

GOOD GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA: WHAT ROLE FOR THE MEDIA

Ifeoma Dunu, PhD

Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria

Abstract

The media over the years have been globally acknowledged as the watch dog of the society and their information/monitoring roles considered a sine qua non for democracy and good governance. Nigeria like most other democratic countries entrenched the principles of Good Governance as possible criteria for democratic governance in her 1999 constitution. However, despite this constitutional provision, as well as the enormous financial resources, and huge potentials of the country, good governance continues to be elusive to Nigeria. This paper argues that media's potential to contribute to Good Governance depends on the extent the media reflect and enforce the principles of good governance as an institution. The paper also identifies why and how the media are critical sectors in shaping governance while highlighting some of the principal opportunities and challenges to engaging with the sector. This work also provides a critical discourse of the concept of good governance. The paper concludes that for the media to contribute effectively in enthroning good governance, they must as a matter of responsibility apply the basic principles of patriotism, accountability, transparency and objectivity in the discharge of their duties and uphold the sanctity of truth and fairness at all times.

Keywords: Good Governance, media, governance, elements of good governance

Introduction

In modern day governance globally, the issue of Good Governance has assumed the front burner as an indispensable requirement for social, economic and political developments (World Bank, 1989, UNESCO, 2005; Nanda, 2006; Hout, 2007; Gisserlquit, 2012), yet better governance continues to be a source of worry and a big challenge to most countries including Nigeria. Interestingly, Nigeria, government in a bid to ensure good governance in the country had in, the 1999 Nigerian constitution in Section 16 (1) a, b, c, and d, and Section 16 (2) entrenched some of the principles of

Good Governance as a possible criteria for governance in the country. Despite these constitutional provisions, as well as the enormous financial resources, and huge potentials of the country, including the social and economic policies that have been implemented by successive administrations good governance continues to be elusive to Nigeria. In another attempt to enthrone Good Governance in the country, recent democratic administrations, organized Good Governance tours, where officials of the federal ministry of information alongside Journalists from various media houses, inspect the progress of work on the projects executed by the different agencies of the federal and the state governments. The objective of the tour is for the media to assess the performance of elected public office holders at both the federal and state level. The Nigerian constitution in section 22 made provision for such an exercise where it stated inter alia; “The press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives contained in this chapter and uphold the responsibility and accountability of the government to the people”.

The Good Governance tour organized by the Nigerian government identified two major issues. First, the Nigerian government’s concern and determination for better governance in the country. This concern possibly stems from the importance attached to the Good Governance concept as highlighted in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, which articulates that the Millennium Development Goals must be achieved through Good Governance within each country and the international level, as well as in this well- cited quote, from Kofi Anan, that, “Good Governance is perhaps the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development” (UN, 1998). Second, it identifies the symbiotic relationship between the media and Good Governance. The media are a critical link in the accountability chain between the government and the governed, providing information for the citizens to hold those in authority accountable and also articulating citizens’ voices and preference for government to use in policy formulation. Given this assumption, this paper argues that media’s contributions to Good Governance in the society is played out within the ambit of the principles of Good Governance and that media's potential to contribute to Good Governance depend on the extent the media reflect and enforce these principles as institution and in the discharge of the fundamental roles of the journalists. The paper as well identifies why the media are critical sectors in shaping governance relationships with special reference to the Nigerian media, while highlighting some of the principal opportunities and challenges to engaging with the sector as well as providing a critical discourse of the concept of good governance.

Defining the Concept of Good Governance

The increasing priority accorded the concept of Good Governance in international discourses, on politics and development across the globe has resulted in constant definitions and redefinitions as to what really constitutes Good Governance (Doornbos, 2003; Suchitra, 2004; Gisselquist, 2012). Looking at various literatures on the Good Governance concept, we could identify three strands of argument:

1. Proponents of the Good Governance agenda that sees it as a worthy goal and a means through which to impact economic growth and development. Their argument is aptly captured in this long quotation:

In poorly governed countries, it is argued, corrupt bureaucrats and politicians baldly hinder development efforts by stealing aid contributions or misdirecting them into unproductive activities. Less obvious but equally pernicious, governments that are not accountable to their citizens and with inefficient bureaucracies and weak institutions are unwilling or unable to formulate and implement pro-growth and pro-poor policies (Gisselquist, 2012, p.1).

