

DEMOCRACY, GOOD GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES: A PERSPECTIVE FOR NATIONAL COHESION AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract: This study examined democracy, good governance and leadership challenges as a perspective for national cohesion and development in Nigeria. The structural conflict theory was used to appraise the main argument of the paper. The study employed content analysis to x-ray the daunting challenges facing national unity in Nigeria. The findings show that the challenges militating against National Unity in Nigeria have exhibited ethnic and religious colorations, and portray clear manifestations of frustration resulting from bad governance and leadership challenges. It also found that after five decades of Nigeria's independence, successive governments have designed a plethora of constitutional policies aimed at uniting the over 350 ethnic groups that made up the country, yet the problems still persist. The paper therefore concludes that unless governmental policies and actions are informed and geared towards the achievement of effective, transparent and accountable leadership which will in turn guarantee good governance, the quest for national cohesion will continue to be a mirage. The paper recommends that there is the need for inculcating dynamic and functional political culture that will ensure responsive and responsible leadership and restore transparency and accountability in governance at all levels with a view to receive new ideas and information that would improve service delivery and promote national cohesion.

Keywords: Democracy, Governance, Good Governance, Leadership Challenges, National Cohesion.

1. Introduction

Since the return to civil democratic governance on the 29th of May 1999, which also marked the inception of the Fourth Republic, after a prolonged period of Military rule in Nigeria, the hope of the common Nigerian for a just and an egalitarian society was rekindled, reawaken and revitalized (Dahiru, 2010). With this development, (i.e. Nigeria's restoration to a democratic government), most Nigerians were full of hope and expectations not only because it signaled the eventual termination of authoritarian military rule, but also because democracy presupposes responsibility on the basis of which unity, social cohesion and development could be facilitated among the various social groupings, particularly in a pluralist country like Nigeria which has over 350 ethnic groups. This expectation is predicated on the view that under a democratic government, individuals and social groups feel more secured than under non-democratic one (Mohammed, 2018).

However, after twenty years of democratic experience, the aspirations and expectations of Nigerians with regards to national unity, seems to have waned and is fast replaced, at best by feeling of resignation and disappointment. This is because more than ever before, Nigerians are witnessing increase in crime, violence, insurgency and proliferation of ethnic/regional militias as well as manifestation of ethno-religious politics, etc., all of which constitute credible threats to the national unity/integration, good governance, internal peace, stability and sustainability of democratic governance. For instance, Elaigwu (2007 cited in Dahiru (2010) observes that "... in the first eight years of the Nigeria's Fourth Republic, Nigeria is said to have witnessed over 140 cases of violent ethno-religious, communal, political and other conflicts of varying intensities and magnitude. Commenting on the consequence of security challenges that characterised the Nigeria's Fourth Republic, George-Genyi (2013) has emphatically adumbrated that "violent conflicts, whether social, political or environmental have seriously contributed to the crisis situation in terms of loss of human and material capital in Nigeria in the last decade".

Moreover, the failure of the Nigerian government to decisively address some of the debilitating anti-development challenges bedeviling the nation such as widespread official corruption, poverty, illiteracy, acute infrastructure deficit and insecurity is intricately connected to lack of good governance. Governance is said to be good when rule of law is respected, democratic pluralism realized, free and fair election is conducted, human and property rights are guaranteed, powers of three branches of government are separated, freedom of associations and press are enforced and legal frameworks properly worked (Anwar, 2007 in Bekele, 2013). Thus the lack of good governance has not only hindered the attainment of national unity, it has also compelled some Nigerians to doubt the feasibility of the continued existence of Nigeria as a truly united entity on the basis of seeming neglect or misconception of the provisions of Chapter II, Section 14 and 15, Sub Sections 1 - 3 a, b, c, d, of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) by the nation's political elite (FGN, 1999). It is against this backdrop that this paper seeks to examine the challenges facing National Unity in Nigeria's Fourth Republic from the view point of Structural Conflict Theorists.

2. Statement of the Problem

Democracy embodies responsive and responsible governance, rule of law, human rights, civic participation and peaceful transfer of power through electoral processes. Each of these underpins peaceful and stable society. However, political leadership conception of democracy and good governance has generated an enormous crisis of legitimacy in Nigeria. The heightened presence of political apathy, self-alienation, pessimism in the electorate's political participation, and the discouraging involvement of the people in political organizations show that democracy has not gotten its footing in Nigeria.

