

Repositioning Democratic Governance in Nigeria: Implications on National Economy

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between all authors. Author EIO designed the study. Authors EIO and UJN performed the statistical analysis, wrote the protocol and the first draft of the manuscript. Author UJN managed the analyses of the study. Authors CE and JO managed the literature searches. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

The value system of Nigeria's democratic process since 1999 may have been undermined by the absence of good governance in the country's leadership stream. And despite the craze for unprecedented development in the country even as it dreams of becoming the 20th best economy in the world by the year 2020, Nigeria leadership attitude to accountability, transparency and outright respect for the rule of law may after all remain a major challenge to overcome in the 21st century. The study adopts empirical process by means of charts towards evaluating the quality of governance Nigeria may have witnessed in the post 1999 democratic regimes of Nigeria with emphasis on the annual GDP growth rate statistics, annual GDP achieved (in US\$), unemployment rates as co-published by the International Monetary Fund, annual national Budget of Nigeria as published by the World Bank Group and the country's corruption perception index as rated by

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Transparency International (TI) for the years 1999 – 2016. These were all employed by the study for graphical evaluation and assessment purpose using charts. Indicative pointers from the charts shows that though the country's annual budget has continued to rise since 1999, the country's employment sector has not really benefitted from this acclaimed shoot up given the recent upward movement of the country's unemployment rate and the consequent downward pace in the rate at which the economy of Nigeria is growing in recent times.

Further pointers noted from the corruption perception index chart indicate that the quality of the governance obtainable in the country is a far cry from what good governance really entails. The study however preferred some sensitive policy framework and reliable approaches to these notable challenges currently engulfing the country.

Keywords: Accountability; annual budget; corruption; corruption perception index; GDP growth rate; GDP value; governance; transparency.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The development or underdevelopment of any nation depends commendably on the quality of governance maintained within that given jurisdiction. Nigeria as a nation is unarguably blessed and endowed with human capital/manpower and natural resources. It has remained, at best, a developing country. This position when rightly considered within the thoughts of economics calls for worry, especially when compared with the economic status of fewer populated nations as Brazil, Singapore etc.

Retrospectively, a look at the national life of Nigeria since independence in October 1st, 1960 seem to underpin the fact that the country's greatest challenge at the moment may not after all be the scarcity of raw materials, funds/revenue generation capacity or the escalating activities of terrorists and separatists in the country but the political class costly view of governance as the instrumental means to the actualization of insatiable selfish ambitions and personal interest irrespective of the position of enabling laws on such actions. Perhaps, leadership attitude to governance is the country's core weakness and should be revisited statutorily in the interest of the nation.

Despite 1999 Constitutional (as amended) injunctions on the dos and don'ts of various public offices in Nigeria, the economic impact of governance since 1999 appear to have depreciated compared to what was obtainable during the military regime. Concurring to the above views, [1] stress that the attainment of a sustainable democratic polity and national development readily entails the unbiased common embrace of a democratic culture of

tolerance and accommodation, equity, fairness, value for justice, and hard work as imperatives in the national life of Nigeria.

Perhaps, Nigeria could be likened to a nation that is has been a victim of unpatriotic and self-centred leadership as well as easily bought up non-concerned citizens. When the signet of governance is applied in leadership without appropriate considerations given to accountability, transparency, respect for rule of law, equity, fairness and justice, the devastating effect of corruption cannot be underestimated [2].

In other words, any democratic governance void of the above values desirable of citizenry-oriented leadership can only imply bad governance, the misuse of leadership office and/or the mismanagement of scarce national resources. This has been the bane of Nigeria since the return of the country to democratic rule; a nation where so much effort is being intensified daily at ensuring that the records are never straight and clear to concerned citizens.

The above situation may have also hampered the significance of democratic governance and the hopeful confidence of the citizenry on Nigeria's youthful democracy given the level of poverty/hunger in the country, hardship, endemic yet deteriorating level of youth unemployment, infrastructural decadence, growing questionable attitude of Nigeria democratic leadership to elephant projects, decaying employ of ethnicity style of leadership in Nigeria, disgusting cruelty approach and the do-or-die attitude to leadership and governance in Nigeria etc. This post-democratic state of affairs in Nigeria and unhealthy leadership conducts equally received downgraded attention such that the imminent

total collapse of the country's value system has been rationalised systematically by the ruling class without any form of proactive or reactive seriousness attached to the same.

Today, ovally pronounced but systemic corruption has become the commonest selective tool of the Nigerian leadership in her widely ignored anti-corruption crusade. Successive Nigeria administrations since 1999 have never ceased to amuse the citizenry with self-scored pass marks that lack realistic traceable credence [3,4].

The question is, *"how many corrupt big names and sponsors of corrupt practices in Nigeria has been mentioned? How many have been arrested? Where arrested, how many have been duly prosecuted? And where prosecuted, how many of such known political criminals have been jailed?"*

Given the above eclipse, it appears little confidence is currently reposed on the country's Executive and Legislative organ of the federal and state government (even the Judiciary is suddenly bereaved of its once cherished dignity and trust) given the magnitude of their questionable stakes and divided interest in the nation's ailing economic, political, and security challenges that appear to meet their personal expectations financially. This means governance is incomplete when elected or appointed public officers fail in their civic responsibilities to embrace and imbibe the attitude of accountability and transparency in the system.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

1. To evaluate the quality of governance in the post-1999 democratic dispensation of Nigeria with emphasis on budget expenditures statistics, unemployment rates movement, economic growth trend, and the country's Corruption perception index.
2. To envisage possible frameworks in response to governance challenges in Nigeria.

1.2 Research Questions

- i. How can the quality of governance in the post-1999 democratic dispensations of Nigeria be evaluated with emphasis on budget expenditures trend, unemployment rates movement, economic growth trend

and the country's corruption perception index?

- ii. What possible frameworks can be envisaged in response to governance challenges in Nigeria?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW: CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

The imperatives of quality leadership and governance to the political and economic stability and development of a nation is a non-debatable stance. This is because the survival of a democratic system and preservation of the sovereign status of a state often rests on the quality of leadership obtainable in such defined territorial jurisdiction. The rise and fall of nations are often credited to the type and quality of leadership a nation is exposed to [5]. How such a country is steered determines the pace of its development and effectiveness in meeting the needs of its citizenry. Thus, the outlook of a nation today or in the future is completely a product of its type of leadership and the principles upon which it steers the affairs of that nation. The full strength of governance lies here.

The concept of governance in Nigeria is a long-aged process traceable to the northern and western parts of Nigeria where the Emirs and Obas were already in existence providing leadership for the common good of their distinct local tribes and groups before the emergence of Britain [6]. However, the arrival of the colonial masters e.g Britain, ushered in a new atmosphere of leadership style viz appointed tax masters whose activities (except for oppressive mechanism sometimes employed) were not new in the northern Nigeria and are not quite different from the modern day civic set up obtainable in the contemporary leadership setting - democracy.

