

## COMMUNAL PARTICIPATION AND GOOD GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

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**ABSTRACT:** *Communal participation has been a collective and progressive impetus for societal development since medieval era while popular representation is one of the indispensable pillars of good governance in modern times. The study examined the impact of communal participation on good governance in Bomadi and Patani local government areas of Delta State, Nigeria. The study investigated the practise of communal participation in the communities and wards, the extent of participation in local government affairs and the leadership style that encourages participation or representation of community members in the local government councils. Data were generated from both primary and secondary sources. Samples of 200 respondents were interviewed through the administration of questionnaire designed according to 5-point Likert scale of strongly agreed (SA) to strongly disagree (SDA). Demographic data were collected and analysed by tables of frequency and percentage. The measures of central tendency such as the mean and standard deviation were employed to analyse the three objectives adopting mean of 2.50 as agree (A) or acceptable criterion at (0.05) level of significance. Findings revealed that there was appreciable level of communal participation and representation in the two local government areas. The study recommended that, a more pragmatic involvement of community leaders in decision making, projects initiation, planning and execution be adequately demonstrated. This should be carried out through regular town hall meetings with community leaders and mass media sensitization to enhance good governance at the grassroots level.*

**KEYWORDS:** communal, participation, leadership, development, good governance

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### INTRODUCTION

Good governance is the clamour and desire of both liberal and communist states in modern world. The adjective 'good' is used to qualify 'governance' because of its imperative to meaningful, impactful and responsive governance in advanced society. Mohammed and Petri (2016) opined that 'good' was added to governance to enrich its meaning in the 1990s. Hitherto communist countries have married the ideologies of socialism and even western democracy. Communal participation also referred to as collective participation, participation and/or communal representation is an offshoot of good governance. Good governance is a consensus arrangement for the good of the majority of the society or state.

On this premise, good governance is defined as the involvement of popular participation, transparency in handling public affairs, accountability in the utilization of public finances, equity in the distribution of resources, promotion of the rule of law to check impunity and abuse of power (Ogali, 2014). Good governance is also seen as the pillar of popular participation. Based on these assertions, communal participation and good governance in any state is anchored on leadership style and the system of government. The presidential system of government operating in the United States of American (USA) is highly skewed towards democracy. It is built on the tenets of modern democracy, popular participation and the rule of law. Therefore, the nature of leadership determines the governance of the local government area.

Leadership is a mobilizing force in the development of a community. The leader shows direction which the followers should follow. In the traditional society, before colonization, our ancient communities had one form of government or the other, ranging from monarchy to democratic or egalitarian administration. The leader who might be the king or village head or group captain appointed by the people directs the affairs of the community. The Niger-Delta as a conglomerate of many nations (the Ijaw nation, the Ibibio nation, the Edo nation, the Urhobo nation the Isoko nation, the Anioma nation etc) has an egalitarian style of leadership which encourages and appreciates communal participation in the execution of community and individual works such as erection of huts (houses), construction of bridges across the tributaries that criss-cross the land, and sanitation works. Security adventures (vigilante project), celebration of annual festivals are communal activities that foster unity and peace among the people.

Communal participation in village meetings is a unifying force in traditional communities before the annexation of the landscape called Nigeria by the British Colonial masters. Usman, Deepali and Kabiru, (2018) affirmed that self-help or communal participation was a common practice of Africans before colonization. Community participation, according to Gaventa (2001) as cited in (Erim, Asor and Akpama 2015) is the involvement of people in community programmes to solving their problems. Hajer (2003) as cited in (Erim, et al, 2014) also supported the views of Gaventa (2001). He sees communal participation as a means of sustainable social development of the community. Communal participation also connotes communal representation in the local, state and federal governments in Nigeria through democratic process and appointments of officials. It is suggestive that, participation has taken a higher dimension with the intervention from formal government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and world donor agencies.

Community participation through self-help is the collective efforts of the community people harnessed to solving the felt-needs of the community. The self-help paradigm will not yield desirable result in modern times without the appropriate leadership style that will entrench good governance in running the polity. The dire need for government intervention and collaboration in community development has been canvassed by Hamijoyo (2004) submitting that top-down

relation can give way to bottom-up relationships between the community and agents intervening in the promotion of community development in our communities. The collaboration between the community people (leaders) and intervening agencies (governments) has to be cemented by initiating and executing community development projects. Hence, the study is examining the impact of communal participation on good governance in Bomadi and Patani local government areas of Delta State, Nigeria.