In Nigeria, political oppression, alienation, distrust, chaos, anarchy, genocide, and wars characterize liberal democracy. The country has been experiencing political setbacks fuelled by complex interactions among individuals, groups, and government forces. From past regimes to the present, there have been intricate internal political forces and struggles for political culture. The situation has left the country to wallow in political turbulence and upheaval with conspicuous deep concern for self-determination, renegotiation of power relations, group agitation for good governance, and involvement of civil society in the political bargaining for good governance (Adejumobi, 2004:12-13). The unfolding political situation requires a thorough understanding by leaders of what democracy and good governance stand to represent. Understanding democracy and good governance will enable political leaders to retrace their steps from biased, trivial, dismissive, or uncritical approaches they manifest in governance.

Osibanjo (2019) argues that diversity in and of itself is not a problem; it is what is done with it that matters. According to him, whether or not sociocultural variety results in strife or collective success entirely depends on how a society chooses to manage it. However, disagreements and controversies over the best political structure to be adopted, size and responsibility of government, the nature of relationship between and among component units, the type and system of government, as well as how resources are acquired and shared, have become a recurring feature of the Nigerian state. This lack of unity has been part and parcel of Nigeria's chequered history, threatening the existence and stability of the nation.

Research Method

Content analysis was used in this study to analyze the data obtained from secondary sources on democracy, good governance and leadership challenges: a perspective for national cohesion and development in Nigeria. These sources include the Internet, journals, books, newspapers, and magazines. The justification for the adoption of the content analysis method in this work is based on the fact that it enables a proper analysis of data and interpretation of events to be realized (Gberevbie, 2014)

3. Structural Theory of Conflict

In order to provide a rational basis for explaining or interpreting the results of this paper, Structural Theory of Conflict particularly the liberal version expounded by Galtung (1990), Ross (1993) and Scarborough (1998) is

employed to analyse the main theme of the paper. The main argument of the theory was that structural defect; either internally generated or externally conditioned, are the main causes of conflict in society (Muhammad, 2006). The liberal structuralists like Johan Galtung argues that whenever economic and political discrimination and lack of tolerance in plural society are embedded in human social relationship, conflicts are bound to be higher, than in societies where opposite social relationship is established. Similarly, structuralists argue that other factors such as overpopulation, economic underdevelopment, demographic factors and uninterested social and political institutions are also responsible for the emergence of internal conflict which directly or indirectly retards the sustainability of any national development.

The arguments of structuralists have been criticized for its excessive focus on material interests as the single most important cause of conflict or insecurity in human society thereby neglecting other important causes such as ideological, psychology or socio-cultural factors. The theory is however deficient in its on-sidedness of looking at causes of conflict. It, for instance, does not see the bright sides of racial or ethnic diversity and the strength that a society may derive from pluralism. It only sees the flaws. The structural theory thus makes sense only when conflicts are viewed from the broadest possible perspective, and only if the observer opts to ignore alternate causes of the conflict.

Despite the criticisms laid against the theory, its real value cannot be denied. This is because the theory presents a large number of factors that make the emergence and escalation of conflicts possible. This further explained that social problems such as political and economic marginalization, injustice, exploitation and inequality in Nigeria have stricken Nigerians ready to resort to violence and conflict at the slightest instance. This explains the reasons behind the reemergence and sustenance of ethnic militias in the present Nigeria's Fourth Republic. The theory further explained the causal relationship between national unity and good governance as well as national development of any nation.

Thus, this theory is adopted in this paper simply for the fact that, the theory will help in providing an explanation with regards to the challenges of national unity and integration in Nigeria as emanating from the social structures of the Nigerian society which exerts considerable pressure upon certain individuals and ethnic groups in the country to engage in non-conforming conduct.

4. Conceptual Framework

The central theme of this paper revolves around some key concepts that require a brief discussion in order to have clear focus. These conceptual terms are: Democracy, Governance, Good Governance, Leadership and National Cohesion.

4.1 *Concept of National Cohesion*

The term national cohesion is a normative concept that may carry different meanings to different people. The terms used for national unity according to Ojo (2009), Zamare and Karofi (2015), have included national unity, national integration, nation building and social solidarity. Chang, Azizan, Amran (2013) conceptualized national unity as "a state in which all citizens from various groups (ethnic, religion, regions) live in peace as one united nation, giving full commitment to national identity based upon the Federal Constitution and the National Ideology". National unity, according to National Unity Advisory Panel (1992) is a "social situation wherein the citizens consisting of diverse ethnic groups, religious beliefs and regions co-exist peacefully as one united nation in accordance with the Federal Constitution."

