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# GOOD GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN A DEMOCRACY

*John Emmanuel Gyong, PhD*

Department of Sociology, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria

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## **Abstract:**

In spite of the fact that Nigeria is one of the highest producers of petroleum products in the world, the country has remained backward in socio-economic and political development. Consequently, malnutrition, poor health prospects, unemployment, abject poverty, rising insecurity and political instability have been the hallmark of the nation. One of the major factors that accounts for the failure of most African countries, including Nigeria, to attain development has been the absence of good governance and accountability in their democratic experiments. The reasoning is that without good governance being institutionalized through accountability, democratic consolidation would be jeopardized. The paper observes that democratic development in Nigeria has gone through chequered history. It therefore argues that that good governance as reflected in the areas of social, political and economic advancement is a necessary prerequisite to the attainment of a full fledged democracy. However, the paper identifies a number of challenges to the attainment of good governance and accountability in Nigeria. The paper then further argued that there are still prospects towards the attainment of good governance and accountability. In conclusion, the paper posits that in order to promote good governance and accountability in Nigeria, there is the need to entrench the principles of majority rule, healthy intra and inter party competition, free and fair election, separation of power between the Executive, Legislature and the Judiciary, strict adherence to due process of law, effective participation of civil society groups, the media as well as civil right for all and sundry.

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**Key words:** Democracy, Good Governance, Accountability, Executive, Legislature, Judiciary.

## **Introduction:**

In spite of the fact that Nigeria is one of the highest producers of petroleum products in the world, the country has remained backward in socio-economic and political development. Consequently, malnutrition, poor health prospect, unemployment and underdevelopment, abject poverty, rising insecurity and political instability have been the hallmark of the nation. One of the major factors for the failure of most African countries to attain development has been the absence of good governance and accountability in their democratization experiments.

Generally speaking, scholars and politicians alike have argued that the democracy being practiced in Nigeria is basically a product of both internal and external pressures. In the wake of this democratization experience, hopes and expectations were elicited the general populace. For one, democracy represents a fulcrum in the values which the global wind of change has imposed on the global system for which Nigeria is one. Two, democracy is generally seen as a harbinger of good governance and development (Omotola, 2007:670). Three, democracy has the capacity to open up relatively extensive political space and liberalize the political atmosphere. It then follows that any nation seeking international relevance must be seen to be founded on democratic values. In this sense, democracy becomes the standard for participation in international affairs and the only sure path to socio-economic and political development. Arising from the above, good governance and accountability are seen to be basic variables to democratic consolidation. The reasoning here seems to suggest that without good governance being institutionalized through accountability, democratic consolidation could not be attained. The questions that this paper attempts to answer are: What are the factors influencing good governance and democracy in Nigeria? What are the challenges to good governance and democracy in Nigeria? What are the prospects of entrenching governance and consolidated democracy in Nigeria?

In order to achieve the objectives of the paper and effectively answer the questions raised- the paper is divided into five sections. The first section is an introduction which highlights the main concerns of the paper. The second examines briefly, the concept of democracy and democratic development in Nigeria, while the third section discusses good governance and accountability. The challenges to good governance in Nigeria is covered in section four and in five, the prospects of good governance in a democratic Nigeria is discussed. The sixth and last section is the conclusion.

## **I. Democracy and Democratic Development in Nigeria.**

Classical democracy from its origin, which dates back to Greece in the 5<sup>th</sup> century meant “rule by the people” (Heywood, 2005:67). It was originally meant to allow all citizens have a voice in matters that affect them. This means, all citizens have the right to voice their opinions on issues that directly affect them.

Liberal democracy, which was ushered in during the enlightenment period of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries in Europe, and which has become the model for the world over is representative in nature (Gyong, 2010A). Under a representative democracy, citizens surrender their rights to an elected group who in turn work for the interest of all and sundry. Thus modern democracy is widely associated with Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg address, delivered in 1864 at the height of the American Civil War in what he called "government of the people, by the people and for the people" (Cf Heywood, 2005:67).