As a process that rests on the values of commendable inclusiveness and outright accountability, the failure of governance has prompted the need for good governance in the system. This is a major missing link in governance among democratic African nations. In a true democracy, [2] believes that the will of the people is often the basis of the authority of any elected government. However, the situation in Nigeria since 1999 is regrettable. The country operates a nominal democracy in which the outward appearance of democracy through elections is upheld, and unconditional participation of institutions and the citizenry

relevant to the functioning of the democratic system is usually missing.

Interestingly, common unethical approaches to governance in Nigeria right from independence have been considered a crucial challenge to the country and the precedent underlying the actions of the ruling class in the post-1999 democratic regime. Although governance is the essential antidote to the resuscitation of ailing democratic structure in a nation, developing countries as Nigeria has underscored its unique role in nation-building and sustainable economic development. This is the cornerstone behind the birth and call for good governance.

The concept of good governance first appeared in the documents of United Nations' development activities and the World Bank in 1992, and later in those of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1996 [7]. Governance is a society's decision-making process undertaken in line with existing rules, laws or procedures towards addressing visible shared problems obtainable in the affected nation.

The emergence of good governance in theoretical and practical terms is closely associated with the issues of public accountability, transparency and efficiency in the conduct of government business [8]. And this is best appreciated when leadership attitude to these values is weighed within the provisions and requirements of the supreme enabling law(s) of sovereign states.

For the purpose of this study, we summarise governance as:

"The totality of means by which the general affairs of the Commonwealth of a given nation is managed in the interest of all within the legal frameworks of statutorily defined sovereign state."

It is worthy to note that governance is not a lone term in discourse but best appreciated in civil leadership setting of a nation. Hence, it is a response due to a leadership setup of a recognized institution or body such as the government, corporate organizations, non government organization etc., who are vested with power or authority to pursue, achieve, secure, preserve/sustain all relevant underlying goals/agenda of governance [9]. This entails that in the public sector, the discourse of civil governance can only be achieved within the

governmental operations of a country such that the absence of leadership or government makes the relevance of democratic governance absurd.

According to Adeosu [10], government can be viewed as a collective body of elected and appointed institutions empowered to legislate and adjudicate for societal good and prosperity. This often involves representational offices or institutions which are run by elected or appointed individuals for laws and governmental policies' implementations, effective regulation of dynamic societal behaviours and the execution of national policies and programmes that are citizenry based. Thus, a well-constituted government functions within this premise towards delivering expected goals and quality services of a given democratic system as promised and spelt out in its manifesto.

In essence, democratic governance maintains focus on how those vested with state power use the same to strive for the selfless achievement of national goals or objectives of the state through maintenance of law and order, undivided commitment to the welfare of the citizenry and the pursuit of national interest (*not personal interest*) in the global arena.

Governance can, therefore, be good or bad depending on whether or not it has the basic ingredients of what makes a system acceptable to the generality of the people [11].

2.1 Governance and Stewardship

A look at the historical Oil revenue of Nigeria across different administrations since 1999 to date may appear more disturbing than thought. See Table 1.

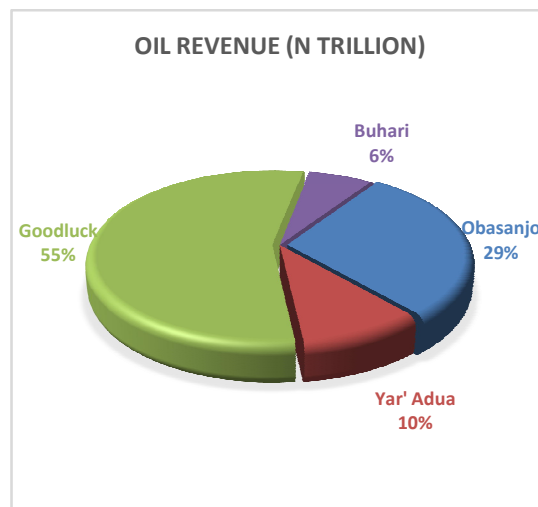
The statistical records depicted in Table 1 and Fig. 1 which were extracted by Vanguard Nigeria from various CBN Bulletins appear so disturbing. Complementary effort must be made to substantiate the above statistics. But where applicable, how then can a nation that has earned this much over the years still languish severely in acute poverty? How could Nigeria have become so indebted internationally despite our huge historical oil revenue?

Between 1999 and 2007, and despite various accountability emancipative reforms of that administration, some sensitive funds transit was noted not to have observed the Due Process standards or let alone being accounted for by public office holders.

Table 1. Oil Revenue in Nigeria post democratic dispensation: 1999 – 2016

S/N	President	Year	Duration	Oil Revenue Generated
1.	Chief Olusegun Obasanjo	1999 – 2007	8 years	N27 Trillion
2.	Alhaji Shehu Umaru Yar'Adua	2007 – 2010	2+ years	N9 Trillion
3.	Dr. Goodluck E. Jonathan	2010 – 2015	5 years	N51 Trillion
4.	Muhammadu Buhari	2015 - 2016	1+ year	N6 Trillion
TOTAL				N93Trillion

Source: Ndujihe [12]

**Fig. 1. Nigeria oil revenue for 1999 – 2016**

2.2 Governance and Quest for Economic Growth

The search for good governance that permits the collective participation of all citizenry in the Nigeria political history may have been compromised given the role of ethnicity in the Nigeria democratic process. Little wonder that bad leadership may have remained a dilemma to Nigerians since the nation's return to democratic rule in 1999. Yet, good governance is esteemed as one of the underlying core factors for achieving remarkable and sustainable economic growth in any nation [13].

Political Economists believe that the economic growth of any nation is quite inseparable from governmental practices [14] obtainable in such a territorial state. The manner in which the resources of a country are maximised in governance over the governed has a lot to do with the economic fate of that nation.

Gurumka et al. [1] maintain that improving the quality of governance is one of the major pre-conditions for arresting situations of political

inertia and economic stagnation. It is one of the important requirements for moving the country forward and transforming its immense potentialities into reality. Citing the findings of Acemoglu et al. [15] on why wealthier colonised European countries in the 16th century did become relatively poorer after 500 years, [16] argued that the difference could be explained by the role perspective of political institutions in these affected countries and not from geographical factors impact.

2.3 Governance and National Goals Implementation in Nigeria: The Annual Budget Syndrome

The thriving rise in investigations into the role of government expenditures in the economic growth and development of nations especially in Africa is gradually taking a different form that arguably justifies the need for good governance in the continent. Oftentimes, this debate presentation by serving public officers in government in an effort to establishing their rarely felt performance claims is usually bereaved of substantial evidence.