Zamare and Karofi (2015) see it as "a process by which members of a social system become less consequential in affecting behavior. In this process members of the social system develop an escalating sequence of contact, cooperation, consensus and community". To Deutsch et al. (1966) cited in Emmanuel (2009) it is "the attainment, within a territory of a 'sense of community' and of institutions and practices strong enough and widespread enough to assure, for longtime dependable expectations of peaceful community". Thus, the concept of national unity is used to describe the process of uniting people of various ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds under

one form of national identity.

4.2 *Concept of Governance*

Governance simply implies the art of governing a people within a given territory or a state. It consists of two essential elements of the state, namely the structure of the state and the procedures of the legislative, judicial and those of the executive and administrative bodies at all tiers of government. Hirst and Thompson (1996) define governance as “the control of an activity by some means such that a range of desired outcomes is attained”. George-Genyi (2013) defined governance as “the exercise of political power in the management of a nation’s affairs”. This definition thus implies that governance encompasses the state’s institutional and structural arrangements, decision-making processes and implementation capacity, and the relationship between the governing apparatus and the governed- that is the people in terms of their standard of living.

From a developmental perspective, governance refers to the manner in which a government or state governs the territory and the people within its juridical controls (Bello-Imam, 2004). This means that governance as a concept clearly covers all aspects of the complex and myriad relations that exist between a government and a people. To this end, Governance therefore, means the manner in which power is exercised by governments in the management and distribution of a country’s social and economic resources (Ogundiya 2010). According Ogundiya (2010), the nature and manner of this distribution makes governance a bad or a good one.

4.3 *Good Governance*

Governance is the process through which citizens and state agents continuously engage in robust interaction to express their demand, their rights and obligations, in order to reconcile their differences and cooperate to produce public goods and services. The beauty is that it makes society a conducive place by producing collective goods and services that people cannot provide individually for themselves. The collective goods and services include: security, public roads, schools, hospitals and control on epidemic diseases; a functioning and independent of the judiciary. It equals the various obligations of the state through its institutional framework within which socio-economic development is pursued.

Ogundiya (2010) opines 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 populace. Governance is termed bad when it fails to achieve the purpose(s) of the state. To this end therefore, good governance encompasses:

- a. An effective state, i.e., one that possesses an enabling political and legal environment for economic growth and equitable distribution.
- b. Civil societies and communities that is present in the policy making process, with the state facilitating political and social interaction, and fostering societal cohesion and stability.
- c. Accountability and responsiveness in leadership and in public service.
- d. Adequate mobilization and utilization of resources
- e. Transparency, effectiveness and efficiency in handling offices
- f. Self-sacrifice and unprejudiced service to the people
- g. Popular participation and empowerment of the people in the conduct and management of their own affairs (Jega, 2012:19). Good governance involves a whole gamut of things, respect for the fundamental human rights of citizens, judicious use of resources that is devoid of waste, fraud and corrupt practices. Good governance requires respect for principles of accountability and transparency. It also encompasses issues of equity, equality, justice and fair play in the distribution of goods and services to promote and enhance the quality of life of the people irrespective of their class, status, religion or other parochial considerations.

4.4 *Concept of Leadership*

Leadership is the ability to inspire, direct, motivate and encourage others to achieve a stated goal. "Leadership has to do with organizing, planning, coordinating human and material resources, time, relationship, skills, expertise and finances to achieve abject poverty, disharmony and death no-religious conflict and unfortunately, the heightened profile of leadership self-centeredness in Nigeria manifests in merciless looting of public treasuries, insensitivity to public opinion and enactment of anti-people's laws, non-accountability and transparency, abuses of power with impunity. In the same vein, Zainab (2011:2) added that Nigerians leadership activities have remarkably with no doubt enhanced and perpetuated bad governance in Nigeria. His views on corrupt leadership had this to say: The basic philosophy of our Nigerian-ness has introduced crippling poverty, increasing inequality between the haves and the have-not's, alarming levels of insecurity, ethnic, regional and religious cleavage and animosity amongst citizens. All this has culminated in a political leadership that is grossly inefficient, corrupt, self-seeking and unpatriotic. This leadership has not only result in weak and dysfunctional state institutions but re-enforced poverty, inequality, frustration-aggression, marginalization and a sense of injustice that is increasingly becoming desperate, disillusioned and militant. This has shown that lack of commitment and cooperation among political leaders is a major threat to the sustainable democracy in the country. Leaders can influence public policies to better the lives of the people, but have failed to do so because their primary goal of assuming a leadership position is self-enrichment.

