

Democracy, good governance and development in Nigeria: A focus on Munya local government area, Niger state

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ABSTRACT

This study examined democracy, good governance and development in Nigeria, with a focus on Munya Local Government Area of Niger State from 2015-2023. The study also examined the effort of political leaders in improving the standard of living of the people and also assessed the effect of elected officials in providing basic social amenities to the people. The study adopted the Social contract theory. The study adopted survey research method; data were collected from the primary and secondary sources, a total number of two hundred (200) respondents formed the sample size from the study population of one hundred and three thousand, six hundred and fifty-one (103,651), through the use of questionnaire and other printed materials. The study discovered that Democracy has enhanced good governance and development for the people of Munya Local Government. The dividends of democracy have been extended to the communities of Munya Local Government Area to some extent. Social amenities like potable water, roads, primary health care centres, schools and others essential services for the citizens. The study recommends that elected political office holders should consolidate on the effort made so far by the provision of more physical infrastructures like roads, bridges, potable water and public transport to remote villages that are yet to feel the dividends of democracy. Workshops and seminars for political leaders should be organized to re-orient the elected political leaders at the Local Government level to preach the importance of transparency and accountability. Democratic administrations should manifest the spirit of accountability, responsibility and responsiveness to ensure good governance in Nigeria. The issue of rural electrification should be taken serious, this will lead to the improvement of the quality of lives of the citizens, this will also lead to improvement of economic activities in the rural areas.

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1 | INTRODUCTION

Democracy according to Yio (2012) is the system of government based on acquisition of authority from the people, the institutionalization of rule of law, emphasis on legitimacy of rules, availability of choices and cherished values as well as accountability in governance. It is the system of administration where the choice of leaders is in the hands of the citizens and governance. Oluwole (2003) stated that the development of every nation is the product of how men and women come together and harness their economic and political potentials towards such end. This development is achieved with the use of certain ideological paradigm, which serves as a cardinal force that mobilizes, energizes and motivates both the leaders and the followers to action. The role of leadership in shaping this process is sacrosanct because it is the leadership that the whole society looks up to for solutions to its problems. Every country in the continent try to link its system of rule as democratic. There is no nation, no matter how highly dictatorial, that does not wish to be referred to as being democratic. That is the reason that led Cheema and Maguire, (2004) state that Dictators in both capitalist and socialist societies often refer to their system of political and economic arrangements as democratic in nature and that their actions and inactions are guided by democratic ideals. Nation states attract global attention and respect only when the foundation of their government and structure of governance is predicated upon democratic norms. It is believed to be the best form of governance which offers opportunities for the citizenry to choose and determine people that will represent them as leaders in all strata of the society. In another development, Oluwole, cited in Salisu, Audi & Zakari (2021) asserted that:

Democracy also holds a strong appeal among the masses in Africa, Latin America and Asia because democracy also offers them protection and preserves their fundamental human rights and in addition to ensure that government is accountable and transparent. The central idea about this concept lies in the practical application of democracy. All versions of democracy according to Audi, Salisu and Zakari (2021) share one fundamental objective, which is how to govern the society in such a way that power would actually belong to the people. It is also argued that democracy has some special ingredients that distinguish it from other systems of government. Such ingredients include freedom, equal opportunity, free fair and credible elections, rule of law and respect for due process, transparency

and accountability which can be subsumed under the word, 'good governance.

Good governance according to Oni & Excellence-Oluye, (2016) entails responsible use of governmental mechanism for enhancing efficiency, growth and the overall development of a state. So, it becomes clear from the aforementioned points to say that the success of any democratic political system is premised on how good governance is integrated into the governance process, enhanced and encouraged by the political leadership. It has become clear that the sustainability of Nigerian democratic depend on good governance through the management of national resources for the benefit of the citizens. The important question to ask is whether the dividends of democracy have been enjoyed by the people of Munya Local Government Area since the re-birth of democracy in Nigeria from 1999. This study covers a period of eight years from 2015-2013.

1.1 | Objectives of the study

This study seeks to examine the effect of democracy on good governance in Munya Local Government Area. Specifically, the study seeks to achieve the following research objectives:

- To examine the effort of political leaders in improving the standard of living of the people of Munya Local Government Area from 2015-2023.
- To assess the effort of elected officials in providing basic social amenities to the people of in Munya Local Government from 2015-2023.

