

GENDER, GOOD GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *Despite widespread democratization in most countries and the struggle by the feminist movements for the integration of gender balancing in the national politics of countries over the world however, women who constitute about 50% of Nigeria population still remain systematically alienated from politics and decision, making process in the country. Poor systems of governance result in widespread discrimination related to sex, race, colour, religion and political opinion. This paper tries to points out the efficacy and the role of gender equality and participation in good governance which has a trickling down effect on development. The study adopted qualitative research and documentary method of data collection. Its revealed a positive correction between gender, good governance and development in Nigeria, hence the need for it and its application. Also, women who constitute about 50% of Nigeria population still remain systematically alienated from politics and decision, making process in the country. It recommended among others that government should engage the support of the mass media and partner with women's movement NGOs and Civil society for vehement complaint against women subordination, discrimination and stigmatization in the society.*

KEYWORDS: Gender, Good Governance, Development, Subordination, Mobilization.

INTRODUCTION

There are functional responsibilities that are given to men and women by society and are influenced by the cultural, political, economic, religious and social situation. Is worth noting that where women and men have equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and potential to contribute to and benefit from development such society tends to development. Thus taking into account their similarities, differences and the various roles they play. But if there are inequalities that exist between men and women and are not related to their biological roles then there will be gender imbalances which tend to retard or slow development in Nigeria. The imbalance is often attributed to poor governance that play an important role in hampering economic growth is truism that good governance is the core catalyst to facilitate development. Although, women are often excluded from decision-making, from the household up to the highest levels of policy making as seen in Nigeria. Women's equal participation in governance is, therefore, an important end in itself a recognition of their right to speak and be heard. More broadly, it is a means to social transformation. Decisions made and policies implemented by governance institutions at global, national and local levels help to shape perceptions of the roles that women and men play in society, as well as determining their access to rights and resources. Involving women in defining these policies and processes, and in influencing the institutions that produce them, makes it more likely they will respond to the different needs and situations of both women and men, and contribute to gender equality.

Poor systems of governance result in widespread discrimination related to sex, race, colour, religion and political opinion. Looking across the world, persistent and pervasive gender

disparities continue to exist. Women and men do not have an equal level of political representation, freedom of association and expression ('voice'). Employment and career structures in the public sector also favour men above women. Service delivery systems are discriminating, and services are more accessible to men than to women, although neither poor men nor poor women fare well in this respect. Finally, women's human rights and their access to legal services is a sore point in many countries. Gender equality is globally accepted as a requisite for achieving development and good governance that give men and women equal voices in decision-making, policy implementation and attaining Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Despite all these, some women that find themselves in the art of governance have been found to perform creditably in their various positions all over the world. In this light, this paper exposes us to the concept of gender, good governance, and development in Nigeria. The study generally aims at discussing the connectivity that exists among gender, good governance, and development in Nigeria. In achieving the above, the following specific objectives are to drive the study: to examine the relationship between good governance and development; to examine the nexus between gender and development; the efficacy and role of gender equality and participation in good governance which help to trickle down effective development.

CONCEPTUAL DEFINITIONS

Definition of Gender

'Gender' can be refer to how a person's biology is culturally valued and interpreted into locally accepted ideas of what it is to be a female or male or the socially determined ideas and practice as to what it means to be female or male. 'Gender' and the hierarchical power relations between women and men based on this are socially constructed, and not derived directly from biology. Gender identities and associated expectations of roles and responsibilities are therefore changeable between and within cultures. Gendered power relations permeate social institutions so that gender is never absent. In different societies, there are different sets of rules, norms, customs and practices by which differences between males and females are translated into socially constructed differences between women and men, boys and girls. These culturally determined gender identities define rights and responsibilities and what is 'appropriate' behaviour for women and for men. This often results in the two genders being valued differently, often reinforcing the idea that women are inferior and subordinate to men.

It is somewhat ironic that the term "gender," which was first coined by psychologists and then used by feminists to get away from the biologist referent of the word sex, is now virtually synonymous with the latter word. Yet by using gender we are using a shorthand term which encodes a very crucial point: that our basic social identities as men and women are socially constructed rather than based on fixed biological characteristics. In this sense we can talk about societies in which there are more than two genders (and in the anthropological record there are several such societies), as well as the historical differences in masculinity (femininity) in a given society (Parpart, J. L. et al 2000). A way of looking at society which focuses on women's roles and responsibilities in relation to those of men, in its simplest recent usage, "gender" is a synonym for "women." Any number of books and articles whose subject is women's history have in the past few years substituted "gender" for "women" in their titles. In these instances, the use of "gender" is meant to denote scholarly seriousness of a work, for "gender" has a more neutral and objective sound than does "women" (Scott, 1989).