### **Statement of the problem**

Communal participation has been established as one of the tenets of good governance in the world. The import of community participation in building sustainable projects in the communities has also been entrenched by several studies. Participation is very important because government is all about the people (Ogali 2014). The nucleus of people in government is taken from the larger society. The people are not animals, neither are they insane and without foresight. They also think, have capacities and professional skills for solving modern issues and challenges confronting humanity. However, the narrative has dramatically changed. Communal participation is fading away in Nigeria because of communal representation in governments at local, state and federal levels. Government officials do not bother to consult with their kinsmen or community leaders before initiating projects into annual budgets. This has led to the introduction of white elephant projects which are alien and not relevant to the peculiar needs of the community people. Due to the critical factors of corruption, electoral malpractices and connivance of ruling party, the votes for the people's candidates do not count any longer. Elections are won through the back door, not by balloting. Elections may also be won through undue court process, ballot papers manoeuvring, re-addition of cancelled election's result even at the Supreme Court level, thereby upturning the result of the validly elected candidates. This has abused the purpose of communal representation, therefore frustrating the essence of community participation in democratic processes and good governance. Based on this background, the people have lost hope in the government and their participation has dwindled. It is obvious that government cannot solve all the needs of the people and the people cannot also provide for all their felt-needs alone. The need for participation and synergy of the people at the grassroots is paramount to sustainable development of the society. Hence the study is examining the impact of communal participation on good governance in Bomadi and Patani Local government areas of Delta state, Nigeria.

### **Objective of the study**

The main objective of the study is to examine the impact of communal participation on good governance in Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

- i. examine whether communal participation is practiced in our communities.
- ii. ascertain the forms of communal participation in local government affairs.

- iii. identify the leadership style that accommodates communal participation in local government administration.

### **Significance of the study**

The study will be beneficial to the following stakeholders namely: governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), policy makers, community administrators, development partners and other researchers. The findings of the study will assist policy makers to develop viable policies and programmes that will facilitate communal participation in the development of the community. Community leaders and administrators will be abreast with modern ways of participating in community development projects. Development officials and partners will also be fed with innovations and sound ideas in fast-tracking socio-economic development in the local communities. Through the findings and recommendations of the study, government and non-governmental organizations will identify problems confronting the progress of these communities and proffer relevant measures towards addressing them. In conclusion, the study will help all stakeholders in community development projects to work as a team. Hitherto, conflicts among them would be jettisoned for collective oriented programmes for public good. This will enhance peace and mutual co-operation between community people and other stakeholders in the community.

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE.**

#### **Concept of Good Governance**

The noun ‘governance’ is technically defined as the act of managing the resources of a country. It connotes the way a nation is governed. The verb ‘govern’ means to legally control a country by introducing laws that regulates its public and private services (Oxford Dictionary, 2015). According to the Commission on Global Governance (1995) as cited in Ogalli (2014) defines governance as the sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private manage their common affairs. This includes formal institutions and regimes empowered to enforce compliance as well as informal arrangements that people and institutions either have agreed to or perceive to be in their interest. Considering the definition propounded by the Commission on Global Governance, governance could mean any structural arrangement that oversees the affairs of a nation and compel her citizens to comply to the dictates of the laws. This structure may be a democratic, monarchical or autocratic government.

The absence of good governance presupposes bad governance. Hanatu (2014) painted the picture of bad governance in Nigeria as a country that is grossly underdeveloped. A country ruled by sentiments, ethnic bias and religious inclinations may not develop. Nigeria as a country is suffering from socio and political instability, abject poverty, gross electoral malpractices, judicial

misjudgement and rascality, severe youth unemployment, poor health-care facilities, insurgency and terrorism, corruption and abuse of power. Despite the fact that, Nigeria gained self-governance since 1960, the country is still groping in darkness due to failure of leadership. Ogali (2014) pointed out that, apart from the troubles of civil wars, coups and counter-coups, religious riots in Nigeria, the greatest tragedy that had befallen the country is leadership failure. Hanatu (2014) also sees governance as the major problem in African and by extension, Nigeria. These national problems can be traced to the absence of good governance, democratic growth and development.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as cited in Ogali (2014) defines good governance as the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority, to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It comprises mechanisms, processes and institution through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences. Waziri (2009 as cited in Edih (2017) explained that good governance is administered or structured upon three legs namely, the economic, political and administrative legs. Accordingly, economic governance includes decision making processes that affect a country's economic activities and its relationships with other economies. This has implications on equitable distribution of resources among the sectors of the economy, poverty reductions and quality of life of citizenry. Political governance entails the process of formulating laws and policies that regulate the electoral processes to ensure credible, free and fair elections and peaceful transition of government in the country. On the other hand, administrative governance is the system of routine policy and programmes implementation by the institutions of government.

Good governance encourages inclusion in all aspects of administration and bridges the gap between the leaders and the led. Bad governance may create dichotomy as demonstrated in the third world countries. Good governance is a higher dimension of governance. It is not just governance which is any form of organized arrangement where a leader either elected or self-imposed controls the affairs of a group of people or a state through democratic process or autocratic fiat. This does not mean that autocratic form of government such as in communist states cannot administer or pursue the tenets of good governance. USSR or Russia which was a communist country is one of the developed nations of the world. This may call for another debate. Through good governance, the citizens are carried along in the various stages of policy planning and implementation processes.

