ambit of the party's ideology. These ideologies are an organized set of ideas that modify the people because a person's idea or belief varies from the others' but in politics; ideas are related to one another as well as modify and support each other. While individual ideology centres around self, political ideology provides a justification for the general needs of the people (The Tide, 2016).

A government's ideologies emanating from the ruling party, try to help protect the governed and regulate them as much as possible; and so a political party that wants to be in power formulates a set of ideas believing that such ideas will be favourable and helpful to all and provide the needed succor and dividends of good governance. The instance of APC's zero tolerance for corruption suffices. Therefore, understanding good governance from the political party's ideology suffices that no responsible government would wish to come up with abysmal ideologies. Basically, uncomfortable and selfish ideologies such as those that encourage people to carry

guns and do not protect human rights, for example, cannot be useful to the people. Ideologies like those seeking immunity for Nigeria's Senate President, payment of life pension to legislators, imposition of multiple taxation on companies and individuals, among others, are not encouraging. Unfortunately, the top ranking members of all political parties in Nigeria either are in the presidency, senate or judiciary, and therefore any aspersion cast on ideologies like immunity for Nigeria's president and Senator as well as payment of life pension to legislators is regarded as disregard and demotivation for the presidency and senate. This is why we say that these ideologies are for their own personal gains and satisfaction.

According to The Tide (2016), an ideology is suppose to guide us in making reasonable and quick decisions that will answer the varied political questions that bother us as a nation in lieu of the worsening experiences we are going through now as a nation, and as such, Nigerian leaders (under whatever political platforms) need to modify their ideologies and apply them with sincerity and regulate is activities dispassionately, as that will help resolve some of the boring issues of governance. In this regard, an ideology is a continually developing and organised set of ideas about politics that helps us to make sense of the myriad of political questions that face us. Unlike the ideologies of life-time pension for political office holders, political ideologies serve good purposes when it is favourable to the generality of the people. However, we must work on ideologies that fit our particular and general needs because ideologies are not just created for the political parties; they are made to help us make sense out of politics because politics, played within the rule of engagement is profitable.

Therefore, our leaders and politicians must develop ideologies in such a way that they fit our general needs and pre-dispositions, reflecting what we generally desire as well as take care of our personal lives, and guide our decisions. Unfortunately, observations have shown that Nigerians politicians do not have ideologies, judging from their performances at all levels. It seems that they have little or nothing to offer the country but for their personal aggrandizement. They are not thinking about other Nigerians' welfare, not concerned about the widening inequality between the poor and the well-off. Therefore, bringing the concept of good governance in the context of the ideologies of the Nigerian political parties is hard to pin down because the politicians see their actions as good governance as it enriches them; while the ordinary man may not regard their activities as good governance. Using the immunity and life pension as an instance, the meaning of the concept of good governance becomes cloudy.

iv. The Expectations of Donor Agencies

Good Governance is strongly related to developmental expectations, especially from the donor agencies point of view. In fact, the concept of good governance was specifically mentioned in the context of institutional assessment criteria in the World Bank document (IFAD 1999). According to this document, good governance is “the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources for development”. The report stated that the World Bank’s interest in governance derives from its concern for the sustainability of the projects it helps finance. By implication, what constitutes good governance in Nigeria is dependent on the expectation of donor agencies who finances some of the developmental projects. Little wonder IFAD (1999) contends that good governance exclusively concerns the contribution the concept makes generally to social and economic development and specifically to the World Bank’s fundamental objective of sustainable poverty reduction in the developing world.

The World Bank was not alone in this expectation hence other donor agencies such as International Development Association (IDA) has their expectations too. Thus, IDA’s governance discussion has centred mainly on governance as an element to be taken into account in determining the size of the resource allocations to be allotted to any given country. This discussion arose in the context of the Additions to IDA Resources: Twelfth Replenishment (IDA12), dated 23 December 1998. On this occasion the delegates agreed on a series of specific operational and policy recommendations that would in the future determine the size of the particular programmes sponsored and also influence their design. Thus, good governance was seen as being critical to the development process and to the effectiveness of development assistance. It was clearly stated that lending to countries with weak governance should be scaled back or stopped entirely if necessary (IFAD, 1999).

Again, the Asian Development Bank (1995) policy paper titled “Governance: Sound Development Management”, sees good governance as “the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources for development”. The African Development Bank (AfDB) sees good governance as central to creating and sustaining an enabling environment for development, and sound development (including good governance) which is inextricably linked to the efficacy of the investment it helps finance. The IFAD, has a highly focused mandate to mobilize funds for agricultural development in its developing Member States and, in particular, for projects designed to increase food production, reduce rural poverty and improve nutritional levels. By virtue of its mandate, therefore, IFAD deals with

its recipient Member States not at the macroeconomic level, as is the case with the other institutions, but at the microeconomic level.

One glaring fact in the connotations of good governance by these donor agencies is that they are setting the standard for what constitute good governance in the recipient states, i.e those states/countries where they finance any developmental project. While we bear no grudge against their approach, in fact, we think it is in order, but what we are saying is that our peculiarities notwithstanding, good governance in Nigeria will only be understood from the perspective of the objectives of these donor agencies. And this explains the changing nature of the meaning of ‘good governance’ as well as the continuing review of its characteristics.

Key Points Raised

1. That the concept of ‘good governance’ has been variously defined but scantily related to the context it asserts;
2. That developmental project financiers or donor agencies set the definitions of good governance and such definitions are tied to their operational objectives.
3. That good governance is a measurement scale developed by these donor agencies to evaluate the performance of their developmental projects in the developing or less developed nations who are beneficiaries of their developmental projects.
4. That from the contextual perspective, what constitute good governance in Nigeria, for instance, maybe difficult if not impossible to adduce because of issues such as the ambiguity of the concept of public interest, the idiosyncrasy of the political leader; the ideology of the political party or lack of it as well as the expectations of the donor agencies to meet their operational objectives without recourse to the peculiarities of the Nigerian society which imbues on the politics and governance processes of the country.\

Policy Options

In line of the above key points raised, we consider the following policy options:

- a. Political leaders should be impersonal and eschew primordial sentiments and considerations in making policies and citing developmental projects
- b. While donor agencies set targets for us through good governance, political leaders should show some commitment to the targets. After all, good governance as a target has in package what every good-willed leader will want for his people.

c. Political leaders should borrow a leaf from the donor agencies and use the good governance target as yardstick to measure their performance and achievement in office.

d. Political parties in Nigeria which produce every single political office holder should go back to the drawing board and reinvent ideologies that are in tandem with current societal realities. Obviously the resources are abundant and so the prospect is very high. Success depends on the political party leadership to evolve ideologies on party bases that seek to remedy the ills of the contemporary Nigeria where poverty, hunger, unemployment, inequality, injustice and insecurity prevails.

Conclusion

Whether conceptualized or contextualized, good governance prevails where governance stands for genuine, optimistic, versatile, and ethical responsiveness that is non-partisan and upholds accountability and nurtures competent enterprising (Dinesh, n.d). However, achieving good governance is very difficult if not impossible when its meaning is difficult to pin down given different culture and backgrounds. But as a measuring index, good governance sets the target to enhance performance that improves the life of the people sustainably. This may be why UNDP reviewed their characteristics of good governance and added the 9th one-Strategic vision. Thus, leaders and the public should have a broad and long-term perspective on good governance and human development, together with a sense of what is needed for such development. There should also be an understanding of the historical, cultural and social complexities in which that perspective is grounded. Whenever this understanding is achieved, then the effort at contextualizing ‘good governance’ would have gained momentum.

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