The word “gender”, like development, had a specific usage before feminist theorists extended its meaning. One of the earliest uses of gender in feminist theory can be traced to the 1976 University of Sussex Workshop on the Subordination of Women and the school of thought that emerged from this workshop. Scholars such as Olivia Harris, Maureen Mackintosh, Felicity Odium, Ann Whitehead, and Kate Young argued that women, like men, are biological beings but that women’s subordination was socially constructed and not biologically determined. They argued further that to conceptually differentiate between these two realities, it is necessary to identify “sex” as the biological differentiation between male and female, and “gender” as the differentiation between masculinity and femininity as constructed through socialization and education, among other factors. What is biological is fixed and unchangeable, but what is social is subject to change and should be the focus of attention for feminist theorists (Brody, 2009).

The concern with gender emerged as feminist theorists sought to understand the complexities of women’s subordination. In Parpart (2000), the word “gender” came into mainly academic use some 15 years after the re-emergence of late 20th century feminism, which has, unlike its earlier manifestations, made a significant dent in male-dominated (andocentric) scholarship (at least, I like to think so). Feminist scholars argued that the Western academic tradition, of which most universities and colleges in the world are part, has systematically ignored the experiences of women in its fields of learning, concepts, theories, and research methods. Additionally, although claiming to be scientific, it has really embodied mythical assumptions about women’s and men’s capabilities, the sexual division of labour in early human history, and, as a result, women’s place in today’s society. These assumptions were extended to non-Western societies, with the result that Western assumptions and values influenced relations between the sexes and between groups within each sex, relations that ranged from egalitarian to highly patriarchal and stratified.

Definition of Good Governance

According to a 1991 World Bank report in Nguyen, (2016), governance is defined as ‘the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources for development’. Instrumentally defined, governance is made up of aggregated elements including: political leadership, bureaucratic capacity, representation and accountability, transparency and non-corrupt judiciary enforcing the rule of law, and participation. The former definition is general and implicit while the latter is specification of the former, but seems rather comprehensive and logic. Also, good governance is the management in the process of development and the keys to good governance are leadership’s political will and political capacity.

The notion of good governance as define is “a modern state with a compulsory association with a territorial base claiming the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force” (Weber 1964). Good governance desires to reduce poverty, unemployment and underdevelopment which focus on activities that promote economic growth and development. Probably the first governance institution that comes to mind is government. Yet it is not only national governments that make decisions about our lives; global governance institutions such as the United Nations (UN), and the World Trade Organization (WTO), also make decisions about our world, which then influence those made by national governments. In turn, civil society organizations (CSOs) and citizens play a key role - putting pressure on governments to take action to challenge gender inequalities, and holding them accountable for the commitments they make.

The importance of good governance as a critical condition for human development can no longer be underestimated. Since the late 1980s, governance has been a subject of considerable debates and different interpretations by governments, international organizations and scholars. For example, Leftwich (1994) defined good governance as “a clear and predictable legal framework, accountability, transparency and information on the management of national affairs”. In the context of human development, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2002) defined good governance as “. . . democratic governance”; meaning respect for human rights, participation in decision making, accountability, poverty eradication, responsiveness, equal treatment, inclusiveness, fairness, impartiality, absence of any discriminatory practices as well as taking into consideration the needs of future generations. The report of poverty task force on localizing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Vietnam defined good governance as “the process of translating societal demands into choices, resulting in policy formulation and implementation”, and thus identifies four good governance principles/indicators that are key to poverty reduction as accountability, transparency, participation and predictability. More importantly, governance should not be understood as the end result but a means towards an end to promoting the quality of life for all.

Principles of effective governance

According to Brody, (2009), this focuses on seven governance principles that are fundamental to the overarching goals of social justice and equality: accountability, transparency, responsiveness, equity, and inclusiveness, upholding rights, and following the rule of law. As all these principles are commonly viewed as contributing to more democratic governance, understandings of democracy are critically explored and a definition provided as a foundation for the report.