Hout as cited in Salih (2003) explains that good governance lays emphasis on economic liberation policies and the reduction of the role of state in the economy. This encourages privatization of business oriented sectors of the economy to private hands. Leadership, good governance and participation have been identified as the vehicles towards achieving the economic policy of liberalization, job creation and poverty reduction in an economy. Neo-liberal economies, according to World Bank will grow their economies through development strategies like

privatization, diversification and liberalization. Good governance involves justice, equity, protection of lives and property, enhanced participation, preservation of the rule of law and improved living standard of the people. It is about the performance capacity of a government and/or as it relates to leadership capability.

The Nigerian experience during the Covid'19 pandemic showed the absence of good governance in the country. The primary duty of government is the preservation of lives and properties. The federal and states government were constrained to impose lockdown for 28 days which commenced from 1<sup>st</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> April, 2020. That was a right step to curtail the spread of the deadly and contagious virus but without palliatives to cushion the effects of hunger. This fueled the adage that says "a hungry man is an angry man who can do anything to survive". Several lives were lost through gunshots by security officers who were on patrol to enforce the Covid'19 lockdown order. It was recorded that police officers and soldiers shot at a cyclist in Warri and two protesters at Sapele in Delta State and another person was also shot dead in Abia State. The novel Covid'19 pandemic did not kill the Nigerian people as predicted but gun shots did. However, riots also took place in Ohio in USA, but there was no record of gun shot at all. This exemplifies maturity and embodiment of good governance in developed world. If the primary aim of government is to ensure security and welfare of the people, why a total lockdown order without welfare palliative for the hungry populace? Just imagine the contradictions in Nigeria!.

### **Characteristics of Good governance**

For the purpose of this study, four elements of good governance relevant to the study are discussed as follows:

#### **Participation:**

The participation of eligible citizens in governance is paramount to the development of the community, state and country. Participation is very important because government is all about the people. Remember, governance is a social contract between government and the governed. Therefore, a government that alienates its people will find it difficult to succeed and this may result to revolution in various manners. Participation could be direct or indirect through representation in government. Effective representation requires an informed and organized populace armed with laws and institutions that promote freedom of expression and association as enshrined in 1999 constitution (Waziri, 2009, Hanatu, 2004, Ogali, 2004 and Edih, 2017).

In Nigeria, communal representation is a mirage. The so-called elections are not elections because the votes of the electorates do not count. According to Ogali (2014), government officials act on behalf of the people and refuse to consult with them in matters relevant to community development. This resulted to the execution of white-elephant projects and most times, remain

abandoned. Alienating the people from policy formulation and programmes implementation is a colossal waste of resources to the nation. Popular participation is indispensable to people-focused projects. Community participation leads to consensus building and development of the community. Government is therefore advised to practice an inclusive administration which encourages popular participation.

### **Rule of law.**

In a constitutional democracy, the law reigns supreme. The constitution is the supreme law of land. The constitution is severally described as the supreme law, the organic law and the grund norm of the land. The government in power is not above the law. The three organs of government must carry out their functions according to law. Any contravention is unconstitutional. However, the immunity clause in the Nigerian constitution contrasts this provision. The immunity clause constitutionally insulates the president, vice president, the governors and deputy-governors from prosecution during their tenure.

In the developed world, governance is based on the rule of law. We are all equal before the law. The rule of law is founded on three canons according to Prof A. V. Dicey (1763). He postulated that, no man is punishable or can be lawfully made to suffer in body or goods except for a distinct breach of the law, no man is above the ordinary law and that the government and the people must conform to the general principles of the constitution (Appadorai, 2004).

However, in Nigeria, under the military rule for over 35 years, the constitution was suspended by Decree No 1 and the country was ruled by decrees and edicts. The courts or judiciary was disbanded from entertaining any matter that affects the state. Since 1999, when the military once again handed over power to a democratically elected president, it was Yar'adua and Goodluck Jonathan who were 'pure civilians' presidents, others elected presidents were re-incarnation of the military regimes and decrees. Obasanjo and Buhari were former military heads of state in Nigeria. A leopard can never change its colour, so never expect democratic rule from indoctrinated military men. A military leader has only one option to resolving crises in Africa- shoot at sight command or quell insurrection with weaponry. The barrel of gun according to Nwabueze (SAN) is the power of military regimes. The Odi massacre during Obasanjo's administration was executed by barrels of gun. Ogali (2014) posited that the rule of law strengthens accountability, transparency and democracy. Due to the weakness of the rule of law, judicial bias and abuse of power, corrupt politicians and leaders are swaying large in Nigeria. Only God will salvage this country!

### **Consensus oriented**

Nigerian is a plural state. Our society is made of individuals who hold diverse viewpoints and perspectives on issues that concern the nation (Waziri, 2001). Ogali (2014) opined that modern

nations are hardly homogenous. The heterogeneous nature of modern society requires government to mobilize a consensus orientation among its citizens. Good governance employs processes that allow different interests to find common ground on national issues. To resolving the rise for secession, inter-ethnic wars, bickering, rivalry and religious bigotry, the call for national conference for dialogue is long overdue.

