

# GOOD GOVERNANCE AND POLITICAL STABILITY AS A MEANS OF ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT

*The study assesses good governance and political stability as a means of achieving sustainable economic development in Nigeria. Corruption has been identified as the major factor that causes poor governance and unrest in Nigeria. Bad governance and political instability affects the sustainability of the development of Nigeria that is why the country is not progressing in terms of improvement in the standard of living of the Nigerians. Therefore, the study reviewed some literatures that are more appropriate and related to issues in governance. In democratic setting, good governance in the country encourages effective decision making, efficient resources utilisation and good accountability for the stewardship of those resources. And also there is significant causality between good governance, political stability and economic growth and development. The study recommended that political governance should be given more attention to human capital development and infrastructural development in Nigeria. And also the political leaders should put the interest of the Nigerians first as their major priority to curtail the menace of corruption.*

**Keywords:** Good governance, political stability and sustainable economic development

## Introduction

Democratic governance within the framework of the three tiers of government - federal, state and local governments is the most efficient, effective and accountable exercise of political, economic and administrative authority to achieve a society's objectives which includes the welfare of the whole population, sustainable economic growth and development and personal freedom in an economy Olowo-Okereke (2005 as cited in **Gbervbie Daniel and Iyoha 2007**). It is

without doubt that <sup>1</sup>for a democratic setting to achieve sustainable development there must be good and enabling environments for human resource development to thrive and prosper for long period of time. This kind of development in human should aim at developing creativity, innovation and potentialities of the people within the economy. This can encourage experts who will use their knowledge to create wealth through new innovation, new methods of rendering services and new technique of production and products designed and

packaging (Ene, Arikpo, Jeffery & Albert, 2013).

Political stability is a necessary condition to achieve in order to realize economic, political and social stability in an economy. Sustainable political stability is dependent upon realistic economic stability. In fact they are inseparable, one reinforces the other and vice versa (Ezema, 2011). <sup>1</sup>Stable political environment in Nigeria could be achieved through good and effective governance, responsible leaders, trustworthiness of public servants, good justice within the judicial domain, transparency and accountability in the whole system and creating awareness to the Nigerians through good education and obeying law and order in order to achieve sustainable economic development in Nigeria. Thus, it is a fact that political stability ensures improvement in employment, protects the basic right of citizens, promotes their culture and unity, provides basic infrastructure and services, electricity, water supply, healthcare and hence ensured increase in both local and foreign investment (Dennis and Paul, 2017).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Nigeria witnessed so many political violence within the country since inception of democratic system of government in 1999. The politics and political system has created a vacuum of deficient system in Nigerian economy that exposed the country to many problems and challenges. The problems that affect Nigerian economy are abject poverty, widespread violence, high unemployment, <sup>4</sup>rigging during election, widespread killing, widespread diseases, politically inspired ethno-religious conflict, insecurity, lack of interest, avertable economic problems and its major and obvious consequences (abject and persistent poverty etc.,) lack of following the rule of law, human rights violation and widespread corruption remains the prominent physical features of

politics in Nigerian. The instability in the political environment in Nigeria has affected the economic growth and development to be achieved and sustained. Corruption has become pandemic and its manifestation has affected the quality of authority of the state. This phenomenon challenges the usual validity and expectation of democracy as the best form of system of governance in Nigeria. The persistent and instability of democratic environment created and deteriorated the country and the political leaders have failed to ensure, maintain and sustain the belief of Nigerians that system of democracy is the most appropriate system of government for the country (Ogundiya, 2010).

However, governance in a democratic setting is assumed to be clearly opened, <sup>1</sup>diaphanous or translucent in all its activities in order to create and install honesty in the mind of the electorates. Good governance ensures the rights, needs and able to provide solutions to the economic and social problems of its citizens. Democratic system of government <sup>1</sup>is surrounded by people, its main aims and goals are set and run by the people. Its activities are opened to scrutinize by various government institutions, anti corruption bodies or management to check the affairs and activities of those involved in the governing and moving the country.

Moreover, it should be noted that good governance must addresses <sup>13</sup>divergence as well as differences and provide good frameworks of democracy that is applicable to our diversity and sectors within the country, that has unique features and require special policy intervention, attention and imposing different sets of policy programs and responsibilities that would allow Nigeria to pursue effective and meaningful developmental programs within a time frame.

Therefore, based on the background of this study, the study intends to proffer solutions to the following question based on the

statement of the problem. In what ways good governance and political stability can act as a means of achieving sustainable economic development in Nigeria? What are the causes of political instability in Nigeria?

In view of the above, the main objective of the study is to assess good governance and political stability as a means of achieving sustainable economic development in Nigeria. The specific objective is; to find out the causes of political instability in Nigeria.

