Ethnicity, Economic Injustice and Problems of Massive Corruption: Correlates with lack of Good Governance in Nigeria

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Abstract

The article is on ethnicity, economic injustice and the problem of massive corruption in explaining why good governance eludes Nigeria. The objective of the article is to contribute to existing literature on why good governance/democratic governance eludes the nation-state. It is already known by scholars although without mentioning, that some of the contending issues that are responsible for this are ethnicity, economic injustice and massive corruption as addressed in this paper. With the triumphant enthronement of democratic rule in 1999, Nigerians approached this century with a renewal of hope that would usher in good democratic governance, for the utmost goal of sustainable development. But the nation is yet trapped in ethnicity, economic injustice and the problem of corruption hereby aiding the reasons why good governance eludes the nation-state. This article, with particular focus on these contradictions, examines their negative impact on the nation's attempt for good governance bearing in mind the undercurrent behind the elusion and the need to put in more efforts to curb ethnicity, economic injustice and massive corruption problems. The article concludes that unless these contradictions are seriously confronted, the state's goal of achieving good governance may take time to be realized.

Key Words
Ethnicity, Economic Injustice, Corruption, Good Governance, and Nigeria

Introduction

Nigeria occupies an area of about 923,768 Km.(the Report as the political Bureau, 1987) with a population of about 145 million people in 2006 (NPC 2006). The territory is occupied by more than 350 ethnic nationalities that are found in a fairly well defined location which does not in itself constitute a problem. However, the elevation of ethnicity, economic injustice and the massive problems of corruption into the process of social change and modernization have constituted a big burden in the polity. This is manifested in the rise of ethnic nationalism, economic injustice/ inequalities and an endemic disease of corruption that has eaten deep into the socio-political fabrics of the country with a lot of native consequences. These trends/social malaises have persisted through the years since independence but seem to have climaxed at a time coincided with the return of democratic governance in the country in 1999 thereby mitigating the nation's demand for good governance. A more worrisome trend, however, is that of military rule that characterized much of the nation's 20th century. The advent of democratic governance at the dawn of 21st century was seen as setting the basis for the transformation of the whole societal system and enhancement of the individual capacity to realize his/her inherent potential and to

cope effectively with the challenges of economic development. The danger, however, is the persistent rise of ethnicity, economic injustice and problems of massive corruption which has grave implications for the country's unity, equity and all round development. It is against this background that this paper highlights the challenges before the Nigerian state in its quest for democratic/good governance and why this quest has remained an illusion. To some scholars, the reason why good governance eludes the nation-state cannot be properly understood nor decoded, unless the analysis and the interpretation of the underlining issues of ethnicity, economic injustice and problems of corruption are seriously uprooted as examined in this work. The paper posits and submits that unless these internal contradictions are actually addressed, the nations search for good governance may remain protracted.

Definitional Reflections of Ethnicity, Economic Injustice, Corruption and Good Governance

Ethnicity

Ethnicity is not a sufficient explanation of Nigeria's political behaviour. It is the most accessible yarn from which the political cloth can be sewn' (Joseph, 1981:30). This succinct quote from Richard Joseph's phenomenal book: Democracy and Pre-Beandal Politics in Nigeria: The Rise and Fall of the Second Republic is an auspicious basis to set the tone for this paper. However, the paper would attempt to discern how ethnicity as a factor has been enthused or, as it were, has encroached into Nigeria's political life and as a result hindered all efforts at attaining good governance in our nascent democracy. While we attempt to give an insight into the ethnicity threat of the nations nurturing democracy and, of course, how the challenge has now soaked Nigeria's political and constitutional evolution. This factor (i.e. ethnicity) would provide the useful frame work for the understanding of colonial and post-independence Nigeria politics and how this cankerworm has presently come to constitute why good governance eludes Nigeria's body politics.

Be that as may, the intrusion or the roots of ethnicity in Nigeria's political life since the 1930s and manifesting profoundly in the present political/democratic dispensation, has continued to encourage and reinforce the emergence of separatist and regional militias and cleavages to the extent that, it has obliterated the sense of a common Nigerian nationality while indeed at the same time, providing a sustained recipe for disintegration, national tension, factionalism, and at best fierce rivalries between and within the constituents of the Nigerian state.