### **Strategic vision**

A strategic vision is a long term projection for growth and development for a country. The vision is usually initiated by the founding fathers of any nation. Nigeria, being a plural state must have a unifying vision for the country. A model of governance that accommodates the diverse interests of the different nationalities in the country should be adhered to. The holy bible affirms that my people are perishing for lack of vision and knowledge. Vision is the pilots' compass. Nigeria has no compass. It has no direction. It has no government. That is why the Nigerian ship is sailing in the widest ocean without docking. Thank God it has not sunk yet. The country may have a vision, but the leaders who will guide the country in the path of this national vision are yet unborn. This led Ayikwei Armah titled his literary work "The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born".

### **Nigeria's Model for Good Governance**

Chapter II of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 is the model for good governance for the country. The chapter is made up of 12 sections comprising sections 13-24 accordingly. The study selected sections 14, 15, 16 and 17 to explain some ideals of good governance enshrined in the supreme law of the country.

#### **Section 14.**

1. The Federal Republic of Nigeria shall be a state based on the principles of democracy and social justice.
2. It is hereby, accordingly declared that:
  - a. Sovereignty belongs to the people of Nigeria
  - b. The security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government
  - c. The participation by the people in their government shall be ensured in accordance with the provisions of the constitution.
3. The composition of the Government of the Federation or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such a matter as to reflect the Federal Character of Nigeria.



### **Section 15**

1. The motto of the Federal Republic of Nigeria shall be Unity and Faith, Peace and Progress.
2. Accordingly, national integration shall be actively encouraged whilst discrimination on the grounds of place of origin, sex, religion, status, ethnic or linguistic association or ties shall be prohibited.

### **Section 16.**

1. The state shall within the context of the ideals and objectives for which provisions are made in this constitution ...
- b. Controls the national economy in such manner as to secure the maximum welfare, freedom and happiness of every citizen on the basis of social justice and equality of status and opportunity...
- d. That suitable and adequate shelter, suitable and adequate food, reasonable national minimum living wage, old wage care and pensions, unemployment, sick benefits and welfare of the disabled are provided for all citizens ...

### **Section 17**

1. The state social order is founded on ideals of freedom, equality and justice...
- 2b. The sanctity of the human person shall be recognized and human dignity shall be maintained and enhanced.

By interpretation, the various definitions of good governance revolve round these noble ideals in chapter II of the 1999 constitution. It is an obligatory governance guide to all successive governments in the country. The puzzling question is where lies the problem of poor governance? The implementation of the principle of Federal Character, Social justice and Equality spelt out in this chapter is grossly abused by governments. It was abused in the creation of states and local government areas. Some states have 44 local government areas (Kano State) while others have just 8 local government areas (Bayelsa). States and local government were created by the military based on land mass at the expense of water mass though the water mass area produces wealth for the nation.

The purpose of the federal character, social justice and equality has also been defeated in the appointment of persons into federal parastatals and employments into the civil service. This lopsidedness was very prominent in the Buhari/Osinbanjo government because most of the federal appointments were given to people from Northern states. Likewise, the recruitment into the directorate of State Security Service (SSS) in 2017 was another shocker, woeful disappointment and clear marginalization. Official records showed that Katsina State had 51 slots while Delta State had just 8 Slots. Is this not sentiment? These may be the reasons why the Niger-Deltans, the

Biafrans and the Yorubas are ceaselessly clamouring civilly and radically for self-determination since 1966/67. The time has come for a round-table talk by all components of this loose federated state. The agitation for total restructuring of the country is dire.

### **Concept of Leadership**

Leadership is the position occupied by a leader. It is the position of being a leader. The leader is the person who leads a group of people, an organization or a country. There is no society without a leader. A leaderless society or country is bound to disintegrate because there will be no vision, no command, no control, no direction and no influence on the people. Leaders could emerge by birth, by election or appointed or by self-imposition. This led to the different forms of leadership style in our society. Ogali (2014) asserts that the emergence of leadership in our society is supported by management theories such as the greatman, trait, and behavioural theories. The Great Man theory canvasses the belief that some men are born great, born to rule, destined to dominate the people and so on.

Leadership style has been classified into three namely; authoritarian, democratic and laissez-faire. The authoritarian leadership has domineering, dictatorial and autocratic postures. The authoritarian leader imposes tasks and methods on his subordinates. He dictates policies and procedures with little or no group participation. Mc-Gregor (1960) believed that human beings are of mix behavioural traits. He stressed that men have inherent dislike for work and must be coerced by control and even threatened with punishment to enable them to work. Mc-Gregor's theory supported the views of the authoritarian leader (Obi, 2001 as cited in Erim et al 2015). Communal participation in this case will be enforced by threat of punishment.