Democratic development in Nigeria has gone through chequered history, dating back to the late 1950s when it became obvious to the British Colonialists that they had to relinquish power to nationalist agitations. This they did in 1960 when they handed over power on a platter of gold to a few select elites that will ensure their invisible continued presence and control over the economy and politics of Nigeria. Consequently, virtually every institution of Nigeria was created and nurtured along these lines. The first attempt of having a democratic rule in Nigeria lasted for only six months and was truncated by the first military coup of 15<sup>th</sup> January, 1966 on claims of corruption and tribalism (Birai, 1988). The military then held on to power up to 1979 when a second attempt was made to return to democratic government through the election and swearing into office of Alhaji Shehu Shagari in October 1979. This attempt lasted for only four years and by January 1984, the military took over the reign of government through General Muhammadu Buhari. Between the rule of Generals Buhari through Ibrahim Babangida to Sani Abacha, various unsuccessful attempts were made to return Nigeria to full fledged democracy. The present democratic setting came into force in 1999 under the midwifery duties of General Abdulsalam Abubakar. By May 29<sup>th</sup>, 1999, Olusegun Obasanjo was sworn in as the democratic President and Commander-in-Chief of the Nigerian Armed Forces. He was succeeded by late Umaru Yar'adua who was in office for less than two years. Today, Goodluck Jonathan is at the helm of affairs as the President and Commander-in- Chief of the Nigerian Armed Forces.

## II. Good Governance and Accountability

Good governance, as a concept is a problematic one. For one, it is value loaded and therefore subjective. The meaning attached to it may largely be a function of the intents and purposes of the analyst. Nevertheless, it remains a useful concept for obvious reasons. The concept of good governance could be used to invite judgment about how the country concerned was being governed: it enables the raising of evaluative question about proper procedures, transparency, the quality and process of decision making, and other such matters. In fact, it helps to differentiate the professed or actual self-understanding of the ruling groups from their real causal contribution to the prosperity or misery of their subjects (cf Simbine, 2000).

Similarly, good governance means accountability, security of human rights and civil liberties, devolution of powers and respect for local autonomy which all constitute a challenge to democratic regimes. Moreover, good governance has been closely linked to ‘the extent to which a government is perceived and accepted as legitimate, committed to improving the public welfare and responsive to the needs of its citizens, competent to assure law and order and deliver public services, able to create an enabling policy environment for productive activities; and equitable in its conduct’ (Landell-Mill and Seragelden, cf Simbine, 2000; 17).

The World Bank has offered a more comprehensive explanation of good governance. It defines ‘governance’ as “the means by which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources for development” and ‘good governance’ as synonymous with “sound development management” (cf Potter, 2000: 379). It encompasses a broad sphere of public sector management; accountability; legal framework for development (reforms); information and technology; the legitimacy of government; the competence of governments to formulate appropriate policies, make timely decisions; implement them effectively and deliver services (cf Potter 2000: 379). The concept of governance is the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented or not implemented. Government is one of the actors in governance. Other actors may include landlords, corporations, NGOs, research institutions, religious leaders, financial institutions, political parties, the military etc. Other actors other than government and the military are grouped together as part of the

civil society (UN ESCAP, Undated). Good governance is about the distribution of political power and means. It means inclusion of women and other marginalized groups. Good governance may also require shifts in power (Anna, 2004). In the views of Igbuzor (2009), good governance entails the respect for the rule of law, ensuring effective delivery of public goods and services, participation of all men and women in decision making process, institutional effectiveness and accountability. Good governance has also been defined by Ilufoye (2010):

*As the process of allocating resources through the instrumentalities of the state, for the attainment of public good. Thus, good governance includes institutional and structural arrangements, decision making processes, policy formulation and implementation capacity, development of personnel, information flows and the nature and style of leadership within a political system. Hence, governance is largely about problem identification and solving.*

According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (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 the society are heard in decision-making. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of the society (OECD, 2001). These characteristics are further discussed as follows:

**Participation:** Participation is a key cornerstone of good governance. Participation could be either direct or through legitimate intermediate institutions or representatives. Participation needs to be informed and organized. This means freedom of association and expression on one hand and an organized civil society on the other hand.

**Rule of law:** Good governance requires fair legal framework that is enforced impartially. It also requires full protections of human right, particularly those of

minorities. Impartial enforcement of laws requires an independent judiciary, an impartial and incorruptible police force, as well as patriotic Armed Forces.