What then is ethnicity?

Ethnicity is the process of politicizing ethnic identity. Soone usually speaks of ethnicity in the context of contestation between particular ethnic group and groups and/or between ethnic groups and/or with ethnic groups when they seek to determine the impact of

different methods of consolidating statehood. Indeed ethnicity becomes activated and converted blocs for state power, manifested in the form of competition and rivalry over resources.(Adam, 2009)

Ethnicity therefore is used by the dominant and the subjugated constituents of the state, as means of domination and resistance respectively. It is also the fabric that binds sections of the ruling elite to those of the civil society to determine the context of what ethnic mobilization will take politically, and thus potentially conflict resulting in series of threats to security crisis, leading to massive destruction of lives and properties.

Hence, ethnicity is the effort on the part of either elites or groups who mobilize ethnic symbols in order to achieve access to social, political and material resources in the face of real or perceived threats acquired either passionately and/or aggressively as attributes when certain new elements enter into relations groups. These include: socio-economic and political competition, fear of domination and closer group interaction fostered by the logic of urbanization and internal migrations (Adam,2009).

Economic Injustice

Economic injustice is another correlate of why good governance eludes Nigeria. Alkali, (1997) citing Seers, (1971) holds that in discussing economic development, three questions are critical: what has been happening to unemployment, what has been happening to inequality and what has been happening to poverty? He then goes on to argue that development could not be said to have taken place unless these three variables are declining and anything less than this is economic injustice suffered by the majority (Odion,1983).

Mabogunje (1989) sees economic injustice or neglect as a non-dynamic process that involves un-quantitative decline and un-qualitative stagnation and leads to non- improved material welfare of the people. Maxwell (1992) who criticizes capitalist intellectuals for concentrating on economic development not taken from the individual level as implying increased skills and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self determination, responsibility and material well-being agrees that this is tied to the state of the society as a whole. The absence of these structures and indices and its by-products, automatically leads to economic injustice. Emmanuel (2005) posits that in addition to improvement in standard of living that encompasses material consumption, education, health and environmental protection, security of lives and properties should be appreciated because development involves equal opportunities for political and civil liberty. However, where any government is not concerned about its citizens in terms of poverty eradication, redistribution of income or elimination of inequality and the war against unemployment, improved levels of literacy, longevity, nutritional intake and cultural freedom, there would be no other terms to describe such than economic injustice leading to the erosion of public confidence in the country's political and economic institutions and culture of contempt for the rule of law and ultimately, a social tolerance for a myriad of conducts previously considered abominable, (Obasanjo, 2004).

Corruption

Various scholars and analysts of diverse intellectual orientations have at different times and occasions advanced a plethora or definitions on the concept corruption. Corruption is a global phenomenon, which has been with all kinds of society through history as a global crime. It is a universal phenomenon which presents itself in different colourations and dimensions depending on where it rears its ugly head with grievous impact and consequences. Odekambi, (1986) sees corruption as asking, giving or taking a free gift or favour in exchange for the performance of a legitimate task or the perversion or obstruction of the performance of such a task or the performance of illegitimate task, collusive price fixing, smuggling, transfer-pricing, inflation of prices, election rigging, illegal arrest for harassment or intimidation purposes, abuse/misuse/non use of office, position or power, dumping of obsolete machines or outdated drugs, illegal foreign exchange transactions, legal but obviously unfair and unjust acquisition of wealth, certificate forgery among others. Similarly, Otite, (1996) notes that corruption is about bribery, favour or moral depravity. He asserts further that corruption takes place when at least two parties have interacted to change the (existing) structure of process of society or the behaviour of functionaries, unfaithfully or defiled situations.

However, with particular reference to Nigeria, Anyacho (2004:118) states that:

> Corruption includes such behaviours as diversion of public funds to private purses not being obliged to discharge an obligation, employment of unqualified persons in jobs they are not qualified to do because of the advantage the employer would get from such employee. Looting public treasury in order to enrich oneself, changing, and doctoring election results to favour unpopular contestants

In this case, corruption is a deliberate attempt by the beneficiary to break the rules for personal gains. From this interpretation, we deduct that personal gains have been a driving force behind any form of illegal appropriation of private and public funds or abuse of public office. Bayart (1986) stated that among others, corruption affects the stability of government, loyalties are fragmented by thoughts of personal gains; it destabilizes the state structures especially when the denied become violent which sometimes results to insecurity in the nation-state.