4.5 Concept of Democracy

It is axiomatic to base the definition of democracy on Abraham Lincoln's declaration as the government owned by the citizens, conducted by the citizens and for the citizens. This was the practice in Ancient Athens of Greece, where all the citizens attended the Assembly and took part in decision making. This type of direct democracy is no longer possible in modern states because of their colossal size and populations. Therefore, that the whole people do not gather in assembly does not make a state undemocratic. The state is now considered democratic if the majority rules. The electorate of the state gives their mandate to their representatives through elections and forms the government. The government must fulfill the terms of the mandate which it promises to pursue. The government must also be responsible, responsive and accountable to the electorate. For the government of the majority to emerge, in a genuine sense, the election must be free and fair. A natural, honest and non-partisan electoral administrative body needs to conduct the election. In Nigeria there have been situations where candidates have doubted the integrity of the electoral commission in relation to the elections' results, resulting in the contestation of the result in electoral tribunal. Precisely put, manipulation and rigging of elections contradict the spirit of democracy (Adebayo, 1982:3-4). In Nigeria, rigging, manipulation of elections, snatching of ballot boxes, killing of opponents, buying of votes, among others is then or rather than the exception. Democratic states are states with a constitution and guided by the rule of law with organized political competition and accountability which has a mechanism that holds the ruling elites accountable or not for what they do. Democracy is an institutional arrangement for arriving at political, legislative and administrative decisions. Democracy is a mechanism for building, choosing and allowing a government in response to the interest of the masses. To others,

Democracy notes freedom of speech, freedom of associations, and supremacy of the will of the electorate, regular elections and accountability (Offe, 2012:450-456, Jacob and Abdullahi (2007:64, cited by Bature, 2019:49). Democracy itself has been summed up into classical, liberal and Marxist postulations of democracy. The classical writings of Aristotle shaped the democratic and institutional framework of the polis. Democracy is also regarded as liberal, where writers like John Locke and John Stuart Mill's influence on the limitations of government is emphasized. Democracy also has Marxist postulation proffered by Karl Marx in which the working proletariat will engage in a revolution of the bourgeoisie. Democracy as an ideology comprehends the following concepts of sovereignty of the people in lawmaking: inclusion of all citizens as free and equal persons; a comprehensive system of rights for all citizens, uncovered deliberation of public matters among citizens. In the practice of the classical aspect of democracy in Athens, the term "power" of the people meant the people exercised control over policy through direct acts of will in the assembly. In addition, the citizens were chosen by lot to carry out the executive tasks of government. In Libertarian times, democracy came to be joined with several other factors; the competitiveness of elites, the representativeness of representation, the control of bureaucracy, the independence of the judiciary and freedoms of various kinds. John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) was among the first writers to

advocate for a liberal version of democracy which spelt out and limited the powers of legally elected majorities by protecting individual rights against the majority. Liberalism as a political creed began with JohnLocke1632-1704). Locke espoused liberalism as a combination of constitution alism, stability, freedom, consent, property and tolerance which played a crucial olein the development of western democracies (Bature, 2019). Liberal democracy, as described above, is what has taken up the political space of Nigeria, where leaders see state resources as their birth rights and nothing else for those governed.

4.6 An Overview of the Mechanisms Adopted by Successive Nigerian Governments towards Promoting National Cohesion

As an integrative measure, various mechanisms, strategies, institutions and policy frameworks were adopted by different governments both in the colonial and post-colonial era with sole motive of uniting and integrating the more than 350 ethnic groups that make up the country. But for the purpose of this paper, the following mechanisms are examined.