The democratic leader emerges through popular selection process carried out by the people because sovereignty belongs to them in a constitutional democracy. The people are allowed to participate through the electoral process. This will result to communal representation in the central government. Democratic leadership gives strength to the feeling of personal dignity and self-respect among the people (Edem 2003 as cited in Erim et al 2015). It is the leadership style that fosters communal participation in the execution of sustainable social projects for the community (Chaskin, 2007). Blair (2000) also asserts that community members are given the leverage to participate in decision that affects them in a participatory democracy.

Participation is also regarded as the people inseparable rights in the decision making process of the community or state. Erim et al (2015) sums it up that, communal participation and democratic leadership are positively and significantly related. They are nurtured to establish and execute a social welfare projects for the people. Democratic leadership enhances good governance and participation. The leaders and the followers interact and decide on the policies and programmes meant to speed up projects execution for community development.

While laissez-faire leadership style gives total freedom to the people to decide what they want. The leader is characterized by indecision and indifference. He is a leader without backbone. Edem (2003 as cited in Erim et al 2015) contends that laissez-faire leader is inherently a vacillating and indifferent person. He rarely initiates policies, programmes and actions. In fact he has no vision for the community, state or country which he leads. Donne (2009) regards him as a figure head in a formal leadership position that does not encourage active participation. He cannot make quality decisions that will improve the living standard of his people.

Stiglitz (2002 as cited in Ogali 2014) posits that great nation produces great leader who in turn make their nation great. However, Dora Akunyili, former Director General of NAFDAC (2001-2008), propounded a slogan to rebrand Nigeria, “great people, great Nation”. The people make the nation great. Great leaders promote the nation and propel subordinates to produce giant strides in human endeavours. Without great visioners, there can be no great nation. This aroused Chinua Achebe’s conclusion that, the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely failure of leadership. There is nothing wrong with the Nigerian landscape... the country is in dire need of true leadership who will encourage full participation in its governance process (Ogali, 2014).

### **Governance Structure in Bomadi and Patani Local Government Areas**

There are 774 local government areas in Nigeria. Local government is the government closest to the people. It is also regarded as the third-tier of government because in Nigeria, the structure of governance is divided into three-tiers (federal, state and local governments). The third-tier of government is constituted to ensure grassroots governance. Bomadi and Patani local government areas are among the 25 local government areas of Delta State. Nigeria is made up of 36 states and Abuja as the Federal Capital Territory. Nigeria as a geographical expression according to the late Sage, Chief, Obafemi Awolowo, is further balkanized for administrative reason into six geopolitical groups- South –South, South–East, South–West, North–Central, North–East and North–West. Delta State is situate in the South- South political region of the country. The south–south zone comprises of six oil producing states which are Delta, Rivers, Cross-river, Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa and Edo.

To ensure smooth and representative administration that promotes good governance at the grassroots level, each local government area is also divided into political wards. There are ten federal wards in every local government area. In Delta State, there are also political wards created by the state government referred to as state wards. These wards vary according to the population of local government area. During the government of Chief James Ibori (1999-2007), the state government created 10 state wards for Bomadi and 9 wards for Patani local government areas.

The structural arrangement for governance in the local government areas in Nigeria are nearly the same. The local government structure is made up of the executive chairman, vice chairman,

secretary, supervisors and councillors. The chairman, vice- chairman and councillors are elected through a democratic process organized and supervised by the State Independent Electoral Commission. In Delta State, the Delta State Independent Electoral Commission (DSIEC) handles all electoral matters in the state. While other government officials like the supervisors, secretary and advisers are appointed by the chairman of council. The chairman and his cabinet form the executive arm of government and the councillors constitute the legislative arm of the government. Local government areas do not have separate judiciary that adjudicates on local disputes or matters. That means, the federal and state courts entertain matters brought from the local government areas. The local governments do not also have their local police because security is an exclusive function of the federal government. During these elections, the chairman and vice-chairman and the 19 or 20 councillors are elected to represent their respective wards. These wards are made up of communities. These communities have representatives in the administration at the local government council. This representation is termed modern communal participation in their local affairs.

In African traditional setting, kings relate with kings, clans relate with clans, communities interact with communities and people live together as one in the society. In this regard, inter –communities and inter-kingdoms relationship is consummated through intra and inter communal dialogue, participation and integration to foster peace and unity among the people. It is the sustaining peace and tranquillity that transforms into community development. There was no formal arrangement known as government. Modern approach to governance, top-down control and subjugation is alien to the African society. Communal participation encourages egalitarian society which allows individual's achievement and fame.

At the various community levels, the local administrative structure is likewise similar. Every community has the elder council (Amakosowei-tu) the women group (Ere-otu), the community chairman and his cabinet and the youth assembly. The king or High chief (The Ebenana owei and Ala-oweis) is the head of the kingdom or clan comprising several communities. He is the supreme overseer of the affairs of the kingdom/clan. In deciding community or kingdoms projects and development, various leadership groups are mobilized to offer their talents, skills and money power to execute meaningful projects and programmes for the people.

