

EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE AND NIGERIA ECONOMY THROUGH SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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Abstract

Good governance has been seen as the promotion of accountability, efficiency, rule of law, and the fight against corruption. It encompasses participation, transparency, and equitability during the exercise of authority in a country. The focus of this paper was to examine the effect of good governance in Nigeria as it cushions the economy through science and technology. The study is fully dependent on secondary data. This study revealed that for good governance to be attained the government must adequately address insecurity, education, rural development, rule of law, press freedom, and fight against corruption. The study recommends that science and technology be pursued to enable the attainment of these goals. Knowledge is fundamental to human development, therefore, catalyses economic growth, social development, cultural enrichment and political sustainability.

Keywords; Effective Governance, Nigeria and Economy, Science and Technology

Introduction

In the twenty-first century, “the use of the internet to enhance interaction with citizens became increasingly widespread and has become a new channel of communication” (Eneanya, 2015). The past decades saw governance as one of the most popular buzzwords which lacked a uniformly accepted definition (Kersbergen and Waarden, 2004; Young, 2005; Jordan, 2008; Toikka, 2011; Tiihonen, 2004; Aubut, 2004; Gill, 2015; Horvath, 2017; Khawaja, 2011). As a concept, governance originated from an ancient Greek word “Kubernan”, which means cart control. It was later metaphorically used by Plato to refer to the control of humans (Preti, 2004). According to Ratner (2003), governance may be referred to

as the efficient functioning of government as well as the roles and activities of civil society. It denotes humanity’s choice of affairs management in terms of systemic political, economic, social and legal frameworks (World Humanity Action Trust, 2000; IMF, 2016). Governance is the exercise of control in resources (both human and material) management for rapid and sustainable economic, political and social development (OECD, 2003).

The thrust of this study is an examination of the effect of good governance in a growing economy like Nigeria. Good governance is concerned with sustainable development, and achieving sustainable development is a function of active participation in the global knowledge-based society (UNESCO, 2007).

The study progressed to highlight some basic indicators and promoters of good governance like rule of law, rural development, freedom of the press, free and fair elections, and job creation, among others. It also examines the role of science and technology in improving agriculture, security, and education, which revamps the economy etc.

Conceptual Clarification Effective Governance

It is necessary to examine what governance entails. Scholars differ as to what governance means. Governance means different things to politicians, the citizens, the media, academics, etc. (Bene and Neiland, 2006). Asian Development Bank (1999) and Akindele (2002) see governance as the legitimate power to manage the human and material resources of a country for development. Governance is a two-way thing. It involves the government as well as the people. According to Bene and Neiland; “governance is the exercise of legitimate authority in transacting affairs, and is broadly understood to refer to the maintenance of social order through endogenously evolved and externally imposed rules sets, (while) government, by contrast, can be defined as the exercise of influence and control, through law and coercion, over a political community, constituted into a state within a defined territory”. “governance refers to the interaction between civil society and government in determining governmental actions” (Wilson, 2000).

Bracking (2010) believes that good governance will most often than not refer to rationality as regards the maximization of

social welfare and the common good. According to Bracking, good governance is an antithesis of clientalism, nepotism, patrimonialism and patronage. Good governance stands opposed to particularism. Good governance has an old idea, but its conceptualization is a recent one, which emerged in the early 70s (Grindle, 2010) and gained popularity in the late 80s (Hardt, 2012). Good governance involves the promotion of accountability, efficiency, rule of law, and the fight against corruption. It also involves participation, transparency, and equitability during the exercise of authority in a country (UNDP, 1997; IMF, 2005; Kaufmann et al., 2009). Good governance is “infrastructural” not “despotic” power (Mann, 1984). Several mechanisms must be implemented to achieve good governance (Grzeszczak, 2015). Levy (2002) posits that there are two distinct components of good governance: political authority credibility as well as a quality bureaucracy. Good governance helps in ensuring that the public interest is protected at every point in time, irrespective of the entities involved. It promotes ethical values, rule of law, integrity as well as the engagement of stakeholders (IFAC and CIPFA 2013). Similarly, Good governance has to do with policy implementation (Nanda, 2006).

Nigeria and Economy

Nigeria remains the most populous black nation with a large geographical landmass of 923,768 square km, (Sertoglu et al., 2017), with a population size of about 170 million people as of 2011 and estimated at 190 million people today. The country is bordered

by Cameroon, Benin, and Chad and is adjoined across the tropics of Guinea Gulf. Nigeria is endowed with an abundance of human and material resources, nice vegetation, good agro-climatological conditions, and dynamic topography (UN, 2007). Nigeria remains an emerging market with a mixed economy and ranks 30th in the economic ranking (by nominal GDP). Nigeria still depends largely on crude oil, although several attempts, including failed ones, are ongoing to diversify the economy. Ofoche, (2012) sees the Nigerian economy as a consumption economy, with a weak industrial base and institutions. Today, the Nigerian economy is facing serious issues with corruption, macro-economic crises, human development, the market, crime and terrorism, unemployment, education, health, environment, infrastructure as well as the lack of interaction between government and society (Naij.com, 2018). The inability of the government to harness the abundance of resources in the country has left millions of citizens in poverty and poor living standard (Olawaler, 2018). Nigeria has lots of problems confronting its economy, therefore, need for responsive governance, having the interest of the vast population devoid of corruption, nepotism, etc. this is a call for “good governance” and to speed effective governance, the Nigerian economy must be built around science and technology. This implies that the strict application of science and technology will be useful in the fight against corruption, crime, terrorism, and poor government among others.

