DEMOCRACY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE: A REASSESSMENT

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ABSTRACT
This of democracy, principles, and characteristics of a good government were elucidated. Further discussion on the problems and importance of good government in a democratic country like Nigeria were discussed. The paper portends that, there is a perfect correlation between democracy and good governance for a dynamic socio-economic, political and technological advancement of Nigeria. It recommends among other things that, democracy and good governance be sustained in Nigeria for the wellbeing of all the people.

INTRODUCTION
The idea of democracy was first developed in ancient Greece. In the democratic city-states of the fifth century B.C., such as Athens, all the adult male citizens used to meet together in an assembly in which issues of policy were debated, decisions were taken, and laws were enacted. No citizen could then claim that policies were being forced upon the community against its will. The political structure of some African ethnic groups, for instance in Nigeria, that of the Igbo people makes provision for a general assembly of all citizens similar to that of the Greek city-state.

The literal interpretation of the word 'democracy' meant that all the citizens of a democratic Greek city-state, with the exception of women, children and slaves, played their part in government. They met together frequently in an assembly which had law-making and policy-making powers, and they were all equally eligible for election to the high offices of the state.

The ideal form of democracy is now an impossibility in the modern states. The large size of modern state in terms of areas occupied and the vast multitudes of people involved make it now only prohibitively expensive but an absolute impossibility to assemble them in one place at any time.

According to Ajaegbo & Ibezim (2001), an alternative approach to the problem of ensuring that policy decisions were made as far as possible in accordance with the popular will was developed in England between A.D. 1250 and 1650. This was the idea of representative government, where small local groups of citizens have the right to chose representatives of their own interest to sit together in a national assembly or parliament.

Representative government is thus a compromise between two ideas: the first, an effective and strong government which gives the people what it thinks is good for them, and not necessarily what they themselves want, and secondly, a government which is based on the idea that people should have what they themselves want, even at the cost of speed, efficiency and consistency policy. The idea of democracy in the context of Nigeria, actually originated with the struggles for independence from colonial rule and the desire for self governance and self determination. Like many other countries, most especially African, Nigerians also wanted to rule themselves and at the same time be in charge of their own destiny. They wanted an elected Nigerian to manage the affairs of Nigeria and to make policies, which would facilitate socio-economic development of the country.

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However, not so long after the attainment of independence, the quest for modern democracy came
to be driven by collective disenchantment with authoritarian n military rule and the desire to return to civil
democratic rule was disrupted. There was a brutal military intervention, capitalizing on the mistakes and
the problems within the new rulers in the area of ethnicity, corruption, lack of tolerance and many others.
But the prolonged nature of the military rule spreading over a period of three decades raised awareness
once again of the dangers of authoritarian rule. Therefore, when Nigeria was introduced to democratic
government once again in 1999 under the military rule of President Abdulsalami Abubakar, all well
meaning igerians felt strongly that democracy should be seriously guarded and protected in order to avoid
the mistakes of the past. It is in the light of the above exposition that the paper focuses on the following:
(a) Conceptual clarification of democracy and good governance
(b) Principles of democracy
(c) Characteristics of good governance
(d) Problems of democracy in Nigeria
(e) Importance of good governance
(f) Relationship between democracy and good governance for socio- economic, political and technological
   advancement in Nigeria.
(g) How to sustain democracy and good governance.

Conceptual Clarification
Concept of Democracy

Democracy has been recognized by political scientist like Reeser (1973) Sheeham (1972) and
Lazzarsfelf (1983) as the most effective principles for ensuring stability in any part of the world. The most
fundamental principle of democracy rooting the sovereign authority of the member states and thus the
legitimacy of the organization which they were compose, in the will of their people. The most cornmon and
popular definition of democracy is the one given by Lincoln (1947), who defined it as "government of the
people, by the people and for the people". One can easily deduce from the above definition that democracy
is a political arrangement in which the generality of the people participate, and have a say in the affairs of
the government as they affect them.

Reeser (1973) also defined democracy as participatory government in which as many people as
possible are involved in the governance of the affairs of the state. From the above definition it could be
realized that democracy has to do with the participation of greater number of population in the affairs of
the government.

It seems as if the above definition of democracy is not peculiar to Nigeria. This is because the
system does not carry majority along, the kind of democracy practiced is about selective participation and
representation. This is the more reason why Jega (2001) asserted that the notions of democracy are many
and varied, contending and contradictory. For some, it is about selective participation and representation,
about access to power through electoral competition. Thus it can be deduced that democracy in the Nigeria
context is about cornering the national "cake" for private consumption and accumulation through
patrimonial process.