In modern democracy, community participation has been transformed into communal representation at the local council, state and federal governments. Communal representation is done through the electoral processes and by appointment of competent party members into offices. This is the bane of the bias political clause which states that the ruling party takes all. Communal representation has its own gains and disadvantages which could be avoided. The whole idea of representation is to present the needs and challenges the ward people are facing to the local and

central government for solutions. However, this novel reason has been abused by corrupt politicians and bad governance in Nigeria.

Those elected or selected and appointed are selfish and greedy. They forget the people whom they are constitutionally representing and also fail to deliver on their campaign promises and party's manifestos. The people and community leaders are never consulted on matters affecting the community. What you see, is imposition of irrelevant projects which are later abandoned.

### **Communal Participation and Good Governance.**

Foregoing discussions and reviews have drawn a connection between communal participation, leadership and good governance. The central role played by responsible and credible leaders in ensuring people's participation through the enforcement of the ideals of good governance has also been entrenched in the study. Participation or communal representation has equally been demonstrated as one of the pillars of good governance in modern society. Due to the effects of globalization on independent nations reinforcing bilateral and multilateral relationships, communal participation has taken new and higher dimensions in governance.

Traditionally, communal participation refers to progressive relationships among the people in a community. This could mean the way of life of the people consolidating on the avowed customs, norms and indelible values of the ancient past. It thus connotes the collective will, brotherliness and togetherness displayed by the people in a given community. Communal participation may also be described as the traditionally entrenched and acceptable behaviours of the people assembling to pursue a common goal that will boost their collective welfare and development. It therefore involves the approaches of dialoguing in the village square or village meetings to suggest methods of executing sustainable projects and programmes that will improve on their standard of living.

In this narrow perspective, the different leadership structures design their mode and time of discussion and generate meaningful and developmental ideas for the progress of the community. Often times, members of the community give donations in cash and kind for building a particular project, say a community hall. In the bible days, King David provided building materials and huge financial resources for the construction of God's temple in Jerusalem. The able bodied men and women are usually assigned the role of securing the land and waging war against external aggression when the need arises. The need to fraternize with other communities is handled by the elder's council who knows the ancient landmarks among neighbouring communities and villages

Several activities are embarked on in the rural communities. Traditional societies have special days for farm works, marketing and celebration of festivals. These activities enhance their socio-economic and socio-cultural attributes among them. They equally have native laws that regulate daily affairs. The traditional court system of swearing to an oath before the gods in order to settle

very serious disputes between two warring factions was highly dependable and revered by the people. In fact, communal participation in African society is voluntary and total. It is the origin of good governance in Africa. No wonder, literature attested to it that Africa (Egypt) was the cradle of civilization.

However, in modern times, the people are wiser and more informed with knowledge and technologies. The formal system of government has taken over the informal leadership and governance structures in African society through colonization. Nigeria got her independence in 1960 from Britain and kicked-off self-governance with Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa as the Prime Minister and Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe as the President in a parliamentary system of government bequeathed to us as by the British government.

The entrenchment of democratic rule in Nigeria, led to a representative form of government at the centre according to the three major geopolitical zones in the 60's namely the Northern, Western and Eastern regions. Subsequently in 1963, due to political upheavals and on the recommendation of Willink's Commission, for the recognition of the minorities in the Nigerian polity, the defunct Mid-Western region was carved out of the old western geopolitical group. Since independence, Nigeria has experienced a diarchic form of government. The military had ruled the country through coup de tat and the civilian had governed same through flawed electoral process. In the past 60 years of self-rule, the military ruled Nigeria for about 35 years causing several political distortions through the promulgation of obnoxious decrees and edicts resulting to the suspension of the constitution for years.

The military always asserts reasons each time they took over power. They label the civilian or military government as incompetent, bias and corrupt. Mostly, the political class are accused of abuse of power, embezzlement of public fund and causes grievous divisions along religious inclinations. However, it is disheartening to submit that the military who alleged that a democratically elected government was highly corrupt were the worst. They glue to power waiting for another successful coup. Because of its tenacity to power, which is unconstitutional and uncivil, National Democratic Coalition of Nigeria (NADECO) was formed in 1994 to chase them into their usual confines – the barrack

Consequent upon these disruptions and upheavals in government for the past 60 years, good governance is far from reach in Nigeria. The seeds of division, religious bigotry, ethnic rivalries, and bad governance had been sown into the minds of successive governments and Nigerians. Coups are plotted and executed along ethnic lineage with ulterior motive for revenge and ethnic cleansing. The 1966 coup which toppled General Aguyi Ironsi junta was labelled as a revenged coup for the killing of the Prime Minister, Alhaji Tafawa Balewa and other Northern personalities. This was the genesis of revenge mission in Nigeria.