➤ Accountability

Broadly, the notion of accountability means taking responsibility for the outcomes of decisions made, and being answerable for failures to meet expectations. Accountable governance means that those involved in governance decision-making in the public and private sector are expected to adhere to publicly agreed standards, norms and goals, which may include international agreements, and citizens or stakeholders’, are entitled to demand accountability when this does not happen. Governance decision-makers need to justify the way they have designed, administered and implemented policies, and the way they have allocated and spent financial resources - for example, by giving an account of what they have done with the national revenue or through an assessment of specific performance measures (Yunusa, 2009).

➤ Transparency

In support of accountability, transparency literally means that citizens should be able to see through the workings of governance institutions. This means making information freely available and not preventing citizens from seeking or sharing information. Transparent procedures include holding open meetings, issuing publicly available financial disclosure statements, passing freedom of information legislation and conducting budgetary reviews (Nguyea, 2016).

➤ Inclusiveness

Inclusiveness is often linked to participation, equity and diversity. Inclusiveness primarily refers to enabling people prone to marginalization - including women - to participate equally

in governance institutions and practices by voting freely in elections, by standing as elected representatives or through their involvement in other forms of governance planning and administration. Inclusiveness is as much about increasing citizen involvement in informal processes such as local consultations as it is about involvement in formal institutions (Ngueya, 2016).

➤ **Equity**

Closely linked to inclusiveness, equity refers specifically to the right of all citizens' to have an equal say in governance processes, and to benefit equally from their outcomes. This means ensuring that decision-making is informed by all voices, including those of the most vulnerable, and that resources are shared in ways that meet everyone's needs. Equity is a goal as well as a principle of governance.

➤ **Responsiveness**

Responsiveness in governance means acting on the information gathered through participatory processes in ways that benefit all citizens. This means actively listening to what citizens are saying, and providing services and policies that meet their diverse needs.

➤ **Upholding rights**

Governance institutions need to guarantee the full protection of human rights - particularly of vulnerable or marginalized people - as endorsed through the various elements of the UN human rights framework and various other instruments that set out the minimum rights that individuals should expect in different situations and circumstances. The realization of rights should also be a goal of governance. In fact the establishment and implementation of rights frameworks are at the centre of the work of some global governance institutions - such as the International Criminal Court, the UN and some of its agencies, such as the International Labour Organization (ILO). Some argue, however, that notions of universal rights contradict cultural norms and understandings (Ademiluyi, 2010).

➤ **Following the rule of law**

When governance institutions follow the rule of law this means that they abide by fair legal frameworks that are established through a consensus process and do not discriminate against anyone in society. These laws must be enforced through impartial bodies, so require the establishment of an independent judiciary and a police force that is not corrupt.

Definition of Development

Development is the process of bringing about fundamental and substantial changes in the society. It encompasses and embraces such aspects of the equality of life as social justice, equality of opportunity for all citizens, equitable distribution of income, and democratization in the development process. Thus, "Development involves not only capital accumulation and economic growth but also the condition in which a country has adequate food and job and the income inequality among them is greatly reduced". In other words, macroeconomic indicators are insufficient as development must also involve social indicators including: rising living standard, education indexes, life expectancy, literacy rate, health, material prosperity, and poverty reduction. For this reason, development should be understood as a multi-dimensional concept (Meier, 1988).

On the other hand, Seers, (1979) defined development by posing certain questions such as; what has been happening to poverty, unemployment and inequality. To him, if all three indices (poverty, unemployment and inequality) are at a relatively high rate, there is absence of development, and vice versa. It follows therefore that for a country to be classified as developed, there are parameters to look out for which are: the state of poverty, unemployment and inequality. For Todaro, (1985) buttressing on the multi-dimensional nature of the concept of development opines that it is the re-organization and re-orientation of the entire economic and social system. Ajagun, (2003), corroborates that development is a state of advancement which makes life more meaningful in its various aspects, including the economic, administrative, political, social, cultural and religious aspects. This implies that development is not about a particular aspect but it is encompassing, better still multi-dimensional depending on the point of contention.

According to Onah, (2005), development is not static but is a continuous improvement in the capacity of the individual and society to control and manipulate the forces of nature for the enhancement of the devising standard of people in a society. This definition introduces another dimension to the meaning of development, analyses the human aspect of development, that is, individuals who reside in a given state. Ahmed, (2007), also noted that development is concerned with the general upliftment in the material, social and psychological conditions of a given human society.