- a. **The Constitution:** This is a body of agreed rules and principles stating how the powers of governing a country are given and how these powers are to be exercised. It also establishes a basic framework or fundamental law of the land with the sole aim of uniting the diverse elements that make up any given social formation. In Nigeria for instance, several provisions were enshrined in all the constitutions adopted with a view to promote national unity and integration. For instance, as an integrative measure, the colonial constitutions laid the foundation of federal structure of government to promote unity among the diverse elements thatmake up the country; and to secure the greater participation of Nigerians in the discussion of their affairs. The idea of these Constitutions according to Agbaji, Glory, Rita, Daniel, Fidelis, Uduak and Vivian (2018) was to integrate the hitherto isolated Northern Province into the political mainstream and to establish regional councils for regional deliberation. Furthermore, the 1999 Constitution also encouraged national integration in Nigeria. This is provided in Chapter 2, Paragraph 15(2) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The section of the constitution states that: “Accordingly, national integration shall be actively encouraged, while discrimination on the grounds of place of origin, sex, religion, status, ethnic or linguistic, association or ties shall be prohibited.” (CFRN, 1999).
- b. **The Amalgamation of 1914:** The amalgamation of the colony, protectorate of the Southern Nigeria and the protectorate of the Northern Nigeria on 1st January, 1914 to become known as the colony and the protectorate of Nigeria were considered by many scholars as an important step toward fostering national unity in Nigeria. The rationale behind this amalgamation of 1914 was to unite the hitherto isolated protectorate of Northern Nigeria into the political mainstream of the colony and the protectorate of Southern Nigeria (Dibie, 2012).
- c. **The Introduction of Federalism:** The Lyttleton Constitution of 1954 introduced federalism in Nigeria as an integrative mechanism for fostering national unity and integration among the diverse ethnic groups that formed the state (Nigeria) (Onifade & Imhonopi, 2013). This means that the establishment of federalism in Nigeria has also been an effective means of fostering national unity in Nigeria. To buttress the efficacy of federalism as a mechanism for fostering national unity Sir Ahmadu Bello (1962) cited in Semiu (2010) posits that “federalism was the only guarantee that the country (Nigeria) will progress evenly all over”. In his own contribution, Dr. Nnamidi Azikwe (1943) cited in Semiu (2010) prescribed a union to accommodate the cultural diversity and geographical configuration of the country. To Obafemi Awolowo (1960) as quoted by Egbefo (2015) posits that, “if a country is bilingual or multilingual, the constitution must be federal and the constituent states must be organized on linguistic basis”. He goes further to stress that “only a truly federal constitution can unite Nigeria and generate harmony amongst its diverse racial and linguistic groups.
- d. **Federal Character Principle:** Federal character principle suggests an attempt to build a nation where equal opportunities abound and where every individual must feel that he has equal chance to participate

without bias of ethnic affiliations (Abiodun and Azuka, 2017). Thus, this policy was set up in order to ensure that there is a fair representation of all the diverse social groups in all government institutions and programmes. The central philosophy as opined by Egbefo (2015) is to diffuse primordial sentiments, create an enabling environment for peaceful coexistence and engineers the process of national integration.

- e. **State Creation Policy:** This policy as a strategy for national integration began under the administration of General Yakubu Gowon in 1967 when he divided Nigeria into twelve (12) states. The rationale behind this policy as pointed out by Agbaji et al (2018) can be seen from two major dimensions. The first rationale was the attempt to ameliorate minority fear and integrate minorities as unique components of a federating society. The second was that state creation attempted to balkanize the hegemony of dominant ethnic groups, in order to ensure the unity in a federating society.
- f. **National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Scheme:** This policy or program was introduced by the military regime of General Yakubu Gowon to foster national unity and integration in Nigeria. The program was established under Decree No. 24 of May 22, 1973. One of the expectations of the program as identified by Onifade and Imhonopi (2013) and Agbaji et al (2018) was the posting of corps members to cities or states far from their homes or state of origin so as to blend with and learn from people of other tribal, religious and regional backgrounds. This would enable them to understand the cultures, languages and the general lifestyle of their host communities (Onifade and Imhonopi 2013).
- g. **Power Sharing or Rotation of Power:** In its strong and determined desire to further strengthen the spirit of national unity, Egbefo (2015) argued that “the still-born Gen. Sani Abacha’s 1995 Constitution in section 229 (4), made provision for rotational presidency and rotation of power among the six geopolitical zones”. The basic aims of this power sharing are basically to ensure the decentralization of power; the protection of minority rights; and the provision of mechanism to ensure decision making by consensus.