2 | LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 | Democracy

"Democracy, on its own, does not connote good governance. It is not an end in itself but a means to an end". "Deep-rooted and consolidated democracy in the form of liberalism or what Cheema and Maguire (2004) call 'maximalist democracy' indeed has been found to be able to engender good governance". According to them, "maximalist democracy encompasses "various rights and liberties that have to be associated with a competitive and inclusive system of government". Diamond (1999), "while appraising the maximalist approach of democracy, submits that democracy is a concept that allows for fundamental human rights, broadening political participation and

guaranteeing credible and periodic elections". For democracy to evolve into good governance, Linz and Stepan (1999) suggest "five interrelated conditions that must be met; the rule of law to guarantee citizens' freedoms and independent associational life, functional state bureaucracy which can be used by the democratic government to deliver public good, free and lively civil society, a relatively autonomous and valued political society and an institutionalised economic society". Democracy has thus been recognized as the only moral and legitimate way through which a society can be administered. Thus, theoretically, scholars and international financial institutions like the World Bank have established an inextricable connection between democracy and good governance. Democracy, adequately understood, is a theory that sets some basic principles according to which a good government, whatever its form, must be run (Oluwole, 2003). Such principles include those of justice, equity, freedom, liberty, accountability, openness and transparency in government. Indeed, effective democratic forms of governance rely on public participation, accountability and transparency. In most countries today, it is these principles that are used as criteria for distinguishing between good and bad governments.

2.2 | Good Governance

"The concept of good' in 'governance' is an appendage to the word 'governance' and it is seen as the process and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised (World Bank, 2014). Furthermore, governance includes how governments are selected, held accountable, monitored and replaced with an emphasis on the capacity of government to manage resources and respect the rule of law" (World Bank, 2003). Therefore, the word 'good' in governance connotes the proper exercise of authority, management of resources and respect for the rule of law in accordance to laid-down principles for the benefit of all in a society. In this regard, Babawale (2007) sees good governance as the exercise of political power to promote the public good and the welfare of the people. He argues that good governance is the absence of lack of accountability in government, corruption, and political repression, suffocation of civil society and denial of fundamental human rights. He points out the attribute of good governance in any society to include: accountability, transparency in government procedures, high expectation of rational decisions, predictability in government behaviour, openness in government transactions, free flow of information, respect for the rule of law and protection of civil liberties, and press freedom.

2.2.1 | Features of Good Governance

The features of good governance are outlined by Arowolo & Aluko (2010) as follows:

Effective Service Delivery: Access to such basic services as education, primary health care, electricity and motor able roads is prerequisite for effective human development with a whole lot of wide reaching effects on the citizenry. Effective leadership is one that puts together and pursues programmes that are sustainable and avoid disjointed mode of planning. When sustainability is in focus, it helps to check elephant projects that are mostly momentary and designed to fail so that a few only are enriched and the target population unreached.

Employment: Nigeria, as a nation, prides itself in fact that it is the most populous nation in Africa, with every 1 in 5 black people on the continent being Nigerian. The population of the country is presently estimated at about 170million people and of this lot it is estimated that a whopping 70% comprises of the youth. However, population growth by itself does not equal prosperity, unless young people are educated and job opportunities created we will only be raising a population that is fast becoming a liability rather than as asset. The development of non-oil sector is the key to improved and sustainable productivity. The increasing application of modern technology and non-availability of basic services sees increasing migration of the youthful population to urban areas in search of employment. Leadership must be proactive and innovative in the provision of viable alternatives, programmes and policies that would see to the effective accommodation of this impressionable population.

Participation: All men and women should have a voice in decision-making, either directly or through legitimate intermediate institutions that represent their interests. Such broad participation is built on freedom of association and speech, as well as capacities to participate constructively.

Rule of law: Legal frameworks should be fair and enforced impartially.

Transparency: Transparency is built on the free flow of information. Processes, institutions and information are directly accessible to those concerned with them, and enough information is provided to understand and monitor them.

Responsiveness: Institutions and processes try to serve all stakeholders.

Consensus orientation: Good governance mediates differing interests to reach a broad consensus on what is in the best interests of the group and, where possible, on policies and procedures.

Equity: All men and women have opportunities to improve or maintain their well-being.

Effectiveness and efficiency: Processes and institutions produce results that meet needs while making the best use of resources.

Accountability: Decision-makers in government, the private sector and civil society organizations are accountable to the public, as well as to institutional stakeholders.

Strategic vision: Leaders and the public have a broad and long-term perspective on good governance and human development, along with a sense of what is needed for such development. There is also an understanding of the historical, cultural and social complexities in which that perspective is grounded. The presence of all the above mentioned attributes makes a government a responsible and good one.