The fiscal policy of any nation is the sole platform for the draft and generation of the annual budget document. How public money is raised and spent based on prior estimations remains the prime emphasis of the government's fiscal policy [17]. In Nigeria, this document encompasses all expected fiscal priorities (revenue) and planned outflows (expenditures) of the government and is often referred to as the budget. However, observations have shown that more priorities are often given to the planned expenditures compared to her expected revenue.

Government expenditures are generally categorised into expenditures on administration, defence, internal securities, health, education, foreign affairs etc. These are all broadly categorised into either capital expenditures or recurrent expenditures [18]. For while the Recurrent expenditures comprises government expenses on administration such as wages, salaries, interest on loans, maintenance etc., her capital expenditures tend to cover all expenditure creating future benefits such as roads, airports, education, telecommunication, electricity generation etc., which are most be proven to be of immense importance to the nation and economy as a whole.

It bothers the study to note that while Nigeria's post-1999 democratic annual budgets have persistently witnessed a rise in the figures, little or nothing seems to have reflected in her economic wellbeing trend over the years. It is worrisome also to note that despite this upward rise in government annual spending in Nigeria, the nation still got sunk in the recent past economic recession that ravaged the economy in January 2016 through April 2017.

Assessing the level of impact felt so far by the economy and Nigerians from the largely claimed economic progress often upheld by past and current administrations in Nigeria since 1999, it could be rightly said that the country appears to have been going forth and backwards within a stagnant but deceptive economic circle largely defined and shaped by corruption. Individually and collectively averaging all performance indicators of all post 1999 democratic administrations that Nigeria has witnessed so far, can we say that the country has really enjoyed good and transparent governance given the quantum of financial resources outflow from the nation's treasury, the national goals basis for such huge financial outflows and the substantial result before Nigerians in the 19 years of the return of the country to democratic rule?

What happened to all the monies that were voted for and released to ministries and government agencies/institutions? What happened to all the national goals that prompted the need for the budget expenditures? Who and who followed up the implementation process? Who confirmed the judicious use of the released national monies and the consequent execution of the projects to which they were tied? How were the views of Nigerians harnessed as a valid witness to concur with the purported reports tendered by relevant agencies concerned? Who and who in the country felt this claimed result? How did this claimed achievement reflect in the economic picture of the nation? What mitigation role did the claimed economic achievement play in the areas of the poverty rate, unemployment rate, infrastructural development level across the six geo-political zones of Nigeria, health service delivery level, quality of educational, and security situation level? What was the country true enbloc revenue picture from all sources during these years and how were the revenues managed against the expenditures? What happened to the billions of US Dollars loans collected by the federal government for infrastructural development? How were the loans managed? Is the purported purpose for the huge foreign loan standing and duly accomplished as planned? How were the looted monies recovered from foreign accounts of past and serving public servants utilised? Where were they channelled and what result speaks for their effective utilisation? Despite so much claimed self-attributed efforts made by past and serving administrations in Nigeria, why is the country still looking like an economic sorry sight?

When the values of accountability, transparency, equity, fairness, collective participation and respect for rule of law are set aside by any democratic leadership, the knots of governance cannot be said to have been rightly tied however long the administration of such leadership may last. And to this, Nigeria as a nation has remained a victim till date.

2.4 Emergence of Due Process in Pursuit of Transparency in Governance

It is observed that accountability and transparency are uncommon in the Nigeria political leadership [19] such that the political zeal and wills of political office holders have notably on repeated occasions outran the processes set out by law in specific decision

makings in the Nigerian public service. These actions, in most cases, have never been in the interest of the nation or her citizens. Some other times, investigations have shown that such abuse of public office disguised in the interest of Nigerians lacks transparency and accountability [20] with so many public monies looted and lost to unsuspecting political thieves in the process. Scholarly debate on the need for an objectively observed due process in Nigeria remains inexhaustible.

The Budget Monitoring and Price Intelligence Unit (BMPIU) was created in 2001 to implement public procurement reforms aimed at minimising open abuses to known rules, processes and standards in the award and execution of public sector contracts in Nigeria. It was designed to serve as one of the transparency mechanism in the overall economic reform programmes of the Federal government. The creation was a direct response to a World Bank Country Procurement Assessment survey conducted in 1999 which established the link between poor/weak public procurement procedures and corruption in Nigeria, and its far-reaching negative consequences on national development especially in the area of infrastructural development (http://www.bpp.gov.ng/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=109&Itemid=739).

The Assessment Report noted that out of every N1.00 spent by the Nigerian government, about 60k was lost to underhand practices, cumulating to an average of ten (10) billion US Dollars (\$10b) which is supposedly lost annually through fraudulent practices in the award and execution of public contracts via inflated contract cost, lack of procurement plans, poor project prioritization, poor budgeting processes, lack of competition and value for money and other kinds of manipulations perpetrated in the procurement and contract award processes.

However, in June 2007, the Public Procurement Act 2007 was signed into law and consequently established the Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP) to take responsibility for the provision of the Legal and institutional framework as well as Professional Capacity for public procurements in Nigeria.

Indeed, the Due Process mechanism was conceived to restore sanity to the public procurement system in the country through the attainment of sustainable participation by reputable, competent and reliable contractors;

settlement of contract price at near marginal cost; faith by tenders in the tendering mechanism and value for money in projects execution and delivery [21]. This implies that governmental activities and businesses should be carried out openly, economically and transparently without favouritism and corruptible tendencies [22].

2.5 Visible Roots to Governance Lapses in Nigeria

Odo [10] contends that the root cause of development failure in any nation is not a lack of needed resources or possible international isolation but the absence of good governance. Problems do not just emerge. They do have foundations and roots from which they emanate, grow, and sustain their venomous existence in any system. A host of notable problems now underlie the livelihood of democracy in Nigeria today. However, the study lays more emphasis on unique loopholes that are presently endemic in the nation's democratic administrations.

- a. **Sectional leadership style:** The citizenry should be carried along in the various stages and phases of policy planning, decision-making and implementation. The October 2017 claim by the World Bank that the Nigerian Presidency has urged the apex global financial body to maintain her developmental efforts solely on the Northern part [23] does not speak well of true governance in a multi-cultural state like Nigeria. This is more as such action could have grave consequences on the nation's unity. The appointment methodology embraced by the incumbent administration for agencies, ministries, services chiefs etc. equally portrays the systematic level of favouritism and sectionalism upheld in the country's governance.
- b. **Sectional Participation:** A country of different tribes, race, and ethnic groups should prioritise the meaningful capture of the voices and interests of these groups in the economic and political system of that nation. The inadequacy of this has been noted to be responsible for the violent activities of some ethnic groups or the aggressive agitations by separatists as well as ethnic/religious unrest.
- c. **The absence of credible free and fair elections:** The foundation of leadership transparency and accountability cannot be separated from the credible electoral

system [24] and processes that respect the will and choice of the people in leadership appointments. This is because this is one reliable means of ensuring that the leadership selection decisions and choice of the people are rightfully treated within the provisions of the laws of the nation and not sabotaged politically through political parties' biased internal arrangements. It is only on the basis of this that such duly elected leaders can be brought to book and effectively held accountable for all decisions made and actions were taken in the capacity of the office affected.