**Transparency:** This means that decisions taken and their enforcement are done in a manner that follows rules and regulations. It also means that information is freely available and directly accessible to those who will be affected by such decisions and their enforcement. It also means that enough information is provided and that it is provided in easily understandable forms and media.

**Responsiveness:** good governance requires that institutions and processes serve all stakeholders within a reasonable time frame.

**Consensus oriented:** there are several actors and as such, many view points in a given society. Good governance requires mediations of 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 context of a given society or community.

**Equity and inclusiveness:** A society's well-being depends on ensuring that all its members feel that they have a stake in it and do not feel excluded from the mainstream of society. This requires all groups, but particularly the most vulnerable to have opportunities to improve or maintain their well-being.

**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.

**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 who varies depending on whether decisions or action taken are internal or external to an organization or institution. In general, an organization or an institution is

accountable to those who will be affected by its decisions or actions. Accountability cannot be enforced without transparency and the rule of law.

In many countries, the decline in public confidence in government is fueled by high profile ethical failure in the public and private sectors. However, trust cannot be asserted, demanded or legislated. It must be earned through demonstrated accountability (CAPAM, 2010). Accountability is one of the cornerstones of good governance. In *Accountability in Governance*, (<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/publicsectora>) the view is held that, accountability exists when there is a relationship such that an individual or body, and the performance of tasks or functions by that body or individual are subject to another's oversight, direction or request that they provide information or justification for their action. It is further stated that the concept of accountability involves two different stages; Answerability and Enforcement.

**Answerability** refers to the obligation of the government, its agencies and public officials to provide information about their decisions and actions and to justify them to the public and those institutions of accountability tasked with providing oversight.

**Enforcement** suggests that the public or the institutions responsible for accountability can sanction the offending party or remedy the contravening behavior. Different institutions of accountability might be responsible for either or both of these stages. Accountability is important for evaluating the effectiveness of public officials or public bodies in order to ensure that they are performing to their full potentials in instilling confidence in government and that government will be responsible to the community they are meant to be serve.

### **Types of accountability:**

In *Accountability in Governance* <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/publicsectora> the following classifications of accountability were made namely:

**Horizontal Accountability:** Horizontal accountability is the capacity of state institutions to check abuse by other public agencies and branches of government or the requirement for agencies to report sideways. Institutions such as the parliament or the judiciary commonly provide horizontal accountability.

**Vertical Accountability:** This is the means through which citizens, mass media and civil society groups can seek the support of elected representatives to redress grievances and intervene in the case of inappropriate or inadequate actions by government. In addition, through the use of public hearings, committee investigations and public petition, parliament can provide a vehicle for public voice and a means through which citizens and civil society groups can question government and seek parliamentary sanctioning where appropriate.

**Political Accountability:** This occurs when the parliament holds the executive politically accountable. This is often done through the oversight activities of parliament over the executive. They may be aided by anti-corruption agencies, ombuds office and human rights institutions. In the case of Nigeria, such bodies include the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) Code of Conduct Tribunal (CCT), National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Commission (ICPC).

**Legal Accountability:** This occurs when the judiciary holds the executive legally accountable. This stems from the fact that the Judiciary, being an independent arm of government can adjudicate on cases that concern the State in order to ensure that the rule of law is maintained.

**Social Accountability:** This is an approach towards building accountability that relies on civic engagement namely a situation whereby ordinary citizen and/or civil society organizations participate directly or indirectly in exacting accountability. This is also referred to as society driven horizontal accountability.

In summary therefore, good governance may be seen as the extent to which a country has made progress in terms of meeting the needs of the majority of its citizens in the areas of social, political and economic advancement. Socially, poverty should be at its lowest ebb, the quality of life should be at a reasonable level, equity and justice should be glaringly and manifestly seen and practiced. Politically, citizens should genuinely and freely exercise their franchise to elect representatives of their choice, they should be involved in decision making and policy implementation and a clear separation of power should exist between the Executive, Legislature and the Judiciary. Economically, the mass of the populace should be seen to be genuinely involved in the



decision making and implementations processes that directly or indirectly affect their country's economic activities and its relationship with other economies.