5. Challenges Militating against National Cohesion in Nigeria: The Structuralists Perspective

From the perspective of Structural Conflict Theorists, conflict is built into the particular ways societies are structured or organized. This means that structural defects, either internally generated or externally conditioned, constitute the main causes of conflict in any given society. The following are some of the structural defects that constitute the major challenges militating against national unity in Nigeria.

i. Ethno-religious Politics: This can be conceived as employment or mobilization of ethnic and religious identities or differences to gain advantage(s) in situations of competition, conflict or co-operation (Osaghae, 1995). The employment as well as manipulation of ethnic and/or religious identities in Nigeria’s socio-political landscape is pervasive. The situation is well understood when we consider the Short Message Service (SMS) messages circulated and received during the 2011 political campaigns. For instance, on 1st January, 2011, an SMS message originating from a ‘concerned citizen’ was widely circulated. The message read:

Do not vote a Muslim President. Muslim has ruled the country for long... Christians in Nigeria must determine who the President of their country becomes; we have taken the back seat and allowed the Muslim to rule the country for long due to disunity of the church (Adeyanju&Haruna, 2012:163)

On 10th February, 2011, another SMS message purportedly originating from a Coalition of Christian Politicians was also widely circulated. The content of the message read:

We call on all Christians to ensure that their votes count in the forth- coming elections. It is time for the son of God to dominate the land. All to note that we believe victory for Jonathan and Nigeria will be a nation under the rule of our Lord Jesus Christ (cited in Adeyanju&Haruna, 2012:168)

On 23rd of April, 2011 another SMS was circulated and is said to be forwarded by Muslim League. The message read thus:

“Muslim brothers, vote Sha’aban of ACN for Governor because CPC candidate, Haruna is not a Hausa Muslim he and his running mate, J. D. Ephraim are from Southern Kaduna”.

From the above messages therefore, SMS 1 and 2 bear a divisive message and is capable of fueling religious intolerance and disunity in the country. While the 3rdSMS message shows a group campaigning for its candidates for gubernatorial position in Kaduna State by flaunting his eligibility and the same time disqualifying other candidate on religious and sectional ground. It is important to note that, the major issue that brings about ethno-religious politics in Nigeria is the question of leadership of the country. This situation is better understood when one considers how the major ethnics’ groups/religious are not ready to concede the leadership of the country to the other.

ii. Corruption: Corruption is so pervasive in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic and has turned the affairs and operation in public service into private enterprise. The ravaging effects of corruption on the unity and integration in Nigeria could be seen when one observes how corruption halted the role of virtually all governmental institution put in place to facilitate unity, integration and development. In other words, corruption has undermined the role of virtually all the institutions put in place to facilitate unity, integration and development. Ogundiya and Abdullahi (2012) opined that corruption in Nigeria has undermined and incapacitated governmental institutions put in place to promote and enhance development in the country. These institutions according to Ogundiya and Abdullahi (2012) cannot carry out their primary constitutional responsibilities of service delivery resulting from the misplacement of priority, contract scam and embezzlement of public funds, lack of due process, and transparency among others. These problems create an environment full of distortion and illegalities which eventually contributed to the fragility of state and incapacity to serve as pillars for uniting the various ethnic groups that formed the country (Nigeria) through service delivery and promotion of even development. Consequently, it allows organized crime, terrorism and other threats to human security to flourish.

iii. Bad Governance: Bad governance is a serious challenge to national unity and integration in Nigeria. It means maladministration and injustice in the cause of governance exercise by political office holders at all level of governments. The United Nations Economic & Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (UNESCAP) cited in Coker and George-Genyi (2014) opined that, bad governance includes governments that are ineffective and inefficient, not transparent, not responsive to the people, not held accountable for their actions, inequitable and exclusive to the elites, non-participatory; do not follow the rule of law and lacking policies that are consensus driven. To Owoye and Bissessar (2009) see bad governance as a symptom of institutional and leadership failures, explicitly “manifested by its long list of dictatorial leaders, non-free media and undemocratic elections.”

In Nigeria, bad governance has manifested itself in multi-dimensional ways among which are persistent problems of inept leadership, institutional failure, pandemic corruption, absence or lack of government’s commitment to the public goods and promotion of ethnic inequality by those in power. This hopeless situation eventually led to the growth of rancor among thevarious ethnic groups that formed the country (Nigeria) and thereby created an environment that is hostile to national unity and integration.

iv. Leadership Crisis: The nature and the character of the state leadership across the levels of government leave much to be desire. This situation is better understood when one considers how the major ethnics’ groups/religious are not ready to concede the leadership of the country to the other. Those in leadership position consciously or unconsciously lack proper understanding of the nature of the relationship between the federal and the component units. Ebegbulem (2011 cited in Ogundiya and Abdullahi (2012) opined that the relationship and autonomy of each tier of government is misconstrued to mean hostile competition and confrontation with each trying to frustrate the other, especially in the area of funding, resource allocation, and citing of federal projects. This situation often resulted to poor service delivery; as such it undermines the prospects of federalism and the capacity of the system to withstand the rigor of pluralism and diversity in the country.