Good governance

According to Eromonsele, (2005), the call for good governance is to promote harmony and reduce social apathy among Nigerians of different socio-cultural backgrounds, with diverse interests. There is no controversy about the desire expressed by Nigerians for good governance. As Tyoor, et al (2006) rightly pointed out, since the introduction of structural

adjustment programmes in the 1980s, there has been a great deal of talk about "good governance" in Africa. What then is good governance?

Good governance refers to a polity which defines a government, a state or people. Good governance stands for acceptable government and desirable leadership. These two terms have not become negotiable: first, there must be a government; second, the said government must necessarily be acceptable to the populace. Good governance entails the elaborate use of available human and natural resources for the satisfaction of the needs of the society. (Onyeka, 2006). Good governance also encompasses the procedures for carrying out the activities of government. In this regard, one is trying to find out whose responsibility it is to carry out specific activities of government.

For Eyinla (2000), good governance is synonymous with concepts such as accountability, security of human rights and civil liberties, devolution of power and respect for local autonomy. According to Doormbos (2001), 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, corruption and other such matters. Good governance is characterized by adherence to the rule of law, respect of human rights, political openness and tolerance, pervasive and effective personal security, economic justice, maintenance of law and order, governmental accountability, transparency and decentralized power structure and decision-making process (Adedeji and Otite, 1992).

The World Bank (1997) has given a more elaborate definition of good governance. It sees '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" (Potter, 2000) 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.

The above definitions of good governance point to the fact that, the term is humanistic and utilitarian and not dehumanizing. It is a government which affects people's happiness. Government, by making proper law, should seek to promote the greatest good for the greatest number of people (Sanni, 1999), Agbaje (2008) reiterated that governance is usually prefixed with the adjectival word "good" when ethnicity is played to the background; natural resources which constitute the main sources of the nation's wealth enhance the living standards of her citizens and the overall problem of corruption is feared.

Situation of Ethnicity, Economic Injustice Problem of Massive Corruption and Good Governance in Post Independence Nigeria

Although contestations have characterized the history and practice of ethnicity throughout the history of humanity, it acquired a fairly complex form in Africa, given the peculiar history of state formation and the patterns of state-society relations arising from this. As Nzongola-Ntalaja (2003:2) has suggested, "Africans are not only the first humans they are also the humans with the greatest attachment to ancestral lands, and it is on the basis of their experience in living in the society from the family to larger social units that their values of solidarity such as ethnic allegiance and patriotism are born. It follows that attachment to one's community and, through it, to the soil of the ancestors or the homeland, is a fundamental dimension of the notion of ethnicity in Africa". The problem as Nnoli, (2003) puts it, is not merely the fact that, African states are multi-ethnic; they are also multi-home land in the sense of "emotional attachment deriving from its perception as the cultural earth and the geographical cradle of the ethnic groups."

However, in order to avoid the danger of essentialism on the ethnic question, there is need to take on board Mafeje's (1997) useful intervention. According to him, ethnicity is an ideologically loaded concept which is not a natural outcome of ethnic existence in any objective sense. The etymological origin notwithstanding, the real significance of the interest or the quest for power is incomplete. He specifically suggested that, in Africa, ethnicity represents a principle for organizing all forms of power so central to intra-class struggle. Correctly understood therefore, ethnicity is about mobilization and politicization of ethnic group identity drawing on those elements that mark out the group such as language, culture, territory, mode of dressing and sharing of jokes. In Nigeria, it takes on greater meaning in competitive situations and where available resources are scare in relation to the interest that grows around them, (Nnoli, 1979)

Be that as it may, the intrusion of ethnic flavour in practical politics, inaugurated in the 1930s reached its peak in the 1950s and beyond when the three major ethnic groups employed and manipulated ethnicity or ethnic identity as an instrument in not only subverting democracy and democratic principles, but indeed unleashed what has today been described as ferocious inter-ethnic rivalries in Nigerian politics. A factor heating up the polity and mounting pressure on the Nigerian state. Indeed, with the entrenchment of ethnicity or "tribalism" in the nation's political life, it has directed latent energies, hitherto directed into national cohesion, to that of fierce ethno-national rivalries, disintegration and contraption. The consequence of which is the shrinkage of the political space along ethnic tribal lines and elusion of good governance. Therefore, a combination of factors such as intrigues, sheer devilry, outright and unreasonable tension mounted on the Nigerian state politics, have combined to arrest our common heritage and drive toward the national development one of the major features of good/ democratic governance.