Economic Recovery and Growth Plan 2017-2020(ERGP).

The ERGP is an economic plan - an amalgamation of the anticipated annual budgets from 2017 through to 2020. In this case, it is a medium-term expenditure framework. The medium-term development plan was launched in 2016 after the identification of negative socio-economic indices in virtually all areas of the national welfare of Nigerians. The plan is expected to pull out the economy from the recession and place her on a sustainable growth path. The plan has identified objectives and set out targets (FGN, 2017). The ERGP is unique and different from the past plans of various governments. We have 4-year budget implemented on the ERGP; 2017, is just like an extension of 2016; is more like a re-calibration of adjustments in terms of real value (adjusting for inflation only) The ERGP is an overarching plan, hence to produce subsequent budgets like 2018 budget would not be difficult because there is now a framework. Business entities can now evaluate the existing framework and plan and make decisions depending on what would happen in terms of taxes and tariffs. This is good for both private and public sector planning.

Science and Technology

The attempt to define “science” is not a recent one. The early philosopher saw science as knowledge (Godin, 2007). In the words of Casey (2012), “science is a systematic knowledge of the physical or material world gained through observation and experimentation”. Apart from the lab coats,

fat textbooks, microscopes, etc, that reflects in the minds of many at the mention of the word, science doubles as a body of knowledge and a process which is exciting, useful, ongoing, and involves a global human endeavour.

Bozeman (2000) sees technology as not relating only to the product but includes knowledge of its application as well as its further development or advancement. According to Lin (2003), “technology is the theoretical and practical knowledge, skills and artefacts that can be used to develop products and services as well as their production and delivery systems. Technology is embodied in people, materials, cognitive and physical processes, facilities, machines and tools”. Science here deals with ‘what is, technology is concerned with ‘what can be. In this direction, “Achieving sustainable development depends on the active participation in the global knowledge-based society, taking into account the varying economic, social, political and cultural conditions of each region or country” (UNESCO, 2007).

Science and Technology for Good Governance

In the 21st century, it is a mistake to have a government that is not fully aware of the importance of science and technology in every sphere of economic activity. It is also an error to have representatives at all levels that are unaware of the potential of science and technology for good governance. Science and technology have proven to be vital in the actualization of our dream society. Countries like China, the USA, Japan, Russia, Britain,

etc have developed at a faster pace economically, socially and politically as a result of a proper annexation of science and technology (Duke, 2018). Today, China is the world’s leading economy and seeks to maintain its record by investing more in science and technology. Nigeria can do more. Good governance has been promoted through transparency, accountability and information (Dwivedi and Bharti, 2010), public participation, and efficiency in public goods and services delivery (Ogbonnia & Chukwuma, 2022). Good governance is concerned with making life easy and more comfortable for the masses, hence, the application of technology in ticketing at both bus and rail stations has helped speed up the process, together with a high level of transparency. The online employment/application portal system used by universities and other government MDAs also shows efficiency and transparency. The satellite/cable television networks and other means of digital communication have brought the masses closer to government programmes and activities (McCall and Dunn, 2012; Macnaghten and Owen, 2011). The automated teller machine makes the banking system available 24/7. The internet bulks SMS and a host of mobile applications help people to acquire useful information more quickly (Golob, etal. ,2001; Mukherjee and Roy, 2016). Science and technology enable innovation in governance in the following ways:

- Social media in governance
- A smart and safe transport system
- Agricultural empowerment

Ways of Speeding Effective Governance in Nigeria

As earlier pointed out, governance is the exercise of control in resources (both human and material) management for rapid economic, political and social development. Getting these done in a well-deserved manner and approach is what constitutes good governance. Perhaps, to speed effective governance in Nigeria, the government must place priority on the following:

Free, fair and credible elections: Elections should not be based on political torment. The masses should be given freedom to choose from a list of aspirants, who their representative(s) should be. There should be no influence from political parties, or any other force.

Economic development: There should be conscious efforts by the government to improve the economic well-being and the quality of life of the masses. It should adopt new technologies and speed up the transmission process from agrarian to industrialized economy.

Agriculture Health: There should be provision for industrialized agriculture, i.e large-scale monoculture. Government should also make available fertilizers, pesticides and other farming instruments in view of the attainment of food security in the country.

Security: The government has a duty to protect all its citizens from external aggression and internal disturbance.

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According to Etim, Duke and Ogbinyi (2017), providing security for the lives and properties of the masses is the core essence of governance and any government that fails in this has failed in all. Security cuts across every sphere of human endeavours ranging from physical, food, health, etc

- ❖ Job creation
- ❖ Rural development
- ❖ Media freedom
- ❖ Legal system
- ❖ Education

Conclusion

This review examines the ways to speed effective/good governance in Nigeria. Good governance has been seen as the promotion of accountability, efficiency, rule of law, and the fight against corruption. It includes participation, transparency, and equitability during the exercise of authority in a country. Several avenues have been highlighted, including agricultural improvement, rule of law, job creation, rural development, press freedom, etc.

Recommendations

The paper recommends the following:

1. Strict application of science and technology in governance in Nigeria.
2. Policy makers should be exemplary of governing by the rule of law.
3. Government must ensure the protection of citizens and their properties creating confidence in the state security.

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