

Transparency, a key Driver to Good governance and sustainable Development in Nigeria: A critical appraisal of Enugu state Government 2015 – 2021

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Abstract

Transparent government ensures that decisions taken and their enforcement follow rules and regulations. In this case, information is freely available and directly accessible to those who will be affected by such decisions and their enforcement. This is a key index of good governance. Good governance plays greater role in evolving sustainable development. Sustainable development embraces personality, infrastructural and super structural development. The study was guided by the three research questions and three hypotheses using descriptive survey research design. Questionnaire was the instrument for data collection. The sample size of the study consisted of 500 drawn from the three senatorial zones of the state. Simple random sampling techniques was employed to select two local governments from each senatorial zone. The data collected were analyzed using mean, frequency and standard deviation. The hypotheses were tested using chi-square statistics. The findings indicated that principles of good governance especially transparency and accountability were used to provide dividends of democracy to boost economic activities in the state. The study recommended the applications of the principles of good governance especially transparency in governing all the states of the federation.

Key words: Transparency Governance, Sustainable, Development, Administration, Infrastructure.

Introduction

Nigeria undoubtedly has seen a number of failed and ineffective governance from grassroots to the center level with various leaders betraying the trust of the masses who elected them. The culture of accountability and transparency which sustain the development of democratic institutions was undermined during the military regime in Nigeria (Below, 2019). Unfortunately, this current democratic dispensation did not correct this abnormality rather there is increase of poverty, underdevelopment of economy and corruption. Enahoro (2019) observed that Nigeria has a huge natural resource base, and the potential to translate this to sustainable economy and development that would drastically reduce poverty and make the country a strong partner in the global comity of the nations, but regrettably, despite its potentials, the country has not been particularly successful in using its resources for the general good and sustainable development.

Bates (2010: 42) lamented that even in pre- colonial Africa people benefits from their national resources as leaders ensure that resources are generously shared. In his words:

the evidence suggests that while there was inequality in the states of pre-colonial Africa, those who held positions of privilege had to ensure that the benefits created by states were widely shared. For the bargaining power of the masses, relationship was strong.

If in – colonial Africa, rulers are made accountable to the masses, what of today we are in a democratic dispensation? Probably the civil society groups are not proactive to mobilize and enlighten the citizen on their rights and obligations to demand transparency and accountability.

Sustainable development involves the execution of programmes that offer economic benefits in the present without limiting social and environmental choices that may be available to the people in the future or in other places (Alfayo, 2018). For Scheta (2014) it is a development that provide real improvements in the quality of human life and at the same time conserves the vitals and diversity of the earth's ecosystems. Good governance on the other hand is the competent management of a country's resources and affairs in a manner that is open, transparent, accountable, equitable and responsive to the people's needs (Australian Government, 2020).

According to the United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) (2020), good governance is participatory, transparent and accountable. It is also effective and equitable and promotes the rule of law. Good governance ensures that the voices of poorest and the most vulnerable are heard in a decision making over the allocation of developmental resources. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP), outline eight core characteristics of good governance. They are (1) Participation (2) Rule of Law (3) Transparency (4) Responsiveness (5) Conscience oriented, (6) Equity (7) Inclusiveness and effectiveness (8) accountability. Conversely bad governance can be seen as situation where the relationship between the government, private sector and civil society is not in order. Bad governance is obtainable where government fails to manage both human and material resources and the institution of a nation for the benefit of generality of the masses.

Statement of the Problem

The absence of the masses in the political process incapacitated them from holding the political leaders accountable for lack of transparency and other indices of good governance in Nigeria, hence, people are subjected to arbitrary rule. Since the creation of Enugu state there is high level of corruption and bad governance that characterized various administrations that are antithetical to economic growth and community development. The situation became embarrassing during former Governor Chimaroke Nnamani administration when distribution of resources and services to different section of the senatorial zone lacked due process, good governance, transparency, accountability and society responsibility.