On the other hand, the opponents who raise strong challenges argue the following points:

- a) Use of Good Governance criteria in the allocation of foreign aids effectively introduces political conditionalities and imposes Western liberal models of democracy (Nanda, 2006; NEPAD, 2007, p.3-4).
- b) Good Governance agenda is a poor guide for development policy. It is unrealistically long and not attuned to issues of sequencing and historical developments (Grindle, 2004; Booths, 2011)
- c) Good Governance ignores institutional variations across well governed states (Pitchett, 2004, Andrews, 2008).

The third stream of research raises questions about the causal effect of the quality of governance on various outcomes especially economic growth (Kurtz & Schrank, 2007a, 2007b; Khan, 2009). It is instructive to point out that current body of literature (Gerring 2001; Goertz,2005; Keefer,2009; Shirley,2010;Gisselquist,2011) have argued that good governance is a poorly defined concept and that future research should rather focus on the disaggregated components of good governance. This in part informs the structure of the discourse of this work. A critical consideration of the conceived differences surrounding the concept goes to point out the increased significance attached to the concept in recent times and also underscores the utility of the good governance components in development index across the nations and in the aggregate well being of democratic governance of a country.

Despite the contentions surrounding the concept, Good Governance has assumed an entrenched position as an indicator for measuring the development progress of any nation as well as a central factor for development. As Oburota (2003) argued “Politically, people may disagree about the best means of achieving good governance, but they quite agreed that Good Governance is absolutely imperative for social and economic progress”. That is why many nations are striving to be seen to offer good governance to its citizenry. All these provoke the question what then is Good Governance? To adjudge governance as good or bad we have to first of all define the concept of governance itself. Governance has been variously defined as "the management of society by the people"(Albrow,2001,p.151), and "the exercise of authority or control to manage a country's affairs and resources"(Schneider,1999,p.7).A synthesis of current definitions from monetary agencies such as World Bank, International development agencies such as United Nations Development Program(UNDP) and multilateral donors yields a more complex definition , which is set out in a 1997 UNDP policy document entitled “Governance for Sustainable Human Development” this way:

The exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It comprises of the mechanisms, processes and institutions, through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences. – UNDP.

Governance within the context of this paper refers primarily to government in domestic politics and is simply defined as the manner in which power is exercised by governments in the management and distribution of a country's social and economic resources. This suggests that governance can be good or bad depending on the method of the management of a country's resources.

So what is Good Governance? We are going to first take the definition of the concept by World Bank, as the chief engineer of the Good Governance agenda. How does World Bank define this concept believed to be capable of engendering sustainable development and democracy in countries such as Nigeria? To the World Bank, Good Governance consists of a public service that is efficient, a judicial system that is reliable, and an administration that is accountable to the public (1989, 60). According to the Bank’s definition, the key components of Good Governance include effectiveness and efficiency in public sector management, accountability and responsiveness of public officials to citizenry, rule of law and public access to information and transparency (World Bank, 1989, 1992, viii). Other International Monetary Agents defined the concept in similar way as World Bank did (See the definitions of ADB, 2008; EBRD, 2010; IADB,

2010). These definitions from the monetary agencies adopted the economic and management focused approach, whereas Multilateral Donor Agencies such as the UNDP (OECD, UNN, UNESCO) and others adopted political issues approach in their definitions. The definitions of these Donor Agencies are expertly captured in this United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP, 2002) definition of Good Governance as striving for:

Rule of law, transparency, participation, equity, effectiveness and efficiency, accountability, and strategic vision in the exercise of political, economic, and administrative authority. (UNDP, 2002, p.2)

This definition more than the previous definitions captured what has become identified by scholars as the elements or components of Good Governance. These components of Good Governance are; participation, consensus oriented, rule of law, transparency, accountability, responsiveness, efficiency and effectiveness. These elements are also eloquently captured in this definition of the concept by Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). According to OECD, Good Governance has eight major characteristics. It is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. It assures that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making (OECD, 2000). All these attributes are instruments of effective governance in the sense that they provide necessary anchor for the act of governance.