2.3 | Review of empirical studies

Kevreksme et al. (2015) examines Good Governance and Poverty Reduction in Cambodia by overviews of its Governance and Poverty Situations as the key concepts for discussion to find out the factors impeding GG, causes and characteristics of poverty, and governance reforms. The findings indicate that GG really has a positive influence on PR in Cambodia, still some challenges should be considered to enhance the governance and PR strategy in Cambodia. Actually, the NPRS in 2002 is proved to be unsystematic and ineffective. However, the main reason of the poverty retaining in Cambodia is seen in poor governance in terms of widespread corruption, limited transparency, and limited accountability of public policy making, limited control, and limited participation to public. Here GG is considered and demanded to make a significant change in the condition of the poor and near-poor. Obviously, the result of the investigation showed that Cambodia is now on the new ways of governance and PR strategy after a big change shown in the result of the general election in 2013. Another study conducted by ONI and Excellence-Oluye (2016). The paper examines leadership and governance. The study reveals that leadership and governance have been recognised as imperative for the attainment of the political, economic and social objective of any political community. The significance of leadership to governance is seeing in the fact that good leadership sets the tone and standard of governance. The paper conceptual examination of the nexus of governance and leadership and with heavy reliance on secondary data, analyzes its phenomenon in Nigeria. Findings reveals that the history of Nigeria is replete with governance and leadership that in most cases lacked vision, mostly engrossed with corruption and political bickering leading to the enthronement of maladministration and mismanagement of public resources, and consequently insecurity, economic setback and abject poverty. A vibrant civil society committed to ensuring free and fair election leading to the enthronement of political leaders founded on distinct sound value systems and with a probe for probity and accountability is imperative if good governance and leadership is to be attained in Nigeria.

Lambert & Aiguosatile (2011) examined "good governance and democratic dividends in Nigeria: the Nexus. The study asserted that the economic problems facing the Nigerian state that started some decades ago have continued to increase despite the current democratic method of governance. Democracy is not only a political concept but also an economic phenomenon for the realization of what people now commonly refer to as the dividends of democracy. It is in this direction that this study seeks to explain why democratic dividends seem to have eluded Nigerians. It concludes that corruption inhibits good governance and by extension the spread of the dividends of democracy. It argues that to stop or reduce corruption, the values must change and the Nigerian must be rearmed morally". In another study conducted by Ekpe (2008) reveals that democratic governance aims to create the climate for political and socio-economic development and extend efficiency and effectiveness of development programmes during a democracy. Adegami & Adepoju cited in Audi, Salisu & Zakari (2021) examined "good Governance in Nigeria: A Catalyst to National Peace, Stability and Development. It asserted that, Good governance manifesting in areas of rule of law, transparency, accountability, citizens participation among others are sine qua non for national peace and development. However, 'poverty of leadership' in most of the Nigeria's 57 years of existence has not only hindered the nation's development, but continued to threaten its peace and stability. While it is widely believed that bad governance is prevalent in autocratic and oligarchic systems, it is evident now that bad governance does exist much more in democracies. Therefore, the study analysed the twin concepts of governance and good governance; assessed the nature of governance offered by the nation's leaders; and its effects on the national peace and development. Using secondary data, the study revealed that, unethical practices, arbitrary rule and corruption which pervade public offices are products of bad governance. The study further revealed that, bad

governance in Nigeria has brought about unemployment, poverty, crimes, internal violence, insurgents activities, and diseases, loss of lives and properties, and underdevelopment of the country". The study concluded that until proactive steps are taken for the enthronement of good governance, peace, stability as well as development will continue to elude the nation, beyond this, the corporate existence of the nation remains threatened. A study by Mimiko (2007) stated that democracy provides a platform for good governance, and promotes systematic stability as long as there is an outlet of legitimately access power by the political contenders through the people's votes at elections. This reveals that power in any democratic state lies in the hands of the electorates and the leaders can only acquire and retain their power through the extension of democratic dividends.