The basic democratic, principles such as human rights principles; peoples participation in decision making, accountability, anticorruption and impartiality in resource distribution was lacking in the state and these had reduced social cohesion, heightened level of corruption and high state of insecurity. The forces that took over the state after its creation failed to endorse open political competition and the attendant rights of political expression and public assembly. Symptomatic was the fate of opposition parties in the period immediately following the state independence. The condition at that period was the product of rigged elections, the persecution of political opponents and outlawing of political opponents. The result was hardship for the states citizens. Then came the period under review 2015 – 2021, the masses mobilized the supporters to defend their interest in the subsequent scramble for power and enthroned the present administration. The study investigates the period under review and it was a period of political reform in the state.

Research Questions

1. What are the core achievements of Enugu State government from 2015-2021?
2. What are the effects of these achievements on the citizens of the state?
3. What can be done to install and sustain good governance in Enugu State?

Brief Literature Review

Governance has been seen as the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority to manage a state's affairs at all levels (Adetiba & Rahim 2012). Thus, governance has three dimensions – political, administrative and economic. Bliss (2013) noted that governance includes not only the government but also the private sector and the civil society. This shows that governance differs from government, because government, simply discusses the political, economic and administrative process carried out by the state while governance embraces the interactive process between government, the private sector and civil societies (Ayuba 2014).

The recent revival of economic growth in the state comes from many several sources that include government policies toward agriculture and job creation. (Okechukwu, 2020). Political competition between organized political parties provides one means to render rulers accountable, there by aligning their interests with the interests of those they rule (Berkelay 2019). Insofar as private citizens own and control the productive resources of the society, the result should be that governments that are accountable will use public power with restraint. Rather than using the power of the state to seize the wealth of those they rule they will seek to protect its creation (Arvider and Chandran 2017).

Further evidence of the relationship between policy reform and the conduct of governments comes from the works of Humphreys and Bates (2015). The two research teams calculated the Relative Rate of Assistance (RRA), which compares the degree to which government polices enable sustainable development According to them the relationship helps to develop local infrastructure and human capital in rural areas to improve the conditions for growth and job creation in all sectors and diversification of economic activities.

Akanba (2019) observed that good governance is the capability of government to sustain social peace, guarantee law and order, promote conditions for generating economic growth and ascertain a minimum level of social security. According to world Bank (2015), Development will be a mirage where good government is lacking. Good governance hinge on the capacity to exercise power and to make sound decisions over a period of time in economic, social and environment areas.

The primary objective of good government is to mobilize political power to promote economic and sustainable development (Ndulu, 2018). This year, we have passed the vision 2020 Development programme which sought to place Nigeria among the 20 most developed economies in the world. The vision embraced all the key principles of good governance and sustainable development (Nigeria vision, 2020). This was not achieved as a result of major bottle necks which include corruption, lack of continuity of policy implementation, inappropriate fiscal policy and macro-economic policies and unstable political and social environment.

The state government during the period under-review as evidenced in our research mobilized political power to promote economic and infrastructural development. The government ensure commitment to quality and quantitative education in all levels. Although, still lacking in some principles of good governance, the present administration has delivered major developmental benefits to this state in the form of: stable political and economic environment that encourage investments and business flourishing; sustainable development in both human and material resources; and accessibility to health and educational facilities.

Study Hypotheses

1. Transformation leadership tends to encourage good governance
2. There is relationship between good governance and sustainable development
3. Type of leadership tends to determines the success or failure of an organization

Theoretical Framework

The paper is anchored on Transformation Leadership Theory. This theory advocates for leadership approach that causes change in individual and social system. This theory believes that the challenges facing the world in contemporary times requires leaders with two couple monetary roles that is, the mover, shaker and gentle persuader. While the mover and shaker achieve transformation in an organizational fortune, the gentle persuader transform followers as a leader (Hynn, 2006). Enacted in its form, transformational leadership enhances the motivation, morale and performance of followers in a variety of mechanisms, such as connecting the followers' sense of identity

and self to mission and the collective identity of the organization. Therefore, transformation leadership approach determines an organizational success or failure (Yalokwu, 2006).