These are some of the reasons why the southern part of Nigeria is agitating for self governance since the reign of late Isaac Adaka Boro in 1965/66 for Niger Deltans, The Biafrans headed by Late General Odumegwu Ojukwu embarked on 3 years civil war for self-rule in 1967-70 and the Oduduwas Republic is also agitating for freedom. Nigeria is in a state of confusion and disintegration. This political pandemonium in Nigeria was philosophically and poetically described by a renowned literacy scholar Chinua Achebe in his literary text. The late icon, wrote in his bestselling novel “Things Fall Apart” that ‘turning and turning in the widening gyre, the falcon cannot hear the falconer, things fall apart, the centre cannot hold, mere anarchy has loosen upon the world”. The country must be salvaged through popular participation, rule of law, purposeful leadership and good governance. The need to resuscitate the African spirit of communalism is now. Participatory democracy must be practiced in Nigeria. The several calls for national dialogue has to be entertained by the government if Nigeria must remain united and indivisible. Based on these discussions, it is evident that communal participation through popular representation in governments is the key to good governance in Nigeria.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

We are not bothering ourselves with the different dimensions of governance theories and models of governance as there are several scholars in the field of management and other social sciences. Despite interpretational and contextual differences in governance theories and models, they are closed related being people-oriented, integrated and decentralized local government system (Mohammed & Petri 2016). According to Farazmand (2002) we should be thinking globally and acting locally. Werlin (2003 cited in Mohammed and Petri 2016) added that governance has political elasticity adjustable to suit the socio-cultural and political realities of the state, region or locality. Farazmand (2013) also highlights that there is no single ideal model of governance for all seasons, which is applicable to all nations and communities across the world.

Accordingly, complementary elements in the different governance theories will be assembled to suit the context of this study. The thoughts of Mintzberg (1996) on the normative-control model and Peter (2001) on the participatory state model were adopted for the study.

Normative-control model is anchored on values and norms orientation rather than governance structures and systems. The model itemized five important elements which include selection, socialization, guidance, responsibility and judgement. The model demonstrates that people (leaders) should be chosen by values and attitudes rather than just paper credentials and that membership be dedicated to an integrated social system. This emphasizes communalism and an acceptable laws and principles which guide their daily interactions. There should be shared responsibilities among people in the community and their performance judged by experienced people void of sentiments and corruption.

Peter (2001) cemented the normative control model of Mintzberg (1996) by advocating his participatory model which promotes greater individual and collective participation by segments of government organisation hitherto excluded from decision making process. He laid emphasis on popular participation in the governance process since good governance entails participatory democracy.

## METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

The study was carried out in Bomadi and Patani Local government areas of Delta state, Nigeria. The random sampling technique was employed in selecting 10 wards out of the 20 Federal wards in the two Local government areas and the stratified sampling technique was used to classify the respondents according to the communities' leadership structures in the local government areas. The quota sampling method was equally employed to assign the number of respondents to each leadership component. The combination of probability and non-probability sampling methods were therefore used for the study to achieve its objectives.

In each ward, 20 members were systematically selected to arrive at 200 community members. The study employed a structured questionnaire designed according to the Likert scale. The questionnaire was divided into 3 sections according to the objective of the study. Data collected from respondents were presented in tables of frequency and percentage distribution to determine the demographic arrangement of respondents. The statistical measures of central tendency and deviation such as mean and standard deviation were applied to analyse the 3 objectives using means of 2.50 as Agree (A) acceptability and (0.05) level of significance. The community leadership structure adopted for study is as follows:

| <b>Structure</b>                      | <b>No of Respondents</b> |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Chairman and Executives            | 50                       |
| 2. King's Administrative Council      | 30                       |
| 3. Elders' Council                    | 30                       |
| 4. Community Women Council            | 30                       |
| 5. Civil Servants                     | 50                       |
| 6. Ward representatives (Councillors) | 10                       |
|                                       | <u>200</u>               |



## DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

**4.1 Table 1: Demography of respondents used in the study**

| S/N | PROFILE         |                | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE<br>% |
|-----|-----------------|----------------|-----------|-----------------|
| 01  | Gender          | Male           | 164       | 82.0            |
|     |                 | Female         | 36        | 18.0            |
|     |                 | Total          | 200       | 100             |
| 02  | Age group       | 18-25          | 35        | 17.5            |
|     |                 | 26-30          | 50        | 25.0            |
|     |                 | 31-35          | 60        | 30.0            |
|     |                 | 36-above       | 55        | 27.5            |
|     |                 | Total          | 200       | 100             |
| 03  | Education level | Primary        | 50        | 25.0            |
|     |                 | Secondary      | 60        | 30.0            |
|     |                 | Diploma        | 55        | 27.5            |
|     |                 | Degree above   | 35        | 17.5            |
|     |                 | Total          | 200       | 100             |
| 04  | Occupation      | Civil servants | 50        | 25.0            |
|     |                 | Business men   | 45        | 22.5            |
|     |                 | Farmers        | 65        | 32.5            |
|     |                 | Artisans       | 30        | 15.0            |
|     |                 | Politicians    | 10        | 5.0             |
|     |                 | Total          | 200       | 100             |