As the definitions presented above suggest, there are clear similarities across the working definitions from different international agents with minor differences. Irrespective of the arguments that find favour in current literature concerning the inaccuracies surrounding the definition of good governance concept and the unending addition to the components, a synthesis of these definitions more or less reveal that good governance constitutes two operative words, 'Governance, and 'Good'. As such basic understanding of these operative words readily yields a simple incontestable fact that the act of governance can be good or also bad. Since our focus is on Good Governance, we will now consider other definitions of the concept. According to Madhav (2007) as quoted in Ogundiya (2010), Good Governance has much to do with the ethical grounding of governance and must be evaluated with reference to specific norms and objectives as may be laid down. It looks at the functioning of the given segment of the society from the point of view of its acknowledged stakeholders, beneficiaries and customers... Therefore to describe governance as good or bad Ogundiya (2010) explains, requires the understanding of the essence of the state which is not only embedded in the constitution but also a function of religious ideals and the nature of the current problems confronting the state.

The Nigerian constitution in Section 16 (2) acknowledged that the essence of the Nigerian state is to promote the common good. The implication of this is clearly explained by Eboh (2003) this way; "The common good stands in opposition to the good of rulers or of a ruling group. It implies that every individual, no matter how high or low, has a duty to share in promoting the welfare of the community as well as a right to benefit from that welfare". Common implies that the "good" is all inclusive. In essence, the common good cannot exclude or exempt any section of the population. If any section of the population is in fact excluded from participating in the life of the community, even at a minimal level, then that is a contradiction to the concept of the common good (Eboh, 2003). The above explanations capture the view of Ogunniyi (2010) in his analysis of Good Governance as he maintains that Governance is good provided it is able to achieve the desired end of the state defined in terms of justice, equity, protection of life and property, enhanced participation, preservation of the rule of law and improved living standard of the population. Similarly, Nigeria's Vision 2010 document defined Good Governance as a means of accountability in all its ramifications. It also means the rule of law and an unfettered judiciary; that is freedom of expression and choice in political association. Good governance means transparency, equity and honesty in public office.

From all these definitions we can infer that Good Governance, as a concept, is applicable to all sections of society such as the government, legislature, judiciary, media, private sector, corporate sector, trade unions and lastly non-government organisations (NGOs). The implication is that it is only when all these and other various sections of society conduct their affairs in a socially responsible manner that the objective of achieving larger good of the largest number of people in society can be achieved (Madhav, 2007).

Remarkably, it is only when we appraise the manner in which the affairs of a country are run that we can discern which government is good or bad or which has been a success or failure. Failure of governance implies that those in political control have not properly managed the economy and other social institutions. According to World Bank (1992) bad governance has many features, among which are: failure to make a clear separation between what is public and what is private, hence a tendency to divert public resources for private gain; failure to establish a predictable framework for law and government behaviour in a manner that is conducive to development, or arbitrariness in the application of rules and laws; excessive rules, regulations, licensing requirements, etc, which impede the functioning of markets and encourage rent-seeking; priorities that are inconsistent with

development, thus, resulting in a misallocation of resources and excessively narrow base for, or non-transparencies, decision-making.

However, looking at the rate of unemployment, diversion of resources by public officials, escalating rate of corruption (Nigeria continues to be reported among the most corrupt countries of the world), tribal cum ethnic clashes, abuse of office by public officials, looting of public finances, kidnapping, increased rate of cybercrimes and other types of crimes there is every reason to believe that Good Governance is still a mirage as far as the Nigerian polity is concerned. Ogundiya (2010) expressed similar views as he emphasizes that, the problem of Nigerian development is both a symptom and consequence of the absence of Good Governance. Since Good Governance implies the exercise of power in a responsible and responsive manner that will ensure greater good, how can the media contribute, and why is the media seen as a critical sector in this regard?

How can the Media Contribute to Good Governance?