Obasanjo and Mabogunje (1992) describe democracy as "government by organized and sustained
popular consent" this is to say, if democracy is government by the people and for the people, then utilization
of the wishes of people in the implementation of government policy is a must for any democratic
government. This means utilization of public opinion.
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However, democracy can be understood as an ideology a concept or a theory. It is an ideology, in so far as it embodies a set of political ideas that detail the best possible form of social organization. It can therefore be understood as an ideal. To be a democrat is to have faith in people, to believe that people have inalienable rights to make decisions for themselves, and to be committed to the notion that all people are equal in some fundamental and essential ways.

In a summary report on democracy and good governance organized by council for Asian Democratic Governance (ADG council) and Asian Institute for Human Right (AIHR)(2006), democracy is a people centered system, where the people are the heart, the root and also the fruits. The fruits of democracy are prosperity and good quality of life and well being, human security, human dignity and participation of the people in all decisions affecting their lives.

According to Beetham (1992) the meaning of democracy can be summarized as:

A mode of decision - making about collectively binding rules and policies over which the people exercise control, and the most democratic arrangement is that where all members of the collectivity enjoy effective equal rights to take part in such decision - making directly - one that is to say, which realizes to the greatest conceivable degree, the principles of popular control and equality in its exercise.

Concept of Good Governance

The concept of good governance has been clarified by the work of the commission on human rights. Its resolution 2000/64 expressly linked good governance to an enabling environment conducive to the enjoyment of human rights and "prompting growth and sustainable human development". Holzer Marc and Kim Byona - Joon (2002) remark that good governance is the term that symbolizes the paradigm shift of the role of government.

Governance is not only concerned about the organs or actors but it is about the quality of governance, which expresses itself through elements and dimensions which will be discussed latter in this paper. However, the organs or actors executing governance in their respective spheres cannot be relegated to the background. Governance can be described as a process by which power is exercised without explicitly stating the ends being sought. The United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) (1999) reiterated that the term "governance means different things to different people. According to UNDP, among many definitions of 'governance' that exist, the one that appears the most appropriate from the viewpoint of the UNDP is "the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affair at all levels. It comprises mechanisms, citizens and groups articulate their interests, their obligations and mediate their differences". The definition of governance given by UNDP encompasses not just the state, but the private sector and civil society as well. All three are viewed as critical for sustainable human development. According to management development and Governance Division Brureau for Development policy, united nations the role of the state is viewed as that of creating a stable political and legal environment conducive to sustained development, while civil society institutions and organizations are viewed as a means of facilitating political and social interaction and mobilizing groups to participate in economic, social and political activities.

World Bank viewed governance as "the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development". It can be deduced from the above concept of governance given by World Bank that governance is concerned directly with the management of the development process involving both the public and the private sectors. It encompasses the functioning and
capability of the public sectors as well as the rules and institutions that create the framework for the conduct of both public and private business, including accountability for economic and financial performance, and regulatory frameworks relating to companies, corporations and partnerships. In broad terms, then governance is about the institutional agencies / officials.

Good governance entails many things such as participatory, transparency and accountability. Effectiveness, equitability and it promotes the rule of law. It ensures that political, social and economic priorities are based on broad consensus in society and that the voices of the poorest and the most vulnerable are heard in decision-making over the allocation of development resources.

**Principles of Democracy**

The key principles underlying democracy, which makes it attractive to many in the modern era, are

- Popular sovereignty
- Participation
- Representation
- Guarantee of basic freedom
- Equality and fairplay
- Justice
- Free and fair elections

**Characteristics of Good Governance**

There are certain attributes or characteristics that good governance should possess in carrying out different activities in the process of governing. UNDP (1997) in its report, governance for sustainable human development acknowledges the following as core characteristics of good governance

1. Participation: All men and women should have a voice in decision-making, either directly or through legitimate intermediate institutions that represent their interests such broad participation is built on freedom of association and speech as well as capacities to participate constructively.

2. Rule of law: Legal frameworks should be fair and enforced impartially, particularly the laws on human rights.

3. Transparency: Transparency is built on free flow of information. Processes, institutions and information are directly accessible to those concerned with them, and enough information is provided to understand and monitor them.

4. Responsiveness: Institutions and processes try to serve all stakeholders

5. Consensus orientation: Good governance mediates differing interests to reach a broad consensus on what is in the best interest of the group and where possible, on policies and procedures.