By extension, the morbid fear, competition, insecurity, unethical, practices, corruption, failed leadership, state failure and absence of good governance inherent in our national life today is the direct consequence of the manipulation of ethnic identity in practical politics on less a test for leadership and statesmanship in Nigeria's political life. Anthony (2009) posited that one implication of the manipulation of ethnic identity is manifested in electoral fraud. Nigeria has a long history of electoral rigging and fraud that have been frustrating the wishes of the people to choose those who exercise political power. Precisely because of this history, elections in the country have often been associated with ethnicity or lineage identity thereby resulting into violence and security crisis and the imposition of corrupt, unfocused and visionless leadership. (Adekanye, 1990), Daniel (2001), Jubril (2006).

Atanda and Abell, (2006:120) commenting on Economic injustice posited that "since our independence, successive administrations have performed woefully in terms of economic justice/development." With the pervasive culture of poverty everywhere, Nigerians are prone to violence, threats of internal security, voters' acceptance of gifts such as cup of salt, T-shirts, cutlasses, ten cubes of magi, five cups of fertilizer, face-caps in order to vote for incompetent leaders during elections. Most election rigging occurs before and during the elections themselves and it involves elaborate forms of system manipulation as a result of massive poverty and ignorance. Traditionally, economic justice was seen as significant increase in the levels of GNP/GDP and the resultant per capital income. These figures were eventually discounted for inflation. Again it was seen as a country's ability to expand its output faster than the population growth rate. These perspectives were mostly economic and quantitative. They provided average measures and there has never been an average citizen; and did not reckon much with poverty, income distribution, employment and other social indications of well-being. Measures of economic justice have gone beyond this level with much emphasis given to qualitative and human-interest issues including freedom and cultural liberalism (Muo, 2006).

Coming back to national issues, Abosede, (2009) defined economic justice to mean the existence and sustenance of economic prosperity of the citizen which enable them contribute to the management of a nation's affairs. It is the complex mechanisms, processes, relationships and institutions through which citizens and group articulate their interests and mediate their differences for economic potentials.

It is important to stress that economic justice goes beyond economics and economic issues. Nevertheless, the fact remains that other aspects of economic development cannot materialize without a stable economic fundamentals and indeed, the economic aspect cannot fair well without these structures directed towards human improvement/wellbeing. Sandstorm, (2005) deepens and widens the concept of economic injustice to include denial or total neglect of an enabling environment for people to enjoy long healthy and creative lives; denial of an inner dimension which incorporates the moral and spiritual angles - people become better people and culturally liberated. He holds that economic provision of needs is a people's right, not a government funded affair since economic issues relate to

values and relationships which cannot be bought with government funding and that the ultimate goal of economic justice/development is freeing the human being to become good human beings as humanely as possible. Korten, (1990) brings to the fore issues of foreign support for development. He reminds foreign agencies that their contributions would be measured in terms of enhanced capacity of the people to determine their own future.

As we earlier mentioned in this paper, Nigeria with a population of above 145 million people has no less than 80% of the population facing one form of deprivation of the other, and as Edoh, (2004:25) argues, "poverty or economic injustice is real in Nigeria." The questions that arise are not why poverty in the midst of plenty; or why poverty in the face of many poverty reduction/ alleviation strategies; and lastly, why poverty in a seemingly democratic dispensation in Nigeria? What is wrong with Nigeria's democracy since 1999, that Nigeria is still clutched in the murderous hands of poverty and underdevelopment? Enahoro, (2009). Thus in order to solve the question of good governance deficit, the government at all levels of the nation must remove the agony of economic injustice (poverty and all sort of inadequacies) in the land created by ethnicity, corruption, and several other unethical practices among Nigerian leaders.