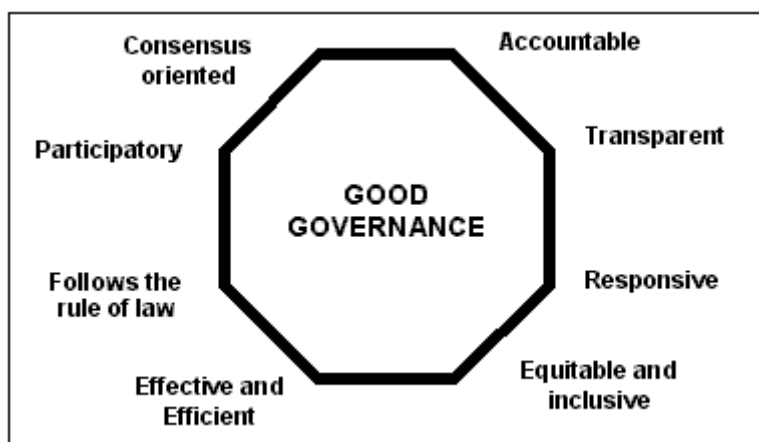
The roles of the media, including the social media, in promoting Good Governance are being recognized by the governments and policy-makers in various countries. In the UK, a “Survey of Policy Opinion on Governance and the Media” published by BBC (2009) reveals that although the emphasis on Good Governance in the development agenda is questionable, “there seems to be increasing recognition of the media’s role in governance in the development community. There are also some indicators that media are being more recognized by the policy-makers as having a central role in development.” The role of the media in promoting Good Governance is obvious. All aspects of Good Governance are facilitated by the existence of a strong, pluralistic and independent media within the society (UNESCO, 2005). Fortunately, the Nigerian media terrain to a large extent could be adjudged to qualify. The significance of the media in how well or not governance can be executed in the society is best captured in this more than a century argument by Joseph Pulitzer, in 1904. Pulitzer summarized his views thus:

Our Republic and its press will rise or fall together. An able, disinterested, public-spirited press, with trained intelligence to know the right and courage to do it, can preserve that public virtue without which popular government is a sham and a mockery. A cynical, mercenary, demagogic press will produce in time a people as base as itself. The power to mould the future of the Republic will be in the hands of the journalists of future generations (1904).

What Pulitzer was essentially saying here is that the media can make or break a society by the way and manner it functions. In our information-based society the media has a disproportionately visible and influential role

in fostering an environment where Good Governance will flourish. As the watchdog, agenda setter of public discourses and interpreter of public issues and events, the media have a special role in governance. The main responsibility of the media as is widely acknowledged is to provide comprehensive, analytical and factual news and opinion to the people on everyday issues and events of popular concern. Indeed this is the critical link between the functioning of the media and Good Governance. The media are the only institution with the capacity to allow and facilitate regular checks and assessment by the population of the activities of government and assist in bringing public concern and voices into the open by providing a platform for public discussion. In fact the nature and character of the media greatly impacts on the governance process in any society. For it is only when the media report, monitor, investigate and criticize the public administration's policies and actions as well as inform and educate the citizens can good governance be enthroned. We are now going to examine the concrete ways the media can contribute to good governance within the ambit of the eight elements of good governance identified earlier in this paper.

Elements Of Good Governance And Media's Role



Source: UNESCO, 2005

As was discussed in the previous section of this paper, there are eight commonly identified elements of Good Governance; it is within these elements that we will now examine the relationship between media and Good Governance.

Participation

Participation as an element of Good Governance implies the wide involvement of ordinary citizens in decision making and governance. According to UNESCO (2005) document, participation is a crucial element for Good Governance in two ways: Participation by citizens in decision

making process allows greater transparency and can help ensure that political decisions are adapted to the needs of the people and affected by them. Second, participation is important for democratic legitimacy, which depends on the investment people have as citizens in their own governing. Citizen participation in the act of governance is engendered by the media and other intermediate institutions. However as widely acknowledged, the role of the media in fostering participation is vital as the media reports on aspects of the decision making process and give stakeholders a voice in the process. The media enables participation in two ways; as a facilitator providing platforms for the citizens to have accurate and sufficient information that help citizens make rational and informed decisions and take the right course of action beneficial to them: As a feedback mechanism, the media provide the means for the citizens to register their feelings and express their assent and dissent concerning issues. The media as the primary intermediaries of information supply the information that other sectors of the society need to participate effectively.