6. Equity: All men and women have opportunities to improve or maintain their well-being

7. Effectiveness and efficiency: Processes and institutions produce results that meet needs while making the best use of resources.

8. Accountability: Decision-makers in government, the private sector and civil society organizations are accountable to the public, as well as to institutional stakeholders. This accountability differs depending on the organization and whether the decision is internal or external to an organization.

9. Strategic vision: Leaders and the public have a broad and long-term perspective on good governance and human development, along with a sense of what is needed for such development. There is also an understanding of the historical, cultural and social complexities in which that
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In addition, the key dimensions of governance identified by the World Bank are:

- Public sector management
- Accountability
- Legal framework for development
- Transparency and information

According to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2000 the true test of 'good' governance is the degree to which it delivers the promise of human rights: civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights.

Problems of Democracy in Nigeria

The following are some of the problems of democracy in Nigeria

1. Politics of money:- One of the problems of democratic governance in Nigeria is the politics of money. Those that aspire to hold/control one position or the other in government are the wealthy people and they see politics as an avenue for making them to become richer than ever before. Because of their riches, they are ready to buy the electoral official's consent by giving them money. The fact that electoral votes can be purchased (i.e. election rigging) may allow wealthy individuals or parties to control the electoral process in much the same way that an openly authoritarian regime would dominate the governance.

2. Illiteracy:- Ignorance and poverty of the masses create in them a different kind of attitude towards the ideals of democratic political culture, thereby perpetuating undemocratic practices.

3. Interest of Government in power:- The interest of government in power used to affect democracy and constitution. The government in power at times may try to amend the constitution to sweet their selfish interest. They used to favour their party members, awarding contract which may not be executed and money will be paid to them.

4. Bribery and Corruption:- Bribery and corruption is always the order of the day among the rulers and followers. This is the most dangerous social ill that attacks the vital structures of the society. The limited but valuable funds and resources that is supposed to be used for infrastructural development are out rightly embezzled, or are severely depleted through kickbacks and over invoicing by the leaders. This is where the issue of bribery comes in. Our leaders used the issue of bribery to pervert judgments in favour of a person in position of authority or power.

5. Ethnicity and Religion:- Ethnicity and religion are the most dangerous threat to the attainment of democracy in Africa. Each of the ethnic groups always wants the leadership to come from their area so as to protect the interest of their groups rather than supporting who so ever is in power. Religion controversy has also served as a bane to the realization of objectives of democracy in Nigeria. Instead of considering the ability and integrity of who so ever is contesting for leadership position, the religion of the individual is our concern. This idea of ethnicity and religious identities pose a threat to Nigeria' development efforts, security, unity and solidarity of the nation.

6. Indiscipline:- Indiscipline among the leaders is one of the major factors that affect democratic governance in Nigeria. Nigerian leaders have certainly addicted themselves to almost every form of malpractice from ballot - rigging, murder and arson, electoral violence, abuse of office to
interference nepotism, misappropriation and lawlessness. These attitudes discourage majority of people to take active part in politics and even to exercise their voting rights during elections.

7. Attention is paid to quantity: Democracy pays attention to quantity, but not the quality. This is because votes are considered but not

8. Slow in arriving at a decision: Democracy in practice is too slow in arriving at a decision, as it has to consult a number of interests before decision can be taken.

9. Above all, democracy is a difficult form of government, for the assumptions on which it rests are difficult of fulfillment. It assumes civic capacity on the part of the citizens.

Importance of Good Governance

Good governance is inevitable for any society that is aspiring to develop socially, politically, economically and technologically. Good governance often leads to the benefit of democracy. This is because it promotes grass roots participatory decision-making. It also enables the citizens to enjoy political rights, civil rights and freedom of the press, among others.

Good governance also leads to stability of government and sustainable democracy. This is because democracy makes authority a trust; the common interest, the common welfare, becomes the sole justification of government.

Good governance is relative to the development process. The participation government affairs makes the citizens interested in their country and gives them a sense of responsibility to make use of resources at their disposal for national development. It also gives room for the thought of its citizens. It does not believe in suppression of thoughts. Its method is to reach decision by discussion, argument and persuasion, which is the attribute of democracy.

In addition, good governance has respect for human rights, adherence to the rule of law and rooting out corruption. It encourages free flow of information. Processes, institutions and information are directly accessible to those concerned with them and at the same time, enough information is provided to understand and monitor them.