As pointed out earlier, corruption is as old as human society and a universal phenomenon which cuts across all ages and indeed all shades of society. The antique nature of corruption can be found in the Holy Bible. Using this to prove that the phenomenon of corruption is not a new creation in human societies, Akinyemi (2004) pointed to some aspects of the ten commandments among others, "not to steal", "not to bear false witness", and "not to covet". That these instructions formed part of the Ten Commandments points to the fact that people must have been stealing, bearing false witness and coveting, which are behaviours that fall squarely in the realm of corruption.

Also a study of the history of the pre-colonial history of the Benin, Nupe, Yoruba and Hausa states reveals stipulated penalties for corruption right up to exiling, banishing, poisoning or the death sentence of the ruling monarchs or chiefs accused of corruption of one sort or other. May be a characteristic of pre-colonial Nigerian society, the phenomenon (corruption) was not as widespread and massive as it is today. This could be due to the fact that the earlier generation of Nigerians believed that honesty was the best value and children were then brought up to protect the name, the honour, image and earned integrity of their families. Consequently, in the pre-colonial Nigerian societies, conviction for corruption, stealing, misappropriation of public funds, cheating and any fraudulent act attracted public odium and condemnation from relations and neighbours who held honesty as their paramount value. In those good old days therefore, all that mattered to public officers was their honour and dignity.

The good values of the pre-colonial Nigerian societies were carried into the colonial period as there still existed great probity and accountability especially as it related to public funds. Hence, the colonial period has been described as a 'golden period' of honesty, probity and good governance when people upheld good ethical values of the societies.

The 'golden period' according to Akinyemi (2004) however came to an end with the introduction of party administration in 1954. Actually, beginning from this period, corruption started to take different forms and magnitude in the Nigerian society. The civilian government that took over power from the colonial administration was accused of corruption and was overthrown by the military in 1966, (Enahoro, 2009).The unfortunate thing however is that the military that took over in 1966 from the civilian government ostensibly to wipe out corruption in the Nigerian political systems seemed to have ended up entrenching corruption itself in the nation state. That same regime that overthrew the civilian administration on account of corruption had ten of its twelve governors dismissed from the Nigerian army also on account of corrupt practices when it was overthrown in 1975 by the Murtala/Obasaanjo junta.

Reports have it that from 1975 up till now, the situation as related to corruption has gone from bad to worse (Adekambi, 2001). This observation has been corroborated by the report of Transparency International (IT) (2006) State of Corruption in Nigeria. The report indicated this worsening situation and ranked Nigeria, 'the third most corrupt nation in the world'. The depth of corruption in Nigeria is also expressed by Chinua Achebe (1985) in one of his books titled The Trouble With Nigeria. He wrote that 'Nigerians are corrupt because the system under which they live today makes corruption easy, fanciful and profitable'. He also maintained in the book that, 'they Nigerians would however cease, to be corrupt only when corruption is made difficult, in convenient and of course unprofitable'. Edeko and Ekata (2007) lamenting on the causes of corruption in Nigeria mentioned the dysfunctional legal system, inadequate and late payment of lawful remuneration: problem of extended family system in Nigeria, indiscipline, job insecurity, evil-capitalism, the quest and struggle for political power and the bureaucratic bottlenecks experienced in our civil service system. The least is endless.

The ugly picture that has been painted so far, is that, since independence, Nigeria has been a country which has been battling with the problem of ethnicity, economic injustice and massive corruption. Most of the national earnings particularly from the oil and gas sector have been gulped by different forms of corruption which have gone rampant and massive. This legacy of corruption and economic injustice and ethnic nationalism Osunde atuned, attest for the critical factor why good governance has kept eluding Nigeria since independence. (Osunde, 2010).