### **III. Challenges to Good Governance and Accountability in Nigeria.**

In the new democratic dispensation in Nigeria, one is beginning to witness some semblance of good governance characterized by the expansion of political space to allow inclusive as opposed to the exclusive government of the past military. This has led to the formation of political parties, the separation of power between the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary, some elements of transparency and accountability, rule of law and adherence to due process in the conduct of government business. These elements of good governance are certainly not in their perfect state, but clear indicators of a return from the profligate and reckless disposition of the past military regimes to a government that is fairly accountable to the citizens (Jega, 2007). In spite of the progress that has been made so far, the present democratic arrangement in Nigeria is bedeviled with a number of challenges.

The first of these challenges is the weak nature of a democratic culture of free and fair elections, adherence to due process and the rule of law, freedom of expression and association. On these issues, Jega (2007:284) succinctly observes that even though “political atmosphere has been liberalized in contrast to what was obtained under the military rule”, nevertheless, he continues “evidence abound about executive overzealousness, if not lawlessness and general intolerance to due process and the rule of law”. The weak nature of a substantive democratic culture is also affecting good governance in the present democratic setting in Nigeria. Substantive democracy, according to Jega (2007) is about genuine and committed participation of citizens in the management of their daily affairs and the development of their societies in which there is truly responsive and responsible governance aimed at the satisfaction of their fundamental needs and aspirations.

The second major challenge to good governance and accountability in Nigeria is the upsurge of insecurity of life and property across the country. This is largely consequent upon the fact that the return to democracy itself has elicited high hopes and expectations among the citizens as it has opened up relatively extensive political space

and liberalized the political atmosphere. Thus, citizens now clamor for freedom of expression, freedom of association and freedom of movement.

For instance, in a paper titled “Crime and Human Rights in Nigeria” Shettima and Chukwuma (2002) attempted a very illuminating examination of the dynamics between the democratic experience in Nigeria and the state of insecurity of lives and properties. They opined that even though democratic transition in autocratically ruled nations brings hope to its people, it also carries along its wake a surge in insecurity with debilitating consequences for the overall sustenance of good governance. In Nigeria, the sudden change that democracy brought to the country was so monumental and managing it became a herculean task. The new democratic setting has become a source of concern as hopes of the majority have not been met, and human rights are misconstrued and exercised without restraint. In this regard, Jemibeun observes that “views which were considered anti-government and hitherto suppressed out of fear---were now freely expressed and often times, violently too. Militant groups sprang up in some parts of the country (cited in Shettima and Chukwuma, 2002: 3). This observation is true given the emergence and deadly activities of the Niger Delta militants and Boko Haram in Maiduguri and other parts of Northern Nigeria. It is also true given the incessant ethno-religious violence in Jos and post-election violence that followed the 2011 elections in Nigeria.

In Jos, Plateau State, personal, private and public sectors have, for over one decade now, been transecting their business under a serious state of insecurity of lives and property. This has degenerated, of recent, into secret killings of lives and burning of houses. In the same vein, Maiduguri, Damaturu and environs have become highly insecure due to the deadly activities of Boko Haram. Similarly, in virtually every other part of Nigeria, personal, private and public sectors’ activities are now carried out in constant fear, real or imagined, of insecurity characterized by spate of bomb blast, ethno-religious conflict and kidnapping. The phenomenon of bomb blast in Nigeria has climaxed into the recent bombing of the Headquarters of the Nigeria Police Force and the United Nations building in Nigeria. In fact, the fear of bomb blast became so severe that the Federal Government of Nigeria had to, for the first time in Abuja, the nation’s seat of government; shift the 51<sup>st</sup> Independence Day Anniversary into the premises of

Aso Rock, supposedly the most secure place in Nigeria. The above state of affairs in Nigeria, no doubt poses a major challenge to good governance and accountability, as every sector is over stretched, resources that should have been utilized to meet other vital needs are diverted and individuals are unable to realize their full potential.

Furthermore, the on-going economic liberalization and privatization which the new democracy has brought is yet a third challenge to good governance and accountability. This situation is creating numerous actors and opportunities which are glaringly accessible to just a few. The on-going economic reforms coupled with the recent global meltdown have led to massive rationalization of the work force, thereby leading to more social dissatisfaction, disarticulation and mass resentment. According to Mark Shaw:

*Post authoritarian and post-conflict societies are increasingly subject to structural changes in their economies---In such states, the access to newly created opportunities is not equal to all. This factor---creates contradictory pressures (cf Shettima and Chukwuma, 2002: 4).*

This economic liberalization has also of recent led to collapse of some banks and the merger of others. On the whole therefore, the liberalization of economic space is often accompanied with vices such as unemployment and underemployment, retrenchment, poverty, inequalities and inequities, deprivation, squalor, massive rural to urban migration, social disorganization etc. These and many other problems pose serious challenge to good governance and accountability.