v. Fear of Domination: This is another prominent factor that is seriously affecting the national unity and integration of various ethnic groups in Nigeria. The fear of domination, marginalization and social deprivation expressed by some sections of the Nigerian State and complaint against official negligence, environment degradation and denial of access to resources are fundamental factor responsible for the constant accusations among the emergence of ethnic militias in Nigeria. This unfortunate situation has resulted to armed reaction ostensibly for self-defense and counter measure against the government leaving the nation in the state of comma and perpetual disintegration (Garuba, 2017).

vi. Proliferation of Ethnic Nationalist/Militia: The emergence and continued proliferation of vigilante groups, ethnic and sectional militias as well as secessionist or separatist groups have taken the front seat in any contemporary discourse on Nigeria and its emerging democracy since the restoration of democratic rule in Nigeria on 29th May, 1999. These groups show and express ultimate concern and love for their sectional grouping rather than for the corporate and collective existence and good of Nigeria. Prominent among these are O'odua people's Congress (OPC), as a militant arm of Afenifere, a pan- Yoruba group, Arewa peoples' Congress (APC) appears to have been formed to serve as a check on OPC incessant attacks on the Hausa/Fulani population in Lagos and other Yoruba towns. The Igbo's people's Congress (IPC), a militant arm of Ohanaeze Eastern Mandate in response to, OPC and others that frequently vandalize their goods and properties across the country. Others are the Bakassi Boys, a vigilante outfit set up by Abia and Anambra State government to curb criminal activities in 1999, the Ohaneze, MASSOB and IPOB in the South –East, the Niger Delta Forum, the Niger-Delta Peoples Volunteer Force and the MEND in the oil-rich South-South and the Middle-Belt Forum in the central part of Nigeria (Michael, 2012, Odogiyon 2009). The net effect has always been the massacre of millions of people who would have contributed to the development of their homeland and also the team work and love needed for national unity and integration of various ethnic groups is not obtainable.

It is clear from the above analysis that the challenges militating against National Unity in the country emanated from the way and manner the Nigerian polity were organized and structured as postulated by Structuralists Theorists. This structure as opined by many scholars has exerted a definite pressure upon certain individuals and groups particularly the youths which in turn trigger their engagement in nonconforming conduct. Buttressing this submission, Musa (2014) asserted that the way Nigeria is structured and organized into a corrupt polity by the unethical political behaviour of the ruling class has led to serious tension and reaction from various ethnic and sectorial groups.

6. Toward Addressing the Challenges Militating against National Cohesion in Nigeria's Fourth Republic: The Imperative of Good Governance.

From the above analysis, it is clear that the challenges militating against National Unity in Nigeria's Fourth Republic have exhibited ethnic and religious colorations, and portray clear manifestations of frustration resulting from bad governance and leadership crisis. This segment is set to critically examine the imperativeness of Good Governance in resolving or addressing the afore-mentioned challenges.

Good governance entails transparency. Transparency in governance means that decisions taken and their enforcement are done in a manner that follows the constituted rules and regulations and also information is freely available and directly accessible to those who will be affected by such decisions and their enforcement. Good governance if fully observed and implemented would facilitate direct accessibility of relevant information about governmental actions to those who will be affected by such decisions and their enforcement (i.e. the general public). By doing so, it would help to facilitate and checkmate the challenges that enveloped the country's effort toward promoting national unity. This is because observers and analysts of Nigerian government and politics opined that lack or absence of transparency in Nigeria's governance fueled the proliferation of ethnic nationalist, militia, corruption, high level of conflict among the competitive groups in the country. The argument here is that, if information is freely available and directly accessible to citizens (i.e. those who will be affected by such decisions and their enforcement), it enhances mutual understanding between and among the competitive ethno-religious groups.

The structuralists opined that the crisis that halted the promotion of national unity in Nigeria emanated from non-adherence and violation of national constitution. Put it differently, the existing literature shows that one of the factors responsible for the crisis of national unity in Nigeria is a resultant effect of constitutional violation committed by some political elites. Thus, the incorporation of good governance indices particularly the 'rule of law' in Nigeria would help in facilitating and checkmating the rate of constitutional violation by some elites and political leaders in the country, which will in turn enhance peace and stability in the country. This is because, the principle of Rule of Law as an indicator of good governance entails a fair legal frame-work that is enforced impartially. It also informs full protection of human rights particularly those of minorities. In other words, it entails respect for the constitution and the rule of law by all, including the head of state, governors, high public officials and political representatives.