Gender, Good Governance and Development in Nigeria

Gender refers to the social meanings associated with being male or female, including the construction of identities, expectations, behaviour and power relationships that derive from social interaction. Those identities, practices and inequalities are, in turn, embodied in the social roles of women and men, in gender relations and in gender hierarchies (power relations between women and men) (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Scott, 1986). Gender is derived from social relations and cannot be seen as fixed and invariant over time and space, differing in this respect from the term “sex” which refers to the biological attributes of women and men. The term “gender” acknowledges that ideologies, behaviours and practices with respect to women and men are socially learned and that gender norms, practices and hierarchies vary within regions, across societies and time, and are subject to change. It also recognizes that such norms, practices and hierarchies may intersect with other socially constructed categories, such as those of race, ethnicity and/or class.

Although women participation in political activities, though, it is still difficult to find a situation where females are nominated during elections for higher positions in government. This has continued to happen because party chairmen are a man and the men hold other important positions in the party. Although women play vital role in campaigning and mobilizing support for the individual parties, it is rare to find them where power belongs. Where women are to be relegated at the back, religion, tradition and beliefs are brought into solidify the society's ground for treating women as “second” class citizens. In spite of many female organizations that have been established for sole purpose of fighting for women's rights, it is still impossible for the women acquire up to five percent (5%) position in policy making institution in the country. It is on record that women fight poverty here in Nigeria. The establishment of having cottage industries such as cassava frying industry, soap making industry, pottery industry, fish smoking industries and others, can testify to the polity initiative of women in the state. Women in Nigeria are good of mobilization and formation of co-operative societies and these are run

effectively. Besides, in any political scene or system the paramount objective of political participation is interest.

Research has shown a positive correlation between gender, good governance and development in Nigeria hence the need for it and its application. Even the World Bank has come around to acknowledge this. Since the mid-1990s the World Bank has published several reports and developed sets of governance indicators all with the theme “governance matters” (World Bank, 2007). The relationships between gender and democracy are complex. It is necessary therefore, to make a conceptual clarification of the terms gender and democracy in order to enhance understanding of the subject matter. Gender has been viewed as the socially construct attributes, opportunities and relationships associated with being male and female and which determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. Despite widespread democratization in most countries and the struggle by the feminist movements for the integration of gender balancing in the national politics of countries over the world however, women who constitute about 50% of Nigeria population still remain systematically alienated from politics and decision making process in the country.

Amongst the key indicators of good governance are; respect for human rights and basic freedoms, regular free and fair elections, the separation of powers as checks and balances; decentralised government structures, free political organizations, a free media, existence of civil society, and existence of watchdog institutions such as anti-corruption, auditor general, civilian control of the armed forces, all emphasizing accountability and transparency and central values and standards of behaviour. The good performance on these indicators indicates that the citizens do participate in the affairs of their nation and in the process have trust in their leaders to protect their rights. A citizen who lives in a country where these indicators are observed and applied feels empowered. Such empowerment at a political level leads to self-realization and actualization - capability development that reduces poverty and increases personal growth and responsibility. Through participation in local decision making institutions, grassroots or community based organizations (CBOs) including religious and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), trade unions and various political formations, citizens become the bedrock of good governance as they select and elect leaders and advocate for policy reforms.

Good governance has been recognized over the past two decades as a major policy consideration that makes a difference to development. A democratic government is more responsive to the needs of the population such as in providing opportunities in education, health and social welfare, better housing, equitable distribution of development projects including roads and other infrastructural development. Such physical projects taken to local communities and different regions usually provide some employment opportunities even though some may be temporary and business opportunities which enhance people’s quality of live. Good governance is one of the essential preconditions for development and poverty reduction. Such policy measures tend to generally improve people’s capabilities as with better education and health they are often able to experience progression in the social structure better than was possible during their parents’ generation. Although governance and poverty received close attention in development circles for the past two decades or so, it was only in 2002 that the UNDP succinctly identified and recognized the centrality of politics to development. Yet, Leftwich, (1996), emphasized the primacy of politics to development. Before then, the UNDP’s human development reports had more or less followed those of the World Bank and the International Money Fund (IMF) in over emphasizing economics, especially economic growth,