2.4 | Theoretical framework

Social contract theory was adopted for this study. "The social contract theory is an old concept in political philosophy propounded by Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean Jack Rousseau. The choice of the theory is informed by its adequacy in explaining the origin of nature, and operation of democratic systems out of which periodic elections are organized to ensure regular turnover of leadership". Hobbes (1588 – 1679) made "emphasis of a state of nature describing it as poor, nasty, brutish and short, because, in it, there are certain features associated with human conditions, such that equality of need, scarcity, essential equality of human power, and limited altruism. The state of nature lacks fundamental social amenities for satisfying of human needs, due to poor social cooperation to produce these basic amenities and that for man to avoid this state of nature, there must be a guarantee that people will not harm one another and government will fulfil its part of the agreement to the citizens". The concept of "social contract created an avenue for increases benefits between the parties to the contract in areas such as political, moral values and socio-economic, that brings lasting peace to societal existences. In other words, social contract has a strong temporal dimension such as the willingness of people to work together in maintaining the contract is strongly influenced by how they view the future. Usually citizens may see little worthy in cooperation with their rulers, if they doubt their sincerity of such contract which was entered for societal development purpose to do with social security, stability and economic development and growth without discrimination". Specifically, this theory gives an overview of how governments in an organized society are formed, maintain changed or are overthrown. It explains why people come together to avoid living a brutish, nasty and short life" that characterizes the state of nature where political authority is absent, which is commonly obtained through periodic elections in a liberal democracy, and that elections that meet the requirements of that contract are termed as legitimate.

3 | METHODS AND MATERIALS

The survey research method was adopted for this study. The primary and secondary sources were used for data collection. Under the primary method, questionnaire was used and secondary data were sourced from books, journals, internet materials, government publications and other printed materials. The data collected were further analysed using simple percentage and the discussion was completed with the information from other sources. The population of the study include the adult citizens living in Munya Local Government Area of Niger State. According to the 2006 National Population and Housing Census, the total population of People in Munya Local Government Area is 103,651. In selecting the sample size, based on the population of the study, the sample size will be determine at 5% error tolerance and 95% degree of confidence, using Taro Yamane's (1967) formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n = sample size N = population size e = error tolerance (5%)

1 = constant

From the study, the sample size is computed as:

$$n = \frac{103,651}{1 + 103,651(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{103,651}{1 + 270.28}$$

$$n = \frac{103,651}{270.85} \quad n = 199.5$$

Therefore, $\approx n = 200$.

From the above target population, simple stratified and simple random sampling technique was used to administer the questionnaire to the

respondents spread across the Eleven Wards that make up of Munya Local Government Area for a fair and equal representation. The researcher also saw to himself the existing structures (amenities). The study used both primary and secondary method of data collection. Questionnaire instrument was used to generate the primary data. Data collected were analyzed, using the simple percentage to measures significance of data collected.

4 | RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the data obtained, it was revealed that four hindered (200) questionnaires were administered to selected people in all the wards that constitutes Munya Local Government Area, out of the copies of questionnaires administered, one hundred and eighty were returned (180), the analysis was made based on the number returned. This is presented in the tables below:

Table 1: Respondent's view on whether Democracy has enhanced better standard of living through projects at the community level.

Variables	No of respondents	Percentage (%)
YES	100	60
NO	80	40
Undecided	0	0
Total	180	100

Source: Field survey 2023

The above table revealed that, 100 respondents, representing 60% of the sampled population agreed that democracy has enhanced better standard of living through community level projects; 80 respondents, representing 40%, disagree while, and 0 respondents, representing 0 %, could not ascertain whether democracy has enhanced better standard of living through constituency projects.

Table 2: Respondent's view on whether any primary health care facility in their community is built by government since 2015

Variables	No of respondents	Percentage (%)
YES	135	75
NO	30	16.5
Undecided	15	8.5
Total	180	100

Source: Field survey 2023

The data obtained revealed that 135 respondents, representing 75% of the sampled population, agreed that any public primary health care facility is built in their community by government since 2015; 30 respondents, representing 16.5%, disagree while 15 respondents representing 8.5 % cannot not ascertain whether was built by government since 2015.

Table 3: Respondent's view on adequate staffing of the available primary health care facilities in their communities by government since 2015.

Variables	No of respondents	Percentage (%)
YES	135	75
NO	15	8.5
Undecided	30	16.5
Total	180	100

Source: Field survey 2023

The data obtained revealed that 135 respondents, representing 75% of the sampled population, agreed that there's adequate staffing of the primary health care facilities in their community by government since 2015; 15 respondents, representing 8.5%, disagree while 30 respondents representing 16.5 % undecided.

Table 4: Respondent's view on employment of graduates in their communities into government establishments

Variables	No of respondents	Percentage (%)
YES	135	75
NO	15	8.5
Undecided	30	16.5
Total	180	100

Source: Field survey 2023

The above table revealed that, 135 respondents, representing 75% of the sampled population, agreed that graduate in their communities have gained meaningful employment in government establishment. 15 respondents representing 8.5% disagreed while 30 respondents representing 16.5% undecided.

Table 5: Respondent's view on the provision of electricity in their respective communities

Variables	No of respondents	Percentage (%)
YES	50	28
NO	120	67
Undecided	10	8
Total	180	100

Source: Field survey 2023.