Good governance further entails equity and inclusiveness which simply emphasizes that society 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. Their improvement and well being would be ensured. In other words, it entails that governance requires a fair distribution of the national wealth so that all citizens, groups, states, and regions of the country benefit. This indicator, if fully implemented and employed in Nigeria's governance, would solve and checkmate national unity challenges caused as a result of struggle for the scarce resources.

The argument here is that, Niger Delta crisis, Herders and Farmers conflicts, settler/indigene crisis in Southern Kaduna, Taraba, and Benue etc. fear of domination among the ethnic groups to mention but a few would have been checkmated if equity and inclusiveness are fully implemented and observed in Nigeria's governance. This is because the existing literature shows that challenges that halted the promotion of national unity in Nigeria emanated as a result of some structural imbalance in the distribution of the national wealth which led to constant agitation and counter agitation by the various ethnic groups in the country to the extent that those who are not benefitting from the wealth of the country are reacting in a manner that threatens the national unity and survival of the country.

Furthermore, in Nigeria today, it is a reality that only those who are politically connected or are able to pay bribes can gain lawful employment or enjoy the national cake and those who are not connected, regardless of their educational status, must feign for themselves in one way or another. This circumstance has bred an intolerable level of peaceful cooperation and understanding among different classes in the country which in turned halted the promotion of national unity in the country. The argument is, if good governance is fully embraced in Nigeria's governance it will eventually reduce the sources of idle hands that can easily be manipulated to cause civil unrest.

It is thus arguable that observance of good governance principles has the capacity for engendering unity especially in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country like Nigeria. This is because according to Minocha (1994) cited in Wani (2014) when justice, rule of law and order are absent in any society, it paves way for conflict, disorder, dispute and political wrangle and backlash among the people in the country.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion therefore, it is inferred from the forgoing analysis that, the current nature of social relations between the various ethnic groups which continue to exhibit ethnic and religious colorations, and portray clear manifestation of frustration is intricately connected to the failure by the Nigeria's government to discharge its primary responsibility based on the principles of Transparency, Responsibility, Accountability, Participation, and Responsiveness to the need of the people. For instance, lack of transparency, lack of accountability, lack of social justice and high level of bureaucratic and political corruption have undermined virtually all the governmental institutions established to facilitate and promote national unity among the various ethnic groups that made up the country and it is a clear indicator that the state has become dysfunctional and cannot effectively unite the various ethnic groups in the country.

Thus, the paper has shown that dialectical relationship exists between good governance and national cohesion in any given social formation and the paper also shows that the relationships is that of a positive symbiosis, where

good governance empowers, aid and enable the government's efforts toward promoting and maintaining coherent and sustainable national unity and integration.

Finally, the paper is of the opinion that it would be meaningless to talk of comprehensive and effective national cohesion in the midst of absence of good governance and pervasive leadership crises demonstrated in the form of absence of political will and commitment by our political actors to consciously implement programs and policies that would promote national unity. The author opines that achieving comprehensive and effective solution to the current challenges militating against national cohesion in recent times is hinged on the availability of an effective, transparent and accountable leadership at all levels which will guarantee good governance to all Nigerians and ensure that governmental policies are well formulated and implemented.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are hereby suggested to guide those in position of leadership at all levels.

- i. The need to inculcate a more dynamic and functional political culture that will guarantee responsible and responsive leadership and restore transparency and accountability in governance at all levels is very important.
- ii. The political actors or leaders should demonstrate their readiness to remain flexible to new ideas and information by avoiding too wedded to their own views.
- iii. Democratization of the policy beginning at the level of planning, execution and sustenance of projects and programs at all levels of government is hereby recommended.
- iv. Leaders must be sound and competent in executing its affairs which must as well be in accordance to the laid down rules and regulation.
- v. Governmental policies should be well articulated and implemented and evenly spread to avoid favoritism and attendant confrontational agitation by some groups which could create discontent. Thus, creating pool of miscreants who could easily be manipulated to foment crises.
- vi. Severe punishment should be served to any convicted corrupt public office holder to serve as deterrence to others. This is because, the study revealed that despite the huge amount of budgetary allocation engulfed by security sector, it has contributed insignificantly to the curbing of security challenges. This situation is not unconnected to the absences of or lack of good governance demonstrated in form of high level of political and bureaucratic corruption.

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