Consequences of the absence of Good Governance in Nigeria

Generally, the consequences of absence of good governance in Nigeria are multi-dimensional and multi-faceted. The implications are overwhelming and this has far-reaching negative implications for every sphere of the nation's-state socio-political and socio-economic existence. We shall examine some of these consequences as follows:

Internal Security Crisis

At the general level, security simply suggests freedom from danger or threats, safety or the ability of the state to protect and promote its cherished values and legitimate interests and enhance the well being of its people. Therefore, according to Imobighe, (1990) internal security may be conceptualized as the freedom, the absence of those tendencies which could undermine internal cohesion and the corporate existence of the nation state and its ability to maintain its vital institutions for the promotion of it core values and socio-political and economic objectives as well as meet the legitimate aspiration of the citizenry. From the above submission, it is crystal clear that internal insecurity could be explained as general situations which encourage the proliferation and negative actions of militants, ethnic and religious movements collectively referred to as militants starting from the Oodua People's Congress (OPC), Arewa People's Congress (APC), Bakassi Boys (BB), Egbesu Boys of Africa (EBA), Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF),Movement for Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), "Boko Haram" and many other groups that often do not have a specific label or designation. When these groups carry out any of their activities, it poses a threat to the sovereignty and co-existence of Nigeria and thus a threat to internal security and a continued absence of good governance.

Secessionist movements

Another consequence of the absence of good governance in Nigeria quest for development and sustenance of our democratization process is that, it gives room for subversion of state structures and authority and order a calculated move or series of clandestine activities designed to undermine the nation's governmental set-up. These include sabotage, vandalization, deliberate destruction of government and private properties and public utilities as well as sensitive military installations in order to grind the nation state to a halt and plunge the nation-state into a civil strife.

Poor External Image

Poor image in the international community is yet another consequence of absence of good governance in Nigeria. According to Adamson (1999), lack of good governance lowers the image of the country and makes it unattractive in the eyes of the international community. The international community deals with the nation's proneness to ethnicity, corruption and economic injustice with a lot of deep-seated fear and suspicion since independence. Nigeria is no longer respected globally and many investors are forced to relocate to other West African countries due to absence of good governance in Nigeria.

Underdevelopment of the Nation-State

Lack of good governance has been categorized as responsible for the socio-economic ills of Nigeria. It is responsible for poor standard of public utilities such as roads, unstable electricity supply, and poor standard of schools administration, poor health faculties, and some other socio-economic amenities and services. Adamson (1999) lamented that all the features of underdevelopment embarrass many Nigerians and mostly foreigners when you move from one part of the country to the other.

Democratic Instability

This is another major negative manifestation of absence of good governance in Nigeria. Commenting on the spate of bad governance in Nigeria's fourth Republic, Arowosegbe, (2009) argued that one of the major challenges facing the Nigerian state especially from the 1st Republic to date (2013) has been democratic instability due to lack of good governance. As a result, there is persistent insecurity of lives and property, increased corruption, national disintegration and socio-economic inequalities. Ever since this democratic dispensation emerged, Nigeria has witnessed one corrupt and unethical scandal of her political leaders now and then. These crises do not provide a level playing ground for citizens in their quest for articulating their interest hence the threat to democratic politics and sustenance in Nigeria. Democracy in Nigeria does not give room for public participation, nor the practice of the rule of law and therefore cannot be regarded as good governance.

Poor Leadership

Lack of good governance has encouraged the poor, unpatriotic, visionless and un-purposeful leadership, which has become a canker worm that is eating deep into the fabric of the Nigerian nation. It has also soiled the personality and character of every Nigerian (Apenda and Adega, 2007). This explains why Orngu (2009) lamented that it is quite disheartening that at this stage in Nigeria's history the country's leadership has been utterly discredited by bad governance, as a result of which institutions hardly provide the needed services to the people just as public interest has been relegated to the side line and compromised for personal or parochial interest. Orngu(2009). Our polity has produced aggressive millionaires than selfless democratic leaders. Successive leaders have among other things outstretched themselves in the wanton acquisition of political, economic and social power. The consequence being that governance has become thoroughly compromised in many ways. Service to the fatherland is seen as an opportunity for personal aggrandizement (Igbana, 2007).

Towards Addressing the Contending Issues for Attainment of Good Governance in Nigeria

Having had an analysis of the nature and character of ethnicity, economic injustice and corruption as correlates in explaining the absence of good governance in Nigeria since the nation-state gained its independence in 1960, this part of the paper makes the following submissions aimed at providing good governance that would enhance development in Nigeria and thus tackle the problems confronting the state presently. Indeed, leadership should be purely based on the principle of good governance. The constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria clearly provides what should be good governance. It provides that Nigeria, "shall be a state based on the principles of democracy and social justice" and that sovereignty belongs to the people of Nigeria from whom this constitution derives its powers and authority". It further provides that, "the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government" and that "the participation of the people in their government shall be ensued in accordance with the provisions of the constitution". Section 15(3).