Expounding further on the views of Osakwe [25] it is worthy to note that when leadership are selected (and not elected) and forced upon the citizenry or people of a given nation by a privileged or self-appointed few "kingmakers" or "God fathers" in the elite or ruling class as is the case in Nigeria, loyalty and accountability are bound to shift to such self-willed political thieves. Leadership products of this process usually owe their voice, accountability and allegiance to the "selectors" and not the people. When leadership is produced by the people through the credible, free and fair election in a system that has absolute respect for the rule of law, the issue of accountability and transparency can only but become a non-negotiable compulsory feedback/civic responsibility to the citizens. This is the cornerstone of good governance and democracy.

- d. **Poor service delivery:** Access to such basic services as education, primary health care, electricity and motorable roads are prerequisites for effective human development [26] with a whole lot of wide reaching effects on the citizenry. A situation whereby the leadership of a country or state is seen to promote uneven development among different regions in a country or state does not argue well for the peace, unity, and common existence of the people. This is the cornerstone behind the mindset of marginalisation often lauded by the affected regions, people or tribes.
- e. **High level of unemployment:** With the alarming number of graduates being rolled out annually from Nigerian tertiary institutions increasing yearly coupled with the number of secondary school dropouts witnessed annually, the democratic atmosphere of Nigeria seem to have been

heavily heated up more than ever. Nigeria prides itself as the most populous nation in Africa and the most populous black nation in the world [27] enriched and well blessed with diverse qualities and calibres of manpower skills that fit virtually into everyday situations of the country, the African continent and the world at large. However, it is regretful to note that a greater number of the nation's energy resources are very much unproductive, thus making no meaningful economic contribution to the country's economic well-being. Today, the crime rate in Nigeria appears to have systematically doubled with sensitive illegal market openings such as the sale of sensitive human body organs in the international market gradually attracting more participants than expected.

- f. **Disrespect to rule of law:** One of the most daunting problems which have stunted the growth of Nigeria democratically and undermines its political stability/stamina is lack of adherence to ethos, rule of law and constitutionality [28].
- g. **Use of corrupt means to fight corruption:** Busari [29] stressed that corruption fuels bad governance, erodes public confidence, undermines public service delivery and entrenches square pegs in square holes in leadership positions. It is a major impediment to governance. While insatiable wants and human greed are obviously the drivers of corruption, the inability of nation's judicial system to hand out prompt penalties to corrupt leaders and individuals often due to prolonged court cases [30,31] appear to have gone from bad to worse. No nation or leadership can be said to be fighting corruption effectively when corrupt means or mediums are devised and used in prosecuting the so-called anti-corruption crusade. Corruption can never fight corruption!!

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Good Governance Theory and Nigeria Leadership

Good governance entails the quality of efficiency upheld in managing institutions and resources of a state in adherence/due compliance with the rule of law towards securing the general wellbeing of the people/citizenry.

To this effect, the good governance theory points out some basic principles that guide the motives, actions and activities of any good government in public service. Such principles include accountability, consensus-oriented, responsiveness, transparency, public participation, economy, efficiency and effectiveness, and equity and inclusiveness [32].

It is on this note that we present in Fig. 2, a model that is consonance with the views of [32] which also represents indicators of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development on features that connotes what good governance entails.

- a. **Participation:** This is believed to be a major player of true governance. It entails freedom of association and expression and the permissive involvement of organised civil society in the decision-making process of the government. Sections 39, 40, 41, and 42 of the [33] (as amended) gives such right to all citizens of Nigeria. Unfortunately, the leadership trend in Nigeria since 1999 has shown that this sensitive principle of good governance has been politicised and badly managed. Claims of marginalisation by some ethnic groups or regions in Nigeria and notable ongoing agitations for self-rule by separatists are typical outputs of such bad management.
- b. **Rule of law:** This emphasis on the impartial enforcement of laws and maintenance of order through an independent judiciary, an impartial and incorruptible Police Force [34] as well as

patriotic Armed Forces Maintenance of law and order in a well democratically governed country must be carried out within the scope and guidance of the country's enabling laws and national constitution without fear, favour, or due consideration to personal interest. Laws of any sovereign nation should be seen to be fair, impartial and no respecter of anybody. The President of a country is subject to appropriate discipline for the same crime a poor citizen was punished. Thus, by rule of law, the power of ruling on all matters of conduct and actions of the citizenry is duly accorded to the laws of that country and to no one else in particular in respect of office held or the magnitude of influence attributable to such public office.

- c. **Transparency:** This requires the making and enforcement of decisions in line with existing but recognised statutory rules and regulations of a given society or nation such that information on such decisions are freely made available and accessible to the people directly affected by it in manner or unconditional form that is understandable and non-ambiguous. Contracts award on sensitive infrastructures as road networks in Nigeria running into billions of naira is never communicated to Nigerians. In most cases, Nigerians have witnessed roads being re-awarded again and again to unknown parties or persons through different administrations but never got executed or completed. Imagine a federal road of economic significance still under construction for 18 years (1999 – 2017) in