## **Literature Review**

### **Concept of Good Governance**

The <sup>10</sup>concept of "governance" can be defined as the act of taking decision and process by which decisions are carry out with the aim achieving particular objectives that are beneficial to the people and also is an activities of governance focuses on the formal and informal players and participant involved in making decision and implementing the decisions made and the formal and informal settings that have been set in place for implementing the decision for a particular purpose to be achieved (UNESCO, nd). According to <sup>7</sup>the Report of the Commission on Global Governance "Our Global Neighbourhood" (1995) governance is defined as the total or summation of the many ways of individuals and institutions, public and private, to control and manage their common affairs. It is a continuous program of actions through which disagreement or opposition, conflict of interests may be adapted and group action may be taken. It comprises of formal arrangement, institutions and regimes empowered to force and oblige compliance, as well as informal settings that people and institutions to either have accepted or perceived to be in their interest and benefits. According to Henrik and Anders (3013) <sup>8</sup>good governance refers to the attestation of observation of political administrative way of making public policies, decision taking and making

reforms, organizing and implementation of those policies and programs in order to achieve the set objectives. <sup>8</sup>Good governance depends on policy programs of government that nurtures and strategically manages and controls the self-governing potential of its citizens under the strategic supervision of administrative authorities, seen in such different areas of conflicts that requires substantial needs of government intervention is some areas such as employment policy, police power and crime prevention and control, health policy and bio-politics, educational policy, accounting practices for effective implementation and management of the affairs of the country Bang and Esmark (2009) cited in (Henrik and Anders, 2013). According to Linus (2015) defines<sup>1</sup>good governance as the set of programs and procedures through which a state's affairs are effectively managed and controlled in the areas of public affairs and accountability, private affairs must be in accordance of the rule of the laws, financial transparency or translucent, administrative and political accountability, responsiveness and transparency in all its activities, all of which must be towards the interest of the people governed.

### **Concept of Political Stability**

<sup>6</sup>A stable society is one that accepted the ruling party,its policy programs and its system of government in such a way that its citizens are not against the ideology of the ruling party and its despotic or oppressive ideas. A stable political scene is one where the ruling government or party is favoured by the population and is free from experiencing any agitation, conflict either political, religious and ethno crisis or any other form of social unrest within its territory. While there are problems within any nation and times of war or hardship are common in a polity, a stable political environment is one that can withstand these occurrences and without major societal crisis within and at the same time enduring all these circumstances for

longer period.(Dennis and Paul, 2017). In a study of Ezema (2011) viewed <sup>3</sup>political stability as the practice and exercise of power in a community where the affairs of the people is being administered and headed by the elders (communal gerontocracy) in villages and small towns where the interest of the people is being protected to avoid communal crisis. Political stability is the steady and continuous exercising of power by those who are elected by the people of Nigerians for a defined period of time, with definite mandates which conform to the fundamental objectives and directive principles as clearly defined in chapter II of the constitution of Nigeria.

### **Concept of Economic Development**

Economic development refers to the challenges, problems and obstacles of underdeveloped countries (Jhingan, 2005). According to Schumpeter cited in Jhingan (2005) defines economic development as a discontinues and spontaneous change in the static state which forever affected and displaces the equilibrium state previously existing. Thus, the distinction between economic growth and development is that economic growth means increase in output, while economic development implies both increase in output and changes in the technical and institutional arrangement by which it is produced and distributed. Friedman in his fashion defines growth as an expansion of the system in one or more dimension without a change in its structure, and development as an innovative process leading to the structural transformation of the entire system (Kindleberger cited in Jhingan, 2005).

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **Theory of Dependency**

<sup>2</sup>The theoretical framework that would guide this work is the theory of dependency. The theory of dependency combines elements from a neo-marxist perspective with Keynes' economic theory.

The dependency theory encompasses four key points: the first key point of the theory is stable and effective demand within the country. Unstable demand of goods and services discourage firms to engage in production of goods and services which would affect macroeconomic objectives of the country. The theory recognises the existence of industrial sector as a determinant factor for the country to achieve economic growth and development given the adequacy and availability of infrastructural facilities. There is need to integrate the industrial sector with agricultural sector. The agricultural output can be processed by the industrial sector which would encourage farmers to produce more and this could help the domestic firms. The integration of the sectors would provide more value-added to products, increase worker's income and the domestic firm would produce at lower prices and effective aggregate demand would increase. There is need for government in the country to control and manage the activities of the country through ell designed policies and programs. Thus, government plays a great role in order to reinforce national development and also improve living standards of its citizens (Giovanni, 2001).

#### **Methodology of the Study**

This study is a review research that reviewed some of the studies conducted by different scholars on the issue of governance, political stability and economic growth. The assessment of good governance and political stability as a means of achieving sustainable economic development in Nigeria is identified through literature review that the study consulted.