It serves all stakeholders. It considers the interests of the people to reach a broad consensus on what is in the best interest of the group on policies and procedures. More also, good governance gives opportunities to both the men and women to improve or maintain their well-being.

It encourages accountability among the citizens. For instance, decision-makers in government, the private sector and civil society organizations are accountable to the public, as well as to institutional stakeholders.

Relationship Between Democracy and Good Governance for Socio-Economic, Political and Technological Advancement in Nigeria.

Democracy and good governance are interrelated and inseparable if properly managed. The relationship between the two can lead to socio-economic, political and technological advancement in the country. The development of these areas is very important for the growth and advancement of any nation.

Economically speaking, sustainable good governance and democracy provides employment opportunity to every citizen. All the able body men and women will be gainfully employed in various sectors of the economy such as doctors, lawyers, teachers, engineers etc. and the activities of these men and women would contribute to the economic development in the country. Sustainable good governance also encourages foreign investors because of the conducive environment which would be favorable for business
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transactions. Through good governance the local industries in the country could be encouraged to operate and to cut down our importations from outside the country.

Socially, sustainable good governance and democracy promotes peace, unity, social integration, and trust, free from discrimination based on race, ethnicity, class, gender or any other attribute among the citizen in the country. It makes provision for social amenities like pipe borne water, good roads, health care services, electricity, recreational centers, education, and access to basic needs like food, shelter and clothing.

Politically, sustainable good governance leads to political stability and sustainable democracy, respect for the country in international communities, prevention of military intervention in politics, promote good leadership to ensure transparency, accountability and probity in government. Good governance seeks efficient institutions and a predictable economic and political environment necessary for economic growth and effective functioning of public services. Democratic governance is concerned with political freedom and human rights, and removal of discrimination as central objectives. Good governance and democracy ensure that there is security of life and properties among the people.

Technological advancement: Good governance will always foster and facilitate good education which will directly or indirectly lead to technological advancement in the country. It will also enable the government to utilize properly the human material and financial resources for technological advancement.

how to sustain democracy and good governance

democracy and good governance can be sustained and promoted through:

a. political liberation and the establishment of constitutional guarantees for a whole range of political freedoms.

b. introduction of universal suffrage and healthy, political competition, with free and fair elections to decide who will assume power.

c. the desire and willingness to internalize democratic practices, conduct, and behavior need to be instilled in the citizens so as to strengthen the democratic culture.

d. to have good governance, our leaders need to inculcate in them, democratic attitudes, beliefs and values. They should recognize the rights of all citizens and members of a given group, to participate in decision making that has direct effect upon them, and most importantly, accept the fact that all members of the groups have a certain essentiality.

e. the leadership should accept the values of cooperation, discussion. Negotiation and consensus in the determination and implementation of policy. This is where the matter of public opinion becomes very necessary for our consideration in order to help perpetuate our nascent democracy.

f. democracy and good governance must be able to cope with competing demands of development in the area of security, provision of social. Infrastructures and other public goods and services. In addition, to promote and consolidate democracy the UN genera. Assembly adopted its first explicit resolution in 1996 on promoting an consolidating democracy "through.

a. promoting pluralism

b. promoting, protecting and respecting all human rights

c. strengthening the rule of law

d. developing, nurturing and maintaining an electoral system that provides for the free and fair 'expression of the people's will through genuine and periodic election.

e. creating and improving the legal framework and necessary mechanisms for enabling the participation of all members of civil society in the promotion and consolidation of democracy
f. Strengthening democracy through good governance

Strengthening democracy by promoting sustainable development

h. Enhancing social cohesion and solidarity.

**Conclusion**

Conclusively, the issue of democracy and good governance are very crucial and sensitive to any given society. This is because democratic governance is built on the concept of human development in its full sense of them, which is about expanding capabilities people have, to be free and able to lead lives that they would choose to.

However, good governance is inevitable for sustainable democracy. There is a need for good governance for a sustainable democracy. Good governance symbolizes the paradigm shift of the role of governments. It is about the quality of governance which expresses itself through element and dimensions. Thus, good governance is, among other things, participatory, transparent and accountable, effective and equitable and it promotes the rule of law. It ensures that political, social and economic priorities are based on broad consensus in society and that the voices of the poorest and the most vulnerable are heard in decision-making over the allocation of development resources. Democracy and good governance are inevitable for any society that aspires to develop socially, politically, economically and technologically.
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