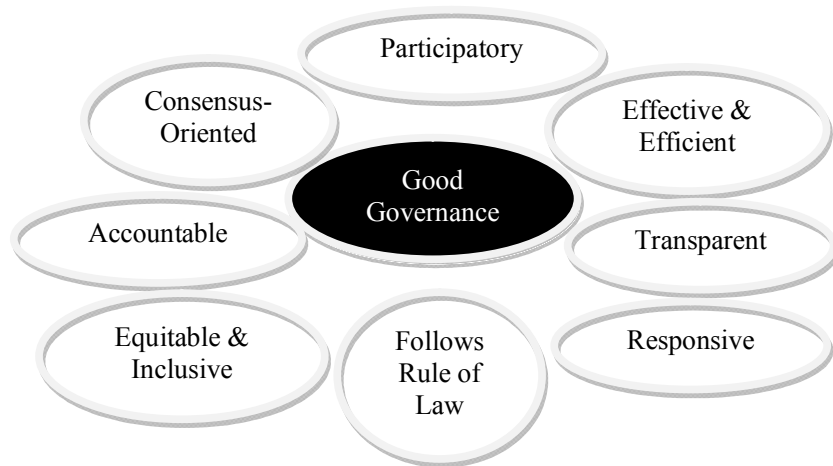


Fig. 2. Constituents of good governance

- Nigeria. Transparency in public governance is built on free trustable information flow and dissemination to the people [35].
- d. **Responsiveness:** The unforeseeable plight of people in a given nation need receive adequate attention from their government within a limited realistic time frame that could help avert the imminent loss of human lives. The deteriorating situation of innocent Nigerians at the IDP camps in the North Eastern region of Nigeria is a clear indication of political exploitation and oppression. A recent report has it that the Presidential Initiative for the North East (PINE) now the Presidential Committee for the North East Initiatives (PCNI) spent US\$646,000 (equivalent of N193,800,000 at N300 a dollar) for the removal of invasive plant species along river channels, US\$318,000 (equivalent of N95,400,000 at N300 a dollar) as donations to non-governmental agencies organizing conferences and US\$372,000 (equivalent of N111,600,000 at N300 a dollar) for the supply of temporary shelters for the IDP camps in 2016 [36,37]. Quite outrageous! Experience has shown that the government has often allowed avertable situations to occur and deteriorate to tie huge extravagant budget to the same for easy loot. Another typical example is the killing of innocent armless people in Southern Kaduna in 2017 [38], Enugu State in 2016 [39] and recently in Benue and Plateau States- 2018 [40,41]. The Federal and State government watched along with Nigerians as many more innocent Nigerians were maimed and killed.
- e. **Consensus oriented:** Viewpoints of different cultures and people in a given society have been known to differ from time to time on certain issues or subjects of common interest. Promotion of good governance in this context often requires a commendable level of tolerance towards providing the mediations for the effective harmonisation of the different interests in different cultures and people in a given society or nation to reach a broad consensus that represents the best interest of the whole community/nation. It is worthy to note that the use of sectional leadership style in a multicultural society ready undermines the achievement of good governance in this context.
- f. **Equity and inclusiveness:** The sustenance of any society or nation becomes non-negotiable when all cultures, groups, and its members are made to feel and without force come to terms that they all have a stake in the survival of that society or nation without the feeling of exclusion of any form from the mainstream of that society. The present call for referendum or restructuring of Nigeria across the nation readily points to how poor governance has been managed in this respect. All groups, cultures, races and tribes in Nigeria, particularly the most vulnerable, should be given opportunities unconditionally in sensitive leadership and decision-making positions to help restore their confidence and commitment to the general well-being of the nation.
- g. **Effectiveness and efficiency:** Until the basic need of Nigerians are met most meaningfully within the annual budget provisions, the issue of good governance remains a discourse and nothing more. Issues of effectiveness and efficiency can best be understood when fitted in properly into the spending attitude of the Nigeria government on capital and recurrent projects that were meant to meet the needs of Nigerians since 1999. Closer study of events surrounding the inconclusive investigations into the US\$1.1 billion Malabu oil scandal [42] and the US\$16 billion NIPP power project saga of the Chief Olusegun Obasanjo administration [43,44] is still amazing in a country that desires the achievement of an unbiased stable political atmosphere that permits accountability, due process and transparency.
- Efficiency paves no room for the wasteful use of scarce national resources. Worst still, no nation can be described as being efficient when non-productive projects or sensitive capital oriented infrastructural developments are being pursued and sited in places of little or no economic significance to the country or at regions whose productive contributions to the nation's GDP are non-persuasive and compelling especially when such region's economic performances are evaluated objectively beyond personal interest and sentiments.

When will Nigerians ever witness N1 worth of project being genuinely tagged, pursued and accomplished at that same N1 face value? The demand for efficiency in the public sector must be managed in such a way as not to allow space for bad service. This is the more reason why citizens or the electorates need insist on and hold politicians duly elected by them into public offices accountable at all for funds released in respect of pending or abandoned projects.

- h. **Accountability:** This is a prerequisite for good governance in the public and private sectors alike. The government, her institutions, private sector businesses and non-business organisations and the civil society organisations must be proven to be accountable to the public, their owners, and institutional stakeholders before responsible decisions which depend on such information could be made meaningfully. In the context of public governance, the elected public servants are under statutory obligations to present their stewardship to the electorates on all decisions made and actions taken in the office they were appointed into through electoral process. Notably, the issue of answerability (*providing necessary explanations/clarifications when demanded*) and enforcement (*sanctioning offending public office holders or parties in respect of contravening behaviours exhibit in service*) [45] are inevitable in pursuance of accountability in public governance. Unfortunately, this is a rare case in Nigeria today.

Good governance debates and its requirement is not whether democracy can provide good governance but more about how best democracy should execute the good governance project on a sustainable basis [8].

4. EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Pere [16] adopted the econometric model to investigate the impact of good governance in the rates of economic growth of GDP using a panel data of good governance indicators for Western Balkan countries (1996 – 2012). He found out that despite the relatively long duration of social and economic transformation, the improvement of governance indicators in the Western Balkan countries for the periods covered in the study were slow and below the average level of assessment.

Woleola [19] assessed the state of governance in Nigeria by adopting the principles of good governance theory as assessment indices. Although it concluded that evidence of good governance is rarely existent in Nigeria given the state of bad governance obtainable in the country, the study failed to corroborate her belief empirically using possible/notable economic indicators or sensitive statistics that could possibly shed more comprehensive light on issues raised in the paper.

Ugwu [2] in his review study sheds descriptive light on those critical elements Nigeria's democratic experiment that tends to frustrate the enthronement of true democracy and good governance in the country. Although statistical evidence to views raised in the review was missing, the study suggests that while the country is not oblivious of the crucial importance of democracy and good governance in fast-tracking its development and progress, there are challenges which tend to undermine their actualisation.

Abdulhamid [8] adopted an empirical descriptive approach to interrogate Nigeria democracy and its bearing on good governance. It equally assessed the good governance profile of Nigeria under democracy. However, based on available literature and against the backdrop of subsisting reform policies, the paper argued that the democratisation process has endured to the extent that the goal of good governance is not too far-fetched.

Akinbuli [45] adopted a 5-point Likert scale survey approach to explore the views of 126 respondents comprising personnel in federal ministries and Chartered Accountants in the Public sectors of Nigeria on the effectiveness of confidence placed on public officers in the management of public offices in Nigeria and their stewardship accounting to the citizens. The analysis was carried out using the Chi-square statistical tool, and their findings showed that accountability in the Nigerian public sector is poor even as current procedures adopted for accountability in Nigeria public service needed to be critically reviewed.

Alliyu et al. [46] in their extant review research noted that corruption which has slowly grown from the time of pre-independence has suddenly taken over Nigeria's public and private sectors in the last five decades with compelling evidence obtainable in the Legislative, the Executives and the Judicial arms of government. They, however,

observed that the over-centralisation of power on and the control of means of survival by the federal government had weakened all major institutions in the Nigerian society. The study did not, however, tell us how such weakness exist among affected institutions and its impact.