#### **Impact of Good Governance and Political Stability on Economic Development in Nigeria**

Nigeria cannot achieve sustainable economic development without good



governance and political stability. Thus, <sup>9</sup>effective and good governance in the country ensures the existence, implementations of sound policies toward public sector by making good decision, utilises the resources efficiently for the benefit of its people and ensure good accountability for the stewardship of those resources. Effective governance provides confidence and improves public sector performance and tackling corruption through its anti corruption agencies. Effective governance can improves its administrative management, leading to more effective implementation of the chosen policy programs that requires government interventions, assure better service delivery to the people and guarantee improvement in the living standard of the people IFAC (2001 cited in IFAC, 2013).

Moreover, on the impact of political stability on economic development in Nigeria, Ezema, (2011) pointed out that there exists causality between foreign direct investment (FDI) and political instability in Nigeria over the period of the study. This has indicated that political instability distorts and discourages investment in an economy. Therefore, for Nigeria to experience economic development unrest within the country must be avoided. In a study of Dennis and Paul (2017) political stability and economic growth in Nigeria. The study found out that there is positive and significant relationship between political stability and economic growth both in the long run and in the short run. The study concluded that a stable political environment is an indispensable element for economic growth and therefore, the government of Nigeria should as a matter of necessity, identify the root causes of unstable political environment and try to mitigate its effects so as to ensure and sustain growth in Nigeria.

In a study of Linus, (2015) revealed that <sup>1</sup>democracy and good governance

guarantee effective social mobilization and development because of their readiness and desire to act towards the yearnings and aspirations of the people. Good governance provides basic infrastructural facilities such as stable supply of electricity, good roads, sound education, good medical facilities and subsidising farm inputs in order to develop agricultural sector to ensure food security of the country and above all enforcement of the rule of law in the country.

### **Factors that Cause Political Instability in Nigeria**

Several factors or obstacles have been identified as the causes of the dysfunctional of Nigerian democratic system of government. Mass poverty of the people in Nigeria is caused by the socio-economic crisis of under-development. Averages Nigerian can easily be bought with some money which can lead him to perform any odd task and atrocities. Election rigging equally contributes to electoral violence in our country. Experience has shown that rigging has been a single most important cause that pervades violence in Nigeria and this has been responsible for grave consequences for democratic stability in Nigeria. Furthermore, electoral maladministration is also one of the causes of electoral violence in Nigeria. The insincerity of the electoral officers seem to over shadow the inadequate control mechanisms and poor logistics which all enhance manipulations through electoral fraud. Personal bitterness and existing rivalry between two contenders can eventually degenerate into serious political violence in Nigeria (Ikyase and Egberi, 2015).

Moreover, Kesselman, Krieger and Williams (1996 cited in Omololu, 2007) in his opinion <sup>5</sup>blamed and identified three principal factors that negatively affected Nigerian economy and these include – scarcity of resources, weak legitimacy and patron-client or what is commonly known

in Nigeria as “godfather” politics. Lack of resources endowment creates abject poverty, unequal distribution of income and a weak position in the international economic system. The management and control of the limited resources by the state gives the government official the freedom to manipulate government spending for their personal benefits. This gives room to the citizens to lack the trust and faithfulness in their political leaders and the political system in general. The active participation in government by the leaders is not legitimate because the citizens have not trusted their leaders. They see and notice that there is no need since their leaders could not provide them with the basic social amenities and their lives and properties are not safe and protected by their political leaders.

However, there are some countries that do not have resource endowments but still they do not experience political unrest within its sovereign state therefore, scarcity of resources is not a means to bring political violence rather a means to find alternative means of developing the country. Despite, Nigerian resource endowments but the level of Nigerian development is insignificant compare to the mass and abundant resources. Mismanagement of the Nigerian resource endowments by public servants has negatively affected developmental goals and this perpetuated political unrest in the country.

Corruption has been the major factors that negatively affect the development capacity of Nigeria. The consequences of corruption in the polity of Nigeria are patently manifesting; cyclical crisis of legitimacy, fragile party structure, institutional decay, chronic economic problem and underdevelopment and above all, general democratic volatility (Ogundiya, 2010). In a study of Samuel and Nchekwube (2015) averred that leaders in Nigeria are grossly irresponsible, are not answerable to the electorates and not accountable to the

masses. The leaders are not patriotic and nationalistic but their selves' interest overrides national interest, individualism against nationalism. The leaders show lip-service declarations for national development.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

It should be noted from the foregoing that good governance and political stability creates more conducive environment for sustainable economic development to take place. This is because political stability gives room for investors and investments to flourish for a long period of time. A stable economy achieves most of its objectives such as investment opportunities, wealth creation and overall economic growth and development. Consequently, the study offers the following recommendations;

The political governance should be given more attention to human capital development and infrastructural development in Nigeria.

The political leaders should put the interest of the Nigerians first as their major priority to curtail the menace of corruption.

The political leaders, government officials and Nigerian citizens must be laws abiding in order to get out from this pandemic act of corruption within Nigeria.

Sustainable development in a democratic setting could be achieved in a free egalitarian society.

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