One outstanding example where the media encouraged citizens' participation in national issue in the country was in the concerted effort of the mass media in raising public debate and discussions across the country in the third term agenda of President Obasanjo. This resulted in public outcry against the third term attempt which led to its demise. Another recent example of the media's role in aiding citizens participation and affecting outcomes is the Fuel subsidy issue popularly referred to as the 'occupy Nigeria Saga'. The Nigerian media's relentless campaign and the provision of various platforms for debate and discussions, not only ensured public participation in this important national issue but it equally affected the outcome.

Rule of law: The rule of law is the foundation of Good Governance. Good governance requires fair legal frameworks that are enforced impartially. The rule of law can be understood both as a set of practices which allow the law to perform a mediating role between various stakeholders in society and as a normative standard invoked by members of society that demonstrate their assent to this principle (UNESCO, 2005). Indeed the obvious demonstration of absence of Good Governance is the presence of arbitrariness and disregard for the rule of law. The rule of law is best seen as an ideal where impartial enforcement of laws is enthroned in every sector of the society. In the enforcement of the rule of law the media again plays a crucial role as the sector of the society most able to promote vigilance towards the rule of law, through fostering investigative journalism, promoting the openness of all the institutions that are relevant in ensuring that the rule of law is respected in the society. Citizens must understand for

instance that the rule of law consists of a set of institutions, laws and practices that are established to prevent the arbitrary exercise of power.

The media in their primary function of information dissemination and education provide such knowledge to all citizens, in different platforms so that the citizen recognizes that the primary protection tool for each and everyone is the respect for the rule of law. Apart from the role of informing, educating and explaining to the people the importance of democracy and exposing its core values for people's mental development, mass media do serve the purpose of keeping officials of government within expected (constitutional) bounds and the rule of law. One recent example where the media (although in this instance the social media) helped to uphold the rule of law in the country is in the recent past brutal massacre of the four University undergraduate in Porth- Harcourt. Without the evidence from the social media the perpetrators of the crime could still be free.

Transparency: Transparency is often regarded as the openness of institutions, that is, the degree to which outsiders can monitor and evaluate the actions of insiders. The purpose of transparency is to allow citizens, to hold institutions, governments and markets accountable for their policies and performances. Transparency is also defined as official business conducted in such a way that substantive and procedural information is available to and broadly understandable by, people and groups in society, subject to reasonable limits protecting security and privacy (Bellver & Kaufmann, 2005). Among the various elements of Good Governance, transparency is widely recognized as a core principle. Underlying this assertion we found that transparency is closely related to accountability and allows citizens to hold institutions and government accountable for their policies and performance and in this way reduce corruption in the polity. The root to transparency is provision of adequate information, since transparency implies sharing of information in an open manner.

The media are regarded as the major tool for disseminating information to the citizenry. Access to information by the media and subsequently the public is guaranteed by free and independent media. The media can play a key role in increasing government accountability to the general public by explaining government policies and actions in this manner; what is to be done, how and why an action has to take place, who is involved and by what standards decisions are made, and in this way government actions and inactions are exposed to the glare of the general public. It is perhaps in the area of engendering transparency in the society that the Nigerian media continue to be acknowledged (Olutokun & Seteolu, 2001; Jibo, 2003; Olaiya et al, 2013). Some outstanding contributions of the media in this regard will suffice.

We can recall that the media covered and intensely reported all aspects of the transition to democracy from (1998-1999). Oseni (1999, p.16) explains the role of the media this way: "Keeping the administration to its word or promise on the handover of power to civilians; offering where necessary, alternatives to the transition agenda; serving as a feedback on government policies as well as expanding the score of the transition to as such as morality, accountability, management of the national economy and the amelioration of poverty". Within the democratic dispensation, the media exposed high profile cases of corruption which involved highly ranked public office holders. The closest to the inception of the fourth republic was the falsification of Alhaji Salisu Buhari who became the first speaker of the republic. Omoera (2010) quotes Olutokun and Siteolu thus: "as a result of the media's watchdog role Buhari, on July 22, 1999 dropped his bravado, pleaded guilty to the allegation and resigned his office, thus paving the way for his prosecution". Other top corrupt cases attracted aggressive comment from the media. The Chuba Okadigho's N67Million car and office furniture allegation, Evan Enwerem (a former senate president), Patricia Olubunmi Etteh (a former speaker, House of Representative), Professor Adenike Grange (a former Minister of Health), Iyabo Obasanjo.(A senator caught up in shady deals in the health and power sectors), House of Representatives N23 million car Sandal, the Halliburton corruption scandal, the Vaswasni brother's scandal and many other improprieties in government circles at different times have been blown open by the media (Omera, Ibid).