Specifically, in section 15 (5), the constitution stipulates that "the state shall abolish all corrupt practices and abuse of power". These and other provisions in the Nigerian constitution aimed at achieving cohesion of the various ethnic groups have not yielded any positive results. For instance, despite the deliberate construction of a federal state as a means of coping with this problem, a number of historical, economic and political factors tend to compound the problem. First is the colonial factor. The British colonial power deliberately pursued a policy of "divide" and "rule" to prevent or slow down a common consciousness based on colonial oppression, injustice and exploitation. Colonial anthropologists did much to bring out differences rather than similarities among Nigerians. Some were portrayed as "civilized", "courageous", "entrepreneurial", "lazy" and "warlike". Colonial administrators on their part pursued the policy of divide and rule which manifested at the end into regionalism. Colonialism also encouraged uneven development in western education between the south and north and within the north, between the "pagan tribes" of the Middle Belt (Central Nigeria) and the Islamic core north.

Secondly, Nigeria's post-independence rulers often find it easy and cheap to mobilize ethnic, regional and religious sentiments in the pursuit of power and resources. It is this opportunistic use of identities that have ended up politicizing these identities.

Thirdly, some of the measures adopted to promote accommodation of differences and "unity in diversity" have had the unfortunate effect of increasing differences. Such measures include the creation of new states and local governments, introduction of "federal character principle", "quota system" and "zoning". All of these are enshrined in the Nigerian constitution. Although these measures are meant to moderate the divisive effect of ethnic and regional competition for power and opportunity, the manner in which they have been implemented has heightened ethnicity and ill feelings among the various ethnic groups.

There is also the problem of diminishing resources and the Nigerian economic crisis. The Nigerian economic crisis and the harsh economic realities which have heightened the level of anxiety, fear and uncertainty have negatively impacted on ethnic identity as individual and groups tend to be less tolerant and more prone to violence. And those in public offices loot the national treasury in reckless abandon. Again there is the failure of the state to perform its routine services to the people that have led to its loss of legitimacy. And because the state increasingly came to be seen as incapable of promoting the general interests as opposed to sectional interests (ethnic and religious interests), and yet very repressive and authoritarian, people naturally rallied around ethnic identities especially as a form of coping mechanism.

Making a case out of the issues of ethnicity in Nigeria, Chamba (2006) admits that, it was to ensure peaceful co-existence of various ethnic groups in the polity, that the people and the government chose the adoption of the federal system of government. Unfortunately its implementation continues to pose serious problems to the political cohesion as a result of some obvious problems. And as a way forward, Chamba suggested that Nigeria has to settle for true federalism, peaceful co-existence, equitable distribution of resources and balance of power that will take into cognizance the interests of the minority, eradicate corruption, and the incorporation of good governance in the nation's democracy.

Nigerian leaders should henceforth depart from leadership that is based on ethnicity, economic injustice and any form of corruption, and embrace the type of leadership that would enable them use the enormous human and material resources the country has to build a coherent, internally consistent, self-sustaining economy. In order to achieve this, the Nigerian government as well as political leaders have a responsibility of addressing the economic and social needs of the citizens,(Ali, 2005). Government policies must continue to focus on adequate provision of basic socio-economic infrastructure, provision of adequate energy, communication, industries, qualitative and quantitative education, security, employment opportunities among others.

Conclusion

Having examined the issues of ethnicity, economic injustice problems of corruption in explaining why good governance has eluded Nigeria since 1960, we have noted that these social economic problems can be addressed only through good governance focused on raising the social, economic and political wellbeing of the citizens. In this regard, true federalism, the practice of the rule of law and not 'rule by law', effective state institutions, transparency, accountability, self morality and insensitivity in the management of public affairs will ensure national cohesion development and peaceful co-existence. All these expectations can only be realized when leaders of the nation- state embrace the qualities of good governance as discussed in this article.

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