Methodology

The survey method was adopted for this study and questionnaire was used as instrument of data collection. The population consisted of urban and rural dwellers, politicians and religious leaders drawn from three senatorial zones of the state. 500 respondents were selected from each senatorial zone using simple random sampling techniques, bringing the whole study population to 1, 500.

Data Analysis

RQI What are the achievements of Enugu State government from 2015-2021?

Statement	Frequency	Mean response	Remark
Opportunity for advancement in health	200	3.12	Accepted
Room for creativity	137	2.75	Accepted
Sustainable development	114	2.86	Accepted
Effectiveness and utilization of resources	215	2.45	Accepted

Source: field survey 2021

The analysis of the responses for each of the above item is revealing. It stated the level of satisfaction of the people on the governance of the state. 3.12% reveals the opportunity for advancement, in health 2.75 shows the room for creativity, .86 sustainable development and 2.44 respondents says that there is effective utilization of resources. This shows that the effect of good governance of the government is positively enormous.

RQII what are the effects of these achievements on the citizens of the State?

Statement	frequency	SD	mean
Infrastructural development	8.83	40.46	3.07
Creation of jobs	3.35	24.18	2.59
Educational of development	3.72	1.86	1.98
Health and peaceful environment	13.48	53.4	3.63

Source: Field survey 2021

The overall mean score of 1500 respondents fell at 8.83%. This indicates that the respondents were generally satisfied with sustainable development in the state in all round sectors; infrastructure, job creation, educational development, health, promotion and peaceful environment.

RQIII What can be done to sustain the good governance in Enugu State?

Items	Mean	SD	Remark
Giving support to leaders	82.41	82.71	Accepted
Effective information dissemination	57.13	57.45	Accepted
Good utilization of resources	34.52	34.68	Accepted
Obedient to leaders	43.04	43.53	Accepted

Source: Field survey 2021

From the response it is believed that the respondents actually known how to sustain the good governance in Enugu State. Overall mean rating of 82.41 and standard deviation of 8.71 gives credence that the masses sustain good governance through giving support, information, good utilization of resources and obedient to leaders.

Discussion of Findings

Findings shows that the formulation of policies cannot ensure effective implementation in the absence of good governance. This corroborated the view of Karthekayan (2008) when he observed that the possibilities for good governance depends on the institutional structures and the economic resources available for ensuring governance and proper utilization of such resources.

Available data shows that since the Government in period under- review came on the board, there had been five economic recessions in Nigeria. Nevertheless, the Government was not deterred by this challenge and go ahead in actualizing all community development projects in the state. This aligned with the position of Enahoro (2019), that

the crises of leadership and governance can be attributed to corruption and, social injustice and political instability. Findings also indicates that the Government were able to achieve all these giant strides because there was political peace and stability. This also follows the findings of Akanba (2001) that good government is the capability of government to sustain social peace and promote conditions that promote a minimum level of social security. Good governance is a democratic government where respect for human rights is enhanced, participation in decision making is upheld, accountability, poverty reduction, responsiveness, equality and fairness. It has been observed that this had been the ingredient of governance in the state which made peace and development thrive.

In the cause of this investigation, it was observed that every decision taken in the state follows the rules and regulations and information direct and accessible especially to the masses who will be affected by such decisions. The government also responded to the needs of all stake holders in the state and serving them with a reasonable time frame. Thus, past political leaders were paid pensions and gratuities according to their entitlements and corroborated in the major decision in the state.

Conclusion

To have a sustainable development in Nigeria good governance is a sine-qua-non. There is need for proper utilization of resources for the wellbeing of the masses.

Recommendations

1. Efforts must be made to ensure reconciliation among political actors and gladiators to ensure proper utilization of available resources for sustainable development.
2. Governors in Southeastern Nigeria and Nigeria in general should tore the line of developmental strides in Enugu state and base their governance in democratic principles, people's participation in decision making and accountability.
3. Peace and security are very important tools for good governance and this should be sustained in Nigeria as it is obtainable in Enugu State in this present administration.

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