The fight against corruption that was intensified in Obasanjo's regime could perhaps be regarded as a direct fallout of the media intense reportage, coverage and exposure of corruption within the Nigerian polity during that period. This led to the establishment of such bodies as Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Crime Commission (ICPC), the media played a key role. Omoera (Ibid) appraises this role as "accountability or whistle blowing role".

Responsiveness: Good governance requires that institutions and processes try to serve all stakeholders within a reasonable timeframe, by responding to the grievances, needs and aspirations of the citizens. As we mentioned earlier, the media act as a feedback mechanism where the public's are given the opportunity to bring their plight to the notice of the State. Often times than not the media do this through various media campaigns that serve to remind the State of their obligations to the public. The vigilance and capacity of the media are particularly important in tracking the availability and accessibility of services to various segments of the public

Consensus oriented: There are several actors as well as many view points in a given society. Good Governance requires mediation of the different interests in society to reach a broad consensus in society on what is in the best interest of the whole community and how this can be achieved. It also requires a broad and long-term perspective on what is needed for sustainable human development and how to achieve the goals of such development. This can only result from an understanding of the historical, cultural and social contexts of a given society or community. It is in this area that the core functions of the media are experienced- The provision of information, education and enlightenment to the citizenry; so that they can effectively make informed decisions and take actions resulting thereof in the good of the society. In doing this, the media help to mobilize the citizen to achieve development programmes of the country. The mass media's role in mobilizing Nigerians for the 2006 census could be seen as a good case in point. The census took place between 21st and 27th of March, 2006. The media's role was apparent before, during and after the head count. The National Population Census (NPC) collaborated with the mass media to "ensure a full-scale participation in the census exercise" (Ojete, 2008). One way the media provided meaningful information and education on the census is via editorials, news, headlines and other journalistic genres (Ojete, Ibid).

By providing meaningful information and education on the census via editorials, news, headlines and other journalistic genres, the media encouraged the huge turnout that was witnessed during the census. This was also the case in the immediate past election of the present administration. The intensive coverage given during the period preceding the election in part led to the unprecedented huge turnout of electorates. Indeed the media have been noted as the vanguard for championing development programmes of government in such a way that the citizen will be persuaded to participate.

Equity and inclusiveness: A society's well being depends on ensuring that all its members feel that they have a stake in it and not excluded from the mainstream of society. This requires all groups, particularly the most vulnerable, to have opportunities to improve and/or maintain their well being. The media's role in this regard is very simple-giving balanced and fair coverage to all issues in a manner that diverse voices and opinions will be represented. It is perhaps in this function that the Nigerian media have been greatly faulted. The Nigerian media have been accused of prejudice in reporting and treating issues of public concern.

Effectiveness and efficiency: Good Governance means that processes and institutions produce results that meet the needs of society while making the best use of resources at their disposal. The concept of efficiency in the context of Good Governance also covers the sustainable use of natural resources and the protection of the environment. Effectiveness and

efficiency means that state institutions are functioning optimally according to the rule of law, thus tremendously enhancing the overall effectiveness of government. Although the media cannot in themselves alone ensure effectiveness and efficiency of all the institution in the society. However, the media can help keep the different institutions and administrators on their toes by readily and regularly reporting cases of inefficiency and other related vices in the system. This way inefficiency in public institutions, organizations and government will be greatly reduced. The media through development of media campaigns, documentaries, editorial comments and other platforms of criticism can spotlight institutions and practices that are inefficient and unproductive.