Table 5 revealed that 50 respondents, representing 28% of the sampled population, agreed that government provided electricity for their communities; 120 respondents representing 67% disagreed while 10 respondents representing 8% could not ascertain whether government has provided electricity for the communities.

Table 6: Respondent's view on whether there is any improvement in the provision of potable water.

Variables	No of respondents	Percentage (%)
YES	160	88.8
NO	15	8.3
Undecided	5	2.9
Total	180	100

Source: Field survey 2023

The above table shows that 160 respondents representing 88.8% of the sampled population, agreed that there is improvement in supply of potable water, 15 respondents, representing 8.3% disagreed while 5 respondents, representing 2.9% could not ascertain whether there was any improvement in supply of potable water.

Table 7: Respondent's view on rehabilitation and construction of roads in their communities

Variables	No of respondents	Percentage (%)
YES	135	75
NO	15	8.5
Undecided	30	16.5
Total	180	100

Source: Field survey 2023.

From the table 7, 135 respondents, representing 75% of the sampled population, agreed that government constructed and rehabilitated some roads in their communities, 15 respondents representing 8.5% disagreed while, 30 respondents representing 16.5% could not decide.

Table 8: Respondent's view on provision of Agricultural inputs, like fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides/insecticides to farmers in their respective communities.

Variables	No of respondents	Percentage (%)
YES	100	60
NO	80	40
Undecided	0	0
Total	180	100

Source: Field survey 2023.

From the table 8 above, 100 respondents representing 60% of the sampled population, agreed that government has provided agricultural inputs, like fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides/insecticides to farmers in their communities for improved food output, 80 respondents representing 40% disagreed while 0 respondents, representing 0% undecided.

5 | DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The finding reveals that democracy has positively affected good governance in the study area. This finding is in line with the view of Ekpe (2008) argues that democratic governance aims to create the climate for political and socio-economic development and extend efficiency and effectiveness of development programmes during a democracy. Linz and Stepan (1999) also stated that, democracy evolved into good governance, suggest five inter-related conditions that must be met; the rule of law to guarantee citizens' freedoms and independent associational life, functional state bureaucracy which can be used by the democratic government to deliver public good, free and lively civil society, a relatively autonomous and valued political society and an institutionalised economic society. He for reveals that Political participation is synonymous to good governance. Political participation, which includes citizens' involvement in the decision-making process, contribution to public debate on national issues and voting, needs to be encouraged we can be concluding that democracy as well as good governance is actually working in Munya Local Government Area Council. The study also discovered that, the standard of living of the people of Munya Local Government Area have been improved through projects that have direct bearing on the citizens within the period of study. The Local government at all levels has provided menial job through agencies like NDE.

The government since return of democracy has provided social amenities like roads, pipe-born water, functional hospital, schools and others essential service are provided for the citizens. We can deduce that people in the study area are enjoying democratic dividends. This is in line with the study by Mimiko (2007) who states that democracy provides a platform for good governance, and promotes systematic stability as long as there is an outlet of legitimately access power by the political contenders through the people's votes at elections.

6 | CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Good governance is synonymous with democracy and most powerful ideas in development in recent years has been good governance. Good governance describes all the things governments do in order to allow development to happen. Checklists of good governance have usually contained elements such as transparency, accountability and the practice of democracy and the rule of law. The presence of the above elements in a democratic state will definitely result to the provision of amenities. In this sense, good governance in Munya Local Government Area is about having Local institutions that makes fair and appropriate decisions about how a locally is governed, and effective systems put in place to deliver public services. The study concludes that, Munya Local Government Area to some extent has reduce the pressure on federal and state government by providing social amenities to the people of the Area. Elected officials to some extent have provided the communities with social amenities such as potable-water, electricity, construction and rehabilitation of roads, provision of clinics and schools. There is no gain saying that the deepest root of development failure is not a lack of resource for development; rather, it is lack of good governance the inability or unwillingness to apply public resources effectively to generate public goods and services. The study therefore made the following recommendations:

- Elected political office holders should consolidate on the effort made so far by the provision of more physical infrastructures like roads, bridges, potable water and public transport to remote villages that are yet to feel the dividends of democracy.
- Workshops and seminars for political leaders should be organized to re-orient the elected political leaders at the Local Government level to preach the importance of transparency and accountability.
- Democratic administrations should manifest the spirit of accountability, responsibility and responsiveness to ensure good governance in Nigeria.
- The issue of rural electrification should be taken serious, this will lead to the improvement of the quality of lives of the citizens, this will also lead to improvement of economic activities in the rural areas.

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