and thus down playing politics in promoting development. This has since changed. The emerging consensus is that politics, particularly governance (since its re-conceptualization), has an effect on poverty reduction - albeit not automatic. Thus, good governance has since been recognized as the “missing link” in promoting development and poverty reduction (UNDP, 2002). Governance is politics and is, therefore, a crucial determinant of the allocation of resources, especially public goods, within a country. Good governance exists where there is responsiveness, equity and consistency in the way resources are allocated to the needs especially those of the poor people. It also affects the quality of decision-making more generally, for instance, those determining economic and social policy. If governance is weak and democratic accountability is poor, then resources are more likely to be appropriated by specific interest groups that may exclude the poor and the resulting policies would be unlikely to reflect the national interest or pro-poor imperatives. A critical look indicates that women often times are good managers of their homes, and this attributes have been translated into the act of governance, with a few women in Nigeria who find themselves in the art of governance perform creditably in politics. Some scholars have agreed that giving women the opportunity in governance, much would also be achieved as they are seen to be less corrupt like their male counterparts. It is in this context that poverty reduction strategies identify and recognize good governance as one of the important pillars. This is not only meant to introduce policies that are pro-poor but to promote transparency and accountability such that policies reflect the needs of the disadvantaged.

CONCLUSION

In Conclusion, effective governance as the route to goals that include reduced poverty and gender equality, democratic, corruption-free societies and economic growth and efficiency is the best way to achieve these end goals. In the case of Nigeria, the governance institutions have hampered economic growth and development. If improvements in these institutions were to take place, development and growth would ultimately flourish.

Furthermore, governance should promote social justice and gender equality, and further the realization of the rights of all citizens. In turn, these different players assess how effective - or good - governance is on the basis of how accountable, transparent, inclusive and responsive governance institutions are to their citizens. These principles, if defined, applied and measured in ways which reflect gendered concerns, can improve the performance of governance institutions. For example, inclusive governance processes that meaningfully engage women as well as men are more likely to result in programmes that meet the needs of both, making them more effective.

Actively involving women in defining policies and processes at global, national and local levels, and in shaping the institutions that produce them, means they are likely to respond to the different needs and situations of both women and men, and contribute to gender equality. These changes should in turn result in more gender-sensitive governance. Gender-sensitive governance is also a significant means to broader social transformation because of the extent to which governance institutions help to shape perceptions of the roles men and women should play in society. Finally, women's equal participation in governance is an important end in itself - it is quite simply a basic right for women who are so often deprived of a voice in decision-making at all levels.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The implications of not mainstreaming gender into development issues are quite enormous, and this portrays great negative effects in achieving human development in Nigeria. As highlighted in this study, the strategy for gender mainstreaming in development process should ideally include gender in the spheres of community development, political participation/inclusion, economic holdings, share in wages employment in the non-agricultural sector, share in both National/State parliaments, appointive executive positions etc.

On the basis of findings, the following policy recommendations are suggested for enhancing gender equality, good governance and development in Nigeria.

- i. That good governance brings about development and gender equality in various national positions and in policy making will faster unity and also contribute to more ideas to push the country forward.
- ii. Government should engage the support of the mass media and partner with women's movement, NGOs and civil society for vehement campaign against women subordination, discrimination and stigmatization in the society.
- iii. Furthermore, education of women is useful to destroying inferiority complex and to give aspiring women courage and confidence to compete with men. Women education should target the adult population both in the cities and rural areas.
- iv. Lastly the creation of a political environment supportive of and conducive for women's participation is a responsibility of the government. Government must curb the menace of electoral violence and the use of political thugs and gangsters to suppress and witch-hunt political opponents in the country. Election Task Force should be established by the government with membership drawn from the Nigeria Police which should be on ground throughout election periods for immediate investigation of the use of political thugs and gangsters during political campaigns and voting by political parties or aspirants, and conviction of such acts through the adjudication of Election Tribunal should lead to automatic disqualification of such political party or aspirants by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).
- v. A mobilization programme on the importance of gender education is needed in our societies and the programmes can also be organized through the mass media. With that, majority of the people that live particularly in the rural areas of Nigeria can be enlightened on the value of men and women and how they can contribute to national development.
- vi. The empowerment of women is very important in Nigeria. They should be adequately equipped with vocational skills that can help them to be productive and also contributes to national development. The women development initiative is a programme that was introduced by the government of Goodluck Obele Johnathan, the President of Nigeria and it can be a good example.
- vii. Finally, there is also the need for the support of traditional and religious leaders in Nigeria. They should all give their co-operation in making gender equality a priority so that a sustainable development can be achieved in the country.

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