Accountability: Accountability is a key requirement of Good Governance. Not only governmental institutions but also the private sector and civil society organizations must be accountable to the public and to their institutional stakeholders. Who is accountable to whom varies, depending on whether decisions or actions taken are internal or external to an organization or institution. In general government is accountable to the society. Accountability points to the responsibility of judging the practices of public administrators to determine their effectiveness in the execution of their public functions. It is a process of taking responsibility for decisions and actions by government and public service organizations, private sector companies, civil society institutions and organizations and by the individuals working in these institutions, firms and organizations. Accountability also includes how these individuals and institutions are managing public funds, and whether there is fairness and performance in all aspects in accordance with agreed rules, contracts, standards and fair and accurate reporting on performance results vis-à-vis mandated roles and/or plans (Jobarteh, 2012). One of the strengths of accountability is that it reduces the possibility of corruption in the polity to an almost zero level by reducing abuse of power by the State. Accountability includes various kinds of internal and external mechanism of scrutiny.

The media represent one of the major mechanisms of accountability. Holding government accountable therefore is a constitutional requirement of the Nigerian media. Access to information is the cornerstone of accountability. It is only when the public are provided with the relevant and adequate information can they hold those in authority accountable for their actions and inactions. As the main purveyor of information the media owe a sacred duty to the public to provide them with truthful and regular information. It is in recognition of this significant role of the media that the Nigerian government passed the FOI bill into law. As a recent study eloquently puts it, "Without information, there is no accountability. Information is power and the more people who possess it, the more power is

distributed. The degree to which a media is independent is the degree to which it can perform an effective public watchdog function of 'Public Affairs ". (Pope, 2000, p.119-120). For the media to facilitate accountability in governance journalists should know the four fundamental questions about accountability:

- Who has an obligation?
- What commitments or standards are supposed to be met?
- What will show whether the commitments and standards have been met?
- What are the consequences for misconduct or poor performance? (Jobarteh,2012).

Accountability and transparency have been identified as twin concepts that are necessary pre-conditions for just governance and democracy which helps to ensure that government power is exercised according to the will of the citizenry. Given the above explanations, when can we say that there is just or fair governance in a country such a Nigeria? Answer to this question, could be viewed from these four perspectives:

- ❖ When the State uses investments and scarce resources reasonably for the benefit of all citizens, and most especially for the most disadvantaged.
- ❖ When the State operates by a clear set of rules, which are considered just and fair by most citizens.
- ❖ When the State treats citizens with respect and inform citizens about what it is doing or not doing
- ❖ When the State allows citizens to choose who leads them and have a say about what they need and want from government (Jobarteh, 2012; paraphrased).

What we have done is to demonstrate how the Nigerian media have contributed in trying to enthrone Good Governance in the country. Critics of the media point to gaps and areas of weakness which we acknowledge, however our submission is that the media play an indispensable role in ensuring better governance in any society and that the Nigerian media in this regard could be adjudged as having performed fairly well even though there are still gaps which will now be considered briefly.

Challenges

Despite acknowledging the various ways the Nigerian media have indeed attempted to foster good governance, the fact remains that there are still critical issues that the Nigerian media need to deal with. Some of the more obvious and vital once will be briefly considered. Nigerian journalists, oftentimes tend to over censor themselves for fear of reprisals, particularly the public media. This leads to factual inexactitude. A situation where

information are often incomplete or deliberately down played or some facts missing. Some of the other challenges for the Nigerian media include: issue of poor remuneration for the journalists; the polarization of the media along North -South divide that pervades Nigerian politics; ownership influence that affects media stand on issues, the private media, as well as the public media have often been accused of reflecting the ideological and political considerations of the proprietors ;the issue of protocol journalism in which highly placed public officials are deliberately shielded from embarrassing questions and investigations from the media in return for some consideration for the media (Jibo,2003); extreme commercialization of news; partisan, biased or ethnic reporting of events (Olukotun(2000) and the practice of black mail journalism.

Opportunities for the Media

Whether or not the media can promote Good Governance also depends on the media themselves. UNESCO (2005) publication on Media and Good Governance clearly reveals what the media should be, and should have, in order to perform their duty effectively. According to the UNESCO document the preconditions for the media to effectively contribute to Good Governance depend on these three elements; media freedom, independence and pluralism. Interestingly, The Center for Development Communication (2006) document echoed similar argument this way:

To contribute to good governance, media should be editorially independent, free from any pressure and external interferences, and reflect the plurality of opinions and perceptions in order to truly help citizens be informed, understand the issues at stake, make up their minds, and finally, judge events by themselves.