Aigheyisi [47] conducted an empirical investigation into the effect of the government's annual total expenditures on the nation's gross domestic product. Relying on the multiple linear regression statistical tool for relevant analysis carried out, it found out that the Recurrent expenditures of the government exerted a greater impact on the GDP than her Capital expenditure, though the impact of the former was negative while that of the latter was positive. This clearly points to the fact the Nigeria annual budget, for a long time now, has concentrated so many funds on outflows that are rarely productive to lead to future inflows (recurrent expenditure) despite her outright disregard to the continued outcry of the average civil servant for increment in the minimum wage status of Nigerian public workers, recently from N18,000 to N50,000 monthly. This is also a clear indication of a fewer people pocketing a huge proportion of the nation's financial resources annually with little or no attention paid to essential areas as the installation/provision of productive basic infrastructural facilities as good roads and adequate power generation and distribution.

Modebe et al. [18] also conducted a study on the impact of government expenditure (disaggregated into recurrent and capital expenditure) on economic growth of Nigeria from 1987 to 2010. Results of their regression analyses showed that the recurrent government expenditures of the federal government had a positive and non-significant impact on the nation's economic growth while her capital expenditures had a negative and non-significant impact on the nation's economic growth.

Ugwu [48] in his review paper interrogated the nature of corruption obtainable in Nigeria and its implications for national development efforts of the nation. The paper stressed that despite the evolution of sensitive policies and agencies as the War against Indiscipline and Corruption (WAIC), Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), corruption has continued to run within and ruin every aspect of the country's national life. It thus concludes that except corruption is dealt with holistically, there can be no meaningful

socio-economic and political development in Nigeria.

5. METHODOLOGY

The study is designed empirically to pave room for a logical appreciation of the state of the nation through unambiguous appraisal of relevant post-1999 democratic national statistics that readily enhances clarity into the quality of governance in Nigeria from 1999 - 2016. It employs the use of charts to descriptively enable the study to achieve its set out objectives and the desired impact in the academia, industries, national economy as well as the political environment of Nigeria.

The annual GDP value (in US Dollars), annual GDP growth rates, annual unemployment rates, the annual national budget of Nigeria as published by the World Bank Group, and Nigeria's corruption perception index for the years 1999 – 2016 were all adopted and holistically evaluated/assessed using graphics/charts.

5.1 Data Assessment and Result Discussion

The statistics in Table 2 will be employed as a basis for empirical evaluations carried out graphically in this study.

5.1.1 Research question one

RQ 1:How can the quality of governance in the post-1999 democratic regimes of Nigeria be evaluated with emphasis on budget expenditures trend, unemployment rates movement, economic growth trend and the country's Corruption perception index?

To explore and achieve the expectations of research question one, statistics/indicators of annual national budget figures of Nigeria, unemployment rates, GDP amount (in US\$), GDP growth statistics, and the CPI for the years 1999 - 2016 were graphically represented using bar and line charts. Given below are charts 1 - 5 and their accompanying discussions and commentary.

5.1.1.1 Discussion and commentary

Commentary 1: Looking at the movements in Chart 1 and chart 2 herein referred to as group A, one would note that 1999, the annual budget expenditures of successive administrations in

Nigeria has never ceased to rise except in 2002 (N578.5 billion from N894.2 billion in 2001), 2014 (4.6 trillion from N4.9 trillion) and in 2015 (N4.59 trillion).

However, the trend in chart 3 herein referred to as group B undermines the expectations earlier depicted in group A charts, seeing that the supposed efforts as in charts 1 and 2 (group A) may not have paid off in the area of unemployment which is inevitably crucial to the development of Nigeria and her security well-being.

The gap between the two chart groups is equally worrisome. How does a nation that spends so

much money annually explain why the impact of such effort is rarely felt by her people/citizens?

Were the funds rightly appropriated as a budget? Were they allocated and utilised efficiently on the budget projects meant for their use? If yes, then why is the country finding it difficult to attain any meaningful development in 18 years of its new democratic experience?

The spirit of governance is largely felt in a political atmosphere where right representation and transparent leadership is known for accountability, delivery of manifesto promises and undivided respect for the rule of law is encouraged and sustained.

Table 2. Notable Nigeria statistics (1999 – 2017)

Year	Annual GDP growth %	GDP (US\$)	CPI Ranking (In Countries)	Unemployment RATE (%)	Total annual budget (in Naira)
1999	0.5	35,870,792,987.9	98 out of 99		163,121,000,000
2000	5.3	46,386,011,231.4	90 out of 90	13.1	677,511,714,732
2001	4.4	44,137,994,251.6	90 out of 91	13.6	894,214,805,186
2002	3.8	59,116,847,821.6	101 out of 102	12.6	578,582,851,520
2003	10.4	67,655,813,930.1	132 out of 133	14.8	699,057,649,979
2004	33.7	87,845,420,504.5	144 out of 146	13.4	889,154,844,588
2005	3.4	112,248,353,104.9	152 out of 159	11.9	1,354,615,243,138
2006	8.2	145,429,764,861.2	142 out of 163	12.3	1,518,877,922,467
2007	6.8	166,451,213,395.6	147 out of 179	12.7	1,880,923,949,983
2008	6.3	208,064,753,766.5	121 out of 180	14.9	2,213,230,236,349
2009	6.9	169,481,317,540.4	130 out of 180	19.7	
2010	7.8	369,062,464,570.4	134 out of 178	21.1	3,931,265,321,767
2011	4.9	411,743,801,711.6	143 out of 182	23.9	3,571,815,678,134
2012	4.3	460,953,836,444.4	139 out of 175	10.6	3,945,036,061,331
2013	5.4	514,966,287,206.5	144 out of 175	10.0	4,987,220,425,601
2014	6.3	568,498,939,784.0	136 out of 175	7.8	4,642,960,000,000
2015	2.7	481,066,152,870.3	136 out of 167	9.0	4,493,363,957,158
2016	-1.5	405,082,677,659.9	136 out of 176	13.9	6,077,680,000,000

Sources: [49], [50], [51], and [52]

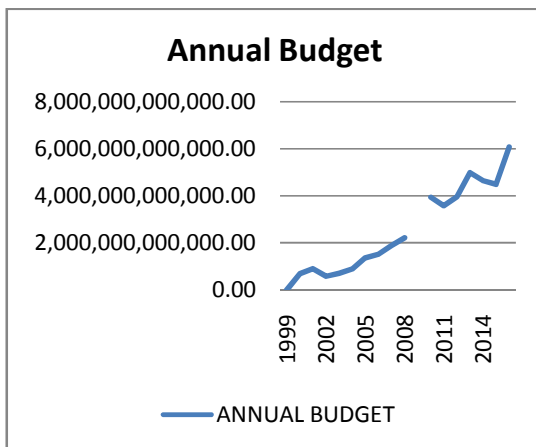


Chart 1. Nigeria Annual Budget (1999 – 2016)