A fourth major challenge to good governance and accountability in Nigeria is the way and manner democratic power is captured and utilized. The most elementary definition of democracy is a “government of the people, by the people and for the people”. The only guarantee for democracy to meet this basic definition is where there is free and fair election and supremacy of popular will of the people is expressed through the ballot box and where the rulers are accountable to the electorate.

But it is common knowledge that elections in Nigeria, since independence have been characterized by massive rigging and allocation of political votes and offices.

These elections have also been characterized by unprecedented scale of violence across virtually every electoral ward in Nigeria. A case in point is the Local Government election that took place in Plateau State in November, 2008. This election resulted into violence in Jos North L.G.A. and subsequently spread to other parts of the State where hundreds of people including security operatives lost their lives and properties. Many more have been displaced and sustained various degrees of injuries. In fact this election is said to be one of the immediate causes of the persistent crisis in Plateau State.

The recent spate of killings and wanton destruction of lives and property including the spate of bomb blasts in various parts of Northern Nigeria following the 2011 elections is another case in point. There have been widespread allegations of the unfortunate involvement of security operatives in these nefarious activities. Similarly, the Judiciary, which is suppose to be the 'Temple of Justice', the 'defender of the common man', 'the benevolent third party and impartial arbiter' has also been accused of taking sides in the present democratic arrangement. The accusation and counter accusation between the suspended President of the Court of Appeal, Justice Ayo Salami on the one hand and the immediate past Chief Justice of the Federation, Justice Katsina Alu and the National Judicial Council on the other, is a clear manifestation of this accusation.

In the same vein, the police and other security operatives have been accused of conspiring with politicians to carry out electoral fraud, harass and intimidate the opposition in Nigeria. It is unfortunate to hear that these security operatives are associated with one political party or the other during elections. It needs to be noted that opposition in a democracy is a very healthy component of good governance and accountability. Opposition provides the needed checks and balances in governance and challenges the government to be just and accountable. Thus, coercing and silencing of the opposition does not support a virile democratic environment.

Another manifestation of police brutality against democracy that affects good governance and accountability is the suppression of trade union activists and civil society organizations. For instance it is on record that Labor Unions like Nigerian Labor Congress (NLC), Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas (NUPENG) and Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff

Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN) have been suppressed by the use of security operatives when planning to demonstrate against some government policies such as hike in pump price of petroleum products, agitation for wage increase and threats of staff rationalization and casualization. Trade unions and civil society organizations are very important organization in democratic setting because they protect not only the interest of their members but the generality of the populace. Therefore constraining their activities by security operatives constitutes a very serious challenge to good governance and accountability in Nigeria.

The fifth major challenge to good governance and accountability is the weak participation of citizens in decision making beyond election. Consequently, they are unable to effectively monitor their leaders and to demand accountability. It is a known fact that in Nigeria, leaders at various levels of governance are continuously accused of failure to deliver on people's needs and demands not only in the delivery of services but also in information provision and accountability. European Union (EU) observed that in Uganda, which is not far fetched from what is obtainable in other African countries including Nigeria; civil society actors who are ideally expected to play a central role in the aggregation of citizens' interest and in promoting and monitoring democratic accountability have not been able to adequately do so. This is mainly due to the fact that governance is not transparent but rather secretive and corrupt. (Konrad et al, 2011)

The sixth major challenge to good governance and accountability in Nigeria is the cancer worm called corruption. Corruption is endemic and has permeated virtually all the individuals, systems and structures of Nigeria. The following illustration helps to appreciate the diversity of corruption in Nigeria: recruitment of kinsmen to fill vacant post even where there are more qualified candidates; collection of salaries and allowance of ghost workers; students made to pay teachers in kind or cash to pass examination; bribing of law enforcement agents and other administrators of justice to pervert justice; contractors conniving with consultants and clients to inflate cost of contract; mothers offering their daughters as fronts to secure contracts and other favors; politicians and public officers spending huge sums of money abroad at the expense of the masses; women using 'bottom powers' to elicit favors from men; buying and selling of votes and positions; misappropriation and embezzlement of funds; sale of adulterated foods and

hazardous drugs; market women distorting measuring devices to increase their profit margin; (Gyong, 2010B).