The arguments from these documents point to the fact that the media must fundamentally be free from any kind of influence, particularly political, ownership, commercial or governmental control. However, this appears to be a critical challenge for the Nigerian media. Scholars have noted that the Nigerian media are plagued with the problems of commercialization; the syndrome of "he who pays the piper calls the tune" and is divided across ethnic lines. Secondly, the term pluralism has been defined as the existence of the greatest possible number of newspapers, periodicals and broadcast stations reflecting the widest possible range of opinions within the society. It is instructive to point out that the Nigerian media although pluralistic in sheer number, cannot yet be said to be truly pluralistic as argued in these documents since community media are yet to be established in the Nigerian media terrain as is the case in other countries. In addition to the above, there are three distinct ways for the media to effectively and efficiently contribute

to Good Governance: Good Governance in the Media; Good Governance By the media and Good Governance For the Media (SCG, 2006).

Good Governance in the Media

To effectively contribute to Good Governance, the media themselves must be credible example of Good Governance concept. First the media should uphold professional ethical rules set up through self -regulation, and constantly enhance professionalism, be accountable to the public in the way it informs, educates and entertains. In sum the media should recognize that they are accountable for their actions to the public, their profession and themselves.

Good Governance by the Media

According to (SCG, 2006), the media must fight the 3Cs: corruption, collusion and cronyism. They must promote human rights, uphold the rule of law and keep the citizens constantly informed. To discharge this duty creditably, the journalists must be equipped with the necessary investigative capacity to bring out the truths to the public and fulfill their functions in promoting Good Governance. The Nigeria media have been accused of factual inexactitude where press conference release are in some cases distorted to give a slant that would suit the idiosyncrasies of either the reporter or the medium owners. What is obviously advocated here is that the media should shun unprofessional acts capable of jeopardizing the media in any way, and embrace professionalism at all cost. However the issue of professionalism continues to remain a critical area of challenge in relation to the contentions surrounding the journalism practice in Nigerian as a profession (Adaja, 2012).

3. Good Governace for the Media

This implies that for the media to function effectively they must enhance the creation and /or maintenance of a favorable legal environment or regulatory framework, which guarantees media freedom, independence and pluralism. However, we need to also point out that it is important for the country to as well provide an enabling environment for the media to investigate. An environment that is free from intimidation; detrimental media laws such as criminal, defamation laws etc, often used against investigative journalists so as to ensure the safety of journalists and their freedom to seek information.

All the points raised above, demonstrate that the media workers have responsibility to the audience, to their profession and to the country. There are two ways in fulfilling these obligations - professionalism and ethical conduct, in gathering and analyzing information. In addition, there is also the

need for infrastructure and organizational capacity and an adequate investigative capacity, without which the media would find it hard to satisfactorily accomplish the promotion of Good Governance.

Conclusion

Achieving Good Governance requires the understanding and participation of every member of the society. However, it has been observed that for governance to be just and democratic, leaders more than any other sector of the society need to use their power responsibly and for the greater good. Systems and procedures need to be in place that impose restraints on power and encourage government officials to act in the public's best interests. The media, their roles, channels and contents, are considered powerful enough to make this achievement a reality. The Nigerian media have been in the vanguard for the promotion and sustenance of the democracy we now have in the country, even the struggle for independence was pioneered and fought for by the Nigerian media. But a great number of existing media channels in the country need to take up the responsibility of adequately engendering better governance in our democratic polity. As the institution mandated to hold those in governance accountable, the Nigerian media can effectively achieve this if they apply the basic principles of patriotism, accountability, transparency and objectivity in the discharge of their duties as well as uphold the sanctity of truth and fairness at all times. In effect, for the media to contribute to Good Governance, the media must embrace the principles of Good Governance themselves as a critical precondition for effectiveness in the discharging their functions to the Nigerian society. The watchdogs must watch themselves.

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