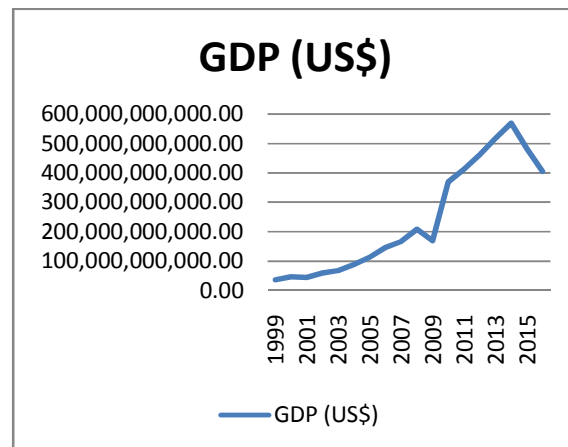


Chart 2. Nigeria GDP amount (1999– 2016)

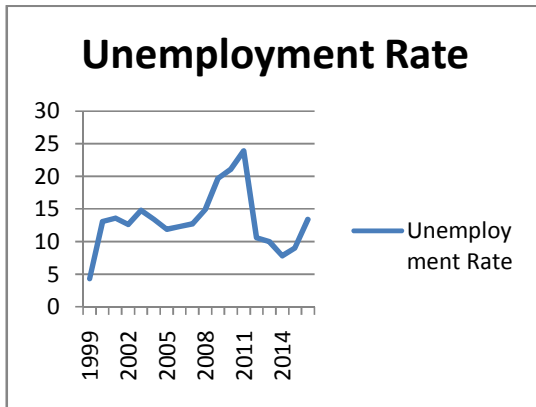


Chart 3. Nigeria GDP Growth Rate (1999 – 2016)

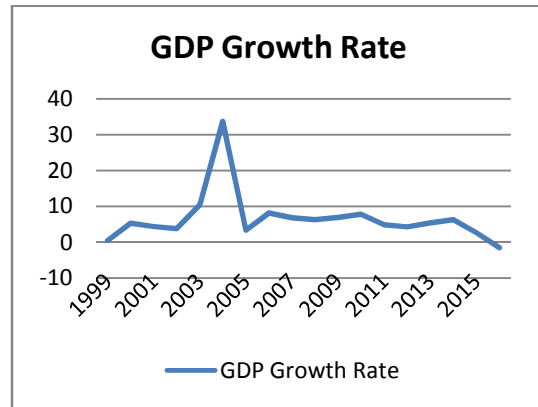


Chart 4. Nigeria Unemployment Rate (1999 – 2016)

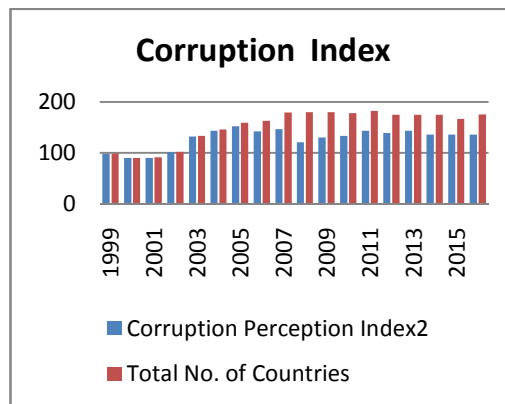


Chart 5. Nigeria's Corruption Status (1999 – 2016)

Commentary 2: At a glance comparative scrutiny of chart 1 and 2 (group A) seem to portray a state of mutual complement between the two sensitive indicators. This could be seen from the movement of the lines in the charts which show that as the figures of the annual budget expenditures rise annually, the gross domestic product (GDP) of the country in response improves upwardly.

However, a further look at the speed maintained in this movement by the annual GDP (the GDP growth rate) in response to this financial outlay calls for attention. It is worthy to note that given the situation in Chart 4, all may not be well with the country as noted in the GDP value of the country despite so much taxpayers monies spent annually in the name of budget.

A notable example is the picture of the economy between 2006 and 2008 where the country spent so much as a total of N5.6 trillion. A look at the

economic feedback of this huge sensitive financial outlay to the nation shows that the GDP growth rate went downwards instead rather moved up (from 8.2% in 2006 to 6.8% and 6.3% in 2007 and 2008 respectively).

The study also noted that except in 2004 (a year before Nigeria obtained debt forgiveness from the Paris club in 2005) where the country's economic growth reached its peak (33.7%), Nigeria has since continued to witness an upward/downward fluctuating dilemma in its annual GDP inflow.

Modebe et al. [18] in their study equally maintained that there had been a steady increase in government spending without an appreciable increase in economic growth and development.

As at 1999, the economic situation in Nigeria was so bleak coupled with so much corrupt

dispositions of the foremost political players of the country's reborn democratic regime that the country got rated as the world's second most corrupt country by Transparency International (TI) and later as the most corrupt nation in the world the following year (in 2000). This was believed to have been triggered by the manner in which the nation's annual budget of that sensitive democratic year was managed and implemented.

Meanwhile, a glimpse of few shameful practices of bad governance by past and current leadership in Nigeria may, after all, throw more explanatory light on the positions maintained by the blue bars representing Nigeria corruption perception index globally as depicted in chart 5:

- i. In 2000, a former Senate President, late Dr Chuba Okadigbo, was accused of spending N75 million on Salah rams for 109 senators at N500,000 per Ram [46]. What a shame.
- ii. Nigeria has also witnessed a situation whereby a bank loan of N10 billion from United Bank for Africa, was squandered by a former Speaker of the House of Representative on election campaign bill [53]. Abuse of public office or the power vested in such an office seems to be a common phenomenon in the Nigerian democratic atmosphere.
- iii. Alleged bribes collected by Nigerian government officials between 1995 and 2004 from, Marubeni Corporation (a Japanese construction firm) in respect of a US\$6 billion Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) contract in Bonny [54] Investigation situation report still pending in Nigeria till date.
- iv. Non-observance of due process by then serving president in the withdrawal of US\$17,290,067 (about N2.1 billion) as the supplementary cost for the extension of the national census in 2006 [55] thereby contravening the provisions of Section 80(3) of [33] (as amended).
- v. The US\$1.1 billion Malabu Oil deal saga of November 2006 [42], until January 2018, was swept under carpet. The Attorney General for the Federation had in January 2018 stated that the matter will be investigated afresh and charged to court.
- vi. The US\$16 billion power projects of 1999 and 2007 [43,44] remains treated as a mere commentary issue by successive administrations. No tangible prosecution response to such humorous loot despite

the findings of investigative committees as the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP).