One obvious conclusion that comes out very clearly from these illustrative examples of corruption is that it is indeed a social malaise that permeates every facet of our National life. It cuts across religious, ethnic, class and geo-political boundaries. The point of difference could be the magnitude, type and manifestation. But the common denominator is that it frustrates good governance and accountability. There are many cases of highly placed Nigerians who were entrusted with power and resources, but eventually diverted such to their personal gains. In this regard, Human Rights Watch (2007) observes that

*Nigerian political elites, almost without exception, have an insatiable capacity to steal from the commonwealth and leave the people more impoverished. Unrestrained by any real accountability to the electorate, many of those elected officials who came to power in fraudulent elections have committed abuses against their constituents and engaged in the large-scale looting of public resources” (cf Ilufoye, 2010).*

This diversion of funds have no doubt created instances of deprivation, poverty, squalor, unemployment, inadequate or total absence of amenities and social services, lack of payment of salaries, to mention but a few that collectively frustrate the attainment of good governance and accountability.

The seventh major challenge to good governance and accountability in Nigeria is the legislative arm of government. This arm is the youngest of the three arms of government and the most vulnerable to any political instability. Yet it performs very significant functions to the sustenance of good governance and accountability through law making, oversight and adequate checks on abuses of power especially by the executive. On this matter, Ilufoye (2010) has made elaborate commentaries as captured herein. Effective legislature contributes to good governance. This is done by the performance of legislative oversight over the finances of government, which serves as a catalyst for the sustainability of a democratic governance. He went further to observe that it is also important to note that the responsibilities of the legislature in a democratic

society have gone beyond mere rule making and representation to include administrative and financial matters. Legislators are now saddled with the role of keeping close watch and control over the executive arm of government and the control of public expenditures and taxation. In summary therefore, a legislative house must not only be capable of making laws for the safety and general wellbeing of the people, but must also be able to manage funds in order to provide good life for the entire citizenry. To perform its oversight function effectively, every legislature needs power to shape the budget and means of overseeing or checking the executive power beyond the ultimate power of impeachment. A legislature that is capable of oversight function is more likely to manage the available funds to achieve the objectives of the State with minimal or no wastages, and this engenders transparency, openness, accountability which represent the tripod of good governance. The failure of the legislature to perform this important function in Nigeria has denied the people the gains of democratic governance. Rather than enhance good governance through equity in the distribution of resources, members of the legislature in Nigeria have been preoccupied with how to amass wealth to them at the peril of Nigeria. The case of the 2009 budgetary allocation is a typical example. Further, Ilufoye (2010) notes that a breakdown of the 2009 National Budget shows that members of the National Assembly and the personnel of a part of the Presidency will be paid 47.8 billion naira as emoluments during the year. The 360 members of the House of Representatives were to receive 26.67 billion naira while the 109 Senators were to get 16.3 billion naira. When provisions for legislative aides, the National Assembly Service Commission and the National Assembly Office are factored in, the total allocation to the federal legislature stands at 61.6 billion naira. In its analysis, the editorial comment in the Nigerian Tribune of December 11, 2008 notes that an infinitesimal percentage of the citizenry will be pocketing 2.9% of the total provision made for the recurrent expenditure of Federal Government. In the context of the above development, the national assemblies have failed to provide selfless, purposeful and democratic legislative leadership. This is so because Nigerian legislators are not qualitatively appointed through competitive, fair and free elections. In the midst of this unfortunate development the Legislature is less likely to significantly contribute its quota to good governance and accountability

The absence of a purposeful, trusted, respected and focused political leadership is the eighth major challenge to good governance and accountability in this presentation. There is a general agreement among most Nigerians that the country lacks purposeful leadership in spite of its abundant human and material resources. Nkom has for instance likened Nigeria, the 'Giant of Africa' to the proverbial decaying fish which usually start getting rotten from the head (leadership). Gradually, the rottenness proceeds to the rest of the body (citizens). Similarly, Tamuno Tekena (Cf Nkom, 2005) has used a more compelling metaphor to describe the problems of leadership in Nigeria. He likened the country to a river which is polluted right from the source by the leaders then gradually, the rest of the citizens in their desire for clean water begin to outsmart one another. At the end of the day, each person or group, depending on the opportunities available to them begin to head deeper and deeper into the stream to take a bit of what is left. At the end of the day, the water is totally and completely polluted from up to the down stream to the extent that nobody can afford clean water anymore. This is the situation in virtually every sector in Nigeria.

By far, the most fundamental challenge facing good governance and accountability is the operative development strategy that currently drives the country's socio-economic and political agenda. Nigeria presently operates a dependant capitalist mode of production whose origin can be traced to the historical unequal relations with her colonial masters. This mode of production creates the insatiable desire and aspirations for everybody to acquire wealth, yet inherently limits the opportunities to only a few. This mode of production also encourages, respects, glorifies, and rewards those that have eventually "made it". Yet it does not attempt to question the "when" and "how" they made it. Faced with a system that caters for only the fittest and the insatiable desire for everybody within it to survive at all cost, majority are forced as it were, to engage in different kinds of misgovernance according to the opportunities available to them. Thus, herein lies the fundamental precursor to the problem of good governance and accountability in Nigeria. This also explains the large scale failure of the various levels of private and public sectors to satisfactorily carry out their responsibilities to the citizens of Nigeria.



#### **IV. Prospects for Good Governance and Accountability in a Democracy in Nigeria.**

Even though, contained in every challenge to good governance and accountability that has been discussed in this paper, there are inherent therapeutic measures, nevertheless, a few remarks will be made as to the prospect for a good governance and accountability within our present democratic dispensation.

A major step that needs to be taken is to truly entrench a democratic culture in Nigeria. This step must be seen to be genuine and sincere. In practice, this major step means the entrenchment of the principles of majority rule, healthy intra and inter party competition, free and fair elections, and the separation of power between the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary, adherence to due process of law, effective participation of civil society groups, the media as well as civil rights for all citizens.

Furthermore, there is the collective need by all and sundry, to deepen the nation's emerging democracy. To this extent, the Carter Center (2011) suggests that in order to do this, there is need to nurture full citizen participation in policy making and implementation as well as establish government institutions that bolster the rule of law and fair administration of justice. In this regard, the Judiciary and Legislature must be functional and alive to their responsibilities since according to Ilufoye (2010), "a health and sound Judiciary and Legislature are the sine qua non for good and democratic governance". It can be argued that if the aforementioned attributes of a truly democratic culture are entrenched, it will have far more reaching multiplier positive effect on symptomatic manifestations of the problems that have the potential to frustrate the attainment of good governance and accountability in a democratic Nigeria.

Lastly, some fundamental measures need to be taken in the thinking and actions of the country's leadership, particularly those of the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary. This in essence involves a shift from the politics of personal enrichment to the politics of service to the people; a shift from the politics of looking for scapegoat to the politics of taking responsibility for failure in providing leadership that can transform the lives of the people for better; a shift from the politics of the stomach to the politics of service; a shift from the politics of primitive accumulation to the politics of human development; a shift from the politics of empty and deceitful promises to the politics of sincerely

providing tangible goods and services to the people; a shift from the politics of guesswork to the politics of empirical evidence-based policies and programmes (Nkom, 2005). If these shifts are successfully carried out, dividends of democracy will be widespread and prospects towards good governance and accountability will be enhanced.

## **V. Conclusion**

Good governance no doubt is absolutely necessary for the achievement of social political and economic progress in any society. It is the means through which the State can effectively address the allocation and management of resources to enable it respond to the collective good of society without discrimination. Failure to give a country good governance can result to widespread corruption and abuse of due process. The results are lack of accountability and widespread poverty of the vast majority, thus making them vulnerable to easy manipulation and exploitation by the elite.

Consequently, to promote good governance and accountability in Nigeria there is the need to ensure that the basic structures of government such as the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary are made to live up to their responsibilities. In addition, the leadership must demonstrate the capacity, courage, will and sincerity of purpose in tackling the identified challenges. Finally and fundamentally, there is need for radical structural changes in the operative mode of production in Nigeria to ensure inclusive as against exclusive governance, justice and the rule of law for all and sundry.

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