- vii. The shady arms deal of US\$2.2 billion of Jonathan administration and involving Dasuki is perhaps undergoing ceremonial judicial process [56].

Given the above pending cases, it is not surprising that Nigeria has continued to maintain the corrupt status position in the Corruption Perception Index table of the Transparency International (TI). Indicators from chart 5 lend more credence to this. This is because, given the position of the bars in the charts (*the taller the blue bar in pursuit of the red bar, the more corrupt the nation is deemed to be*), leadership negative attitude to good governance viz production of self-contradictory annual budget document, celebrity of missing budget document, introduction of favourability complex between different groups in Nigeria, unequal treatment/denial of selected ethnic groups to national resources, employ of sectional leadership style, outright disrespect to rule of law, outright abuse of humanitarian right, misuse of office and power for personal gain etc..., may have been systemized in the nation's democratic/political stream.

Commentary 3: Chart 3 (Unemployment rate) and chart 4 (GDP growth rate) appear to have the same thing in common, trend-wise. In economics, improvement in the GDP picture of any nation is expected to reflect positively in the level of unemployment obtainable in that environment downwards. The implication is that when the economy thrives well, some capable but unproductive hands are expected to benefit and get duly engaged in a meaningful means of survival. The reverse is, however, the case when the economy heads downwards. However, despite the attractive movement of Nigeria's GDP inflow as in chart 2, the paintings in charting 4 clearly points to the fact that such economic smiles may, after all, be short-lived if certain positive development oriented-policies and reforms are not put in place in that respect. Notice that the lines of charts 3 (unemployment rate) were beginning to rise as the lines of chart 4 (GDP growth rate falls further). This only implies that as the economy takes a bad shape, more capable hands are laid off from their jobs or are unable find any paying jobs in the country, signalling a further rise in unemployment rate in Nigeria.

6. CONCLUSION

The challenges facing Nigeria at the moment can only be handled by a credible and competent leadership. Although the democratization of Nigeria has witnessed 19 years of civic leadership by the polls, the entire process could be seen as being far from best practices obtainable globally.

With the interest of the international community soaring strong day by day, the issue of ethnicity in Nigeria leadership must be shelved and redefined appropriately within the strength of the law.

Nigeria as a nation has equally had her military stamina hijacked by the leadership. This has visibly paid off in the attitude and cruel involvement of the Nigeria Army in civil issues which oftentimes, are constitutionally beyond their civic jurisdiction.

Good governance demands that elected and serving public officers be made to render an account of their stewardship to the people and citizen they purport to represent. For when the values of accountability and transparency are properly enshrined in governance, leadership attitude to funds misappropriation and mismanagement will be considered a thing of the past. With good governance, a project worth of N1. could be captured within the budget document at N1 and executed at N1. The nightmares of kickback could be outgrown in Nigeria when the value system of true democracy has been duly restored.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS/WAY FORWARD

The fact that big names behind corrupt practices have not been indicted, labelled for one crime or the other and punished decisively according to the law means the venoms of corruption may continue to undermine the potency of Nigeria laws/legal framework as a reliable cure. The law of the land should be accorded its deserved respect irrespective of persons or offices involved or affected towards revitalising and securing the value system, power and dignity of the judiciary.

A situation whereby provisions of the country's number one law- the 1999 Constitution (as amended) cannot be set in motion when and where applicable at all times goes to show the ailing extent of division and personal interest in

the National Assembly as well as members' redefinition of patriotism and dedication to the service of Nigerians who they supposedly represent. The blindfold of justice must never be spared of the eyes when issues of statutory requirement, interpretation and due implementation are at stake, regardless of who is involved or affected.

Situation scene in Nigeria seems to depict the fact that the wellbeing of Nigerians has been politicised and grossly undermined by her leadership. Policies and reforms of the government that are not anchored on the wellbeing and safety of the citizenry should not be worth the tax monies and state/national treasury of Nigerians. Nigeria is simply its citizens and people, and not just a name. Any policy/reform/goal envisaged and pursued in any nation without visible positive impact on the citizenry is not citizen-friendly and interest representative. Sometimes, such policies/reforms however manipulated they may appear are often personal and loot-oriented/motivated.

The issue of inconclusive and non-transparent electoral process should be handled once and for all. Until the vote and voice of the masses begins to count in the electoral process without any form of manipulation or rigging such that political public servants are appointed by the public through a competitive, free and fair elections, accountability in the public sector and the government may, after all, remain a subject of discourse on the social media and among scholars.

The true meaning and expected benefits of public governance must be revisited by the presidency towards observing the rules of justice and equity in reaching out favourably to all regions, sections, tribes, ethnics and religions in Nigeria.

Alternatively, the spirit of true federalism may be embraced by the federal government to give all ethnic groups and regions the privilege to develop unevenly at their own pace and capacity while contributing meaningfully to the power at the centre and the nation as a whole. This could go a long way to restoring the lost passion for accountability by the owners of the resources while depopulating and weakening human presence and excessive activities at Aso Rock. This approach could help restore meaningfully commitment of political players in the country to the development of their States, regions and

people, thus strengthening the voice and power of the people in the decision-making process of Nigeria.

Presidential or state appointments into Ministries, agencies, Para ministries, the office of Special Assistants, Special Advisers, Permanent Secretaries etc. must not be seen as being treated partially or sectional without due consideration given to other tribes, ethnic groups and religions in the Federal and State Executive Councils. The voice of the Constitution as affecting the promotion of equity and justice need be heeded.

The federal government should refocus their annual budget expenditures effort more on capital expenditures than on recurrent expenditures. Though the outcry for salary increment could be meaningfully accommodated within the annual budget, effort should be made to ensure that the size of the country's recurrent expenditures does not in any way outnumber her planned capital expenditures.

Uncompromised accountability framework should be devised by the national assembly through her various committees and effectively implemented for all ministries and government agencies as a way of monitoring budget implementation pattern at the ministerial and agencies level.

The Presidency and the federal government should reconsider the issue of slashing the salaries of lawmakers at the national assembly level to a meaningful amount that tallies with what is expected of elected leadership in the country's federal civil service, giving due considerations to the nation's agonising economic situation.

Effort should be made by the federal government to at all times to reflect positively the gains of the country's GDP annual inflow in the unemployment sector of the country towards reducing/curtailing future incidences of insecurity, ethnic unrest, criminal activities etc. in the country.

Lastly, every tribe, ethnic group, and religion should be given an equitable sense of belonging during the decision-making process of the nation. Opinions on sensitive issues that affect the collective good and co-existence of all Nigerians need be considered harmoniously and unconditionally.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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