*field survey, 2020*

Result in **Table 1**, indicates that male constituted the highest number of respondents representing 82% while, female constituted only 18% of the total respondents. Respondents within the age bracket of 31-45 years had the highest number representing 30% closely followed by respondents within the age group of 36 and above representing 27.5% which demonstrates maturity and experience required in leadership. While respondents within the age group of 18-25 years and 26-30 years constituted 17.5% and 25% of the total respondents respectively. This showed that youths are actively involved in decision making process of these wards and communities. On the education stratum, primary school leaving certificate was the least qualification of leaders in the two local government areas. This is an indication that most community leaders can read and write. In similar vein, respondents with secondary education had 30% followed by respondents with Diploma qualification constituting 27.5%.

The table also showed that 35 respondents had university degree representing 17.5% of the total respondents showing improvement in literacy level in the local government areas. On occupational level, majority of respondents are farmers representing 32.5% followed by civil servants representing 25.0% of the total respondents. Businessmen and Artisans represent 22.5% and 15% of the total respondents respectively while the political class constitutes only 5% of total respondents.

**4.2 Table 2: Communal participation is practised in rural communities and how?**

| S/n | items  | Total | Mean | S.D  | Decision |
|-----|--|-------|------|------|----------|
| 0.5 | Community people participate in local projects                           | 200   | 4.50 | 0.50 | SA       |
| 0.6 | Participation is voluntary and by invitation                             | 200   | 4.45 | 0.49 | SA       |
| 0.7 | Local people support individual projects                                 | 200   | 4.00 | 0.00 | a        |
| 0.8 | Communities hold town hall meetings                                      | 200   | 4.50 | 0.50 | sa       |
| 0.9 | Members of community supports project through cash and kind              | 200   | 4.25 | 0.43 | A        |
| 10  | Community people build community schools, bore-hole water, etc           | 200   | 4.00 | 0.00 | A        |
| 11  | Mild disputes and settled at community level                             | 200   | 5.00 | 0.00 | SA       |
| 12  | Members of community join vigilante outfit to enhance community policing | 200   | 4.00 | 0.00 | A        |
|     | Aggregate means & Standard deviation                                     | 200   | 4.34 | 0.24 | A        |

*Computed by researcher 2020.*

**Table 2** presented the mean and standard deviations of respondents' responses on the continued existence of communal participation in rural communities' development projects in Bomadi and Patani local government areas in Delta State, Nigeria. Result indicated that, items 05-12 had mean ratings of 4.50, 4.45, 4.00, 4.50, 4.25, 4.00, 5.00 and 4.00 with corresponding standard deviations as 0.50, 0.49, 0.00, 0.50, 0.43, 0.00, 0.00 and 0.00. Since the mean ratings are greater than 2.50 target criterion level for accepting an item, it therefore means that the respondents agreed that there is high extent of communal participation in community development.

Additionally, the cluster or aggregate mean (4.34) with standard deviation of 0.34 showed a high degree of community participation since it also above the target mean score of 2.50. This proves that there is high existence of communal participation in community development projects or matters within the community landscape of interactions and relationships. Gaventa and Hajer (as cited in Erim et al) strongly supported the view that communal participation leads to societal development.

**4.3 Table 3: Communal participation in local government council affairs and how?**

| S/N | ITEMS  | TOTAL | MEAN ( $\bar{X}$ ) | S.D  | DECISION |
|-----|--|-------|--------------------|------|----------|
| 13  | Council consult with community leadership structure  | 200   | 2.75               | 0.83 | A        |
| 14  | Council holds town hall meetings with communities  | 200   | 2.50               | 0.77 | A        |
| 15  | Communities have representatives in council eg Councillors, supervisors & advisers                             | 200   | 5.00               | 0.00 | SA       |
| 16  | Council allows community to initiate projects as part of council's budget                                      | 200   | 2.50               | 0.87 | A        |
| 17  | Kings and high chiefs are appointed as council chairman's advisers   | 200   | 1.75               | 1.23 | N/A      |
| 18  | Council consult with civil servants on community projects  | 200   | 1.75               | 1.23 | N/A      |
| 19  | Council sensitizers the local people on pandemic diseases and imitate control measures eg Covid'19 and others. | 200   | 4.00               | 0.00 | A        |
| 20  | Council supports community projects through donations.   | 200   | 3.00               | 1.00 | A        |
|     | Aggregate mean & standard deviation  | 200   | 2.91               | 0.74 | A        |

*Compiled by the researcher 2020.*

**Table 3 presented the mean and standard deviations of respondents' responses on the level Nigeria. of communal participation in Bomadi and Patani local government areas of Delta State.**

The result showed that items 13-20 had mean ratings of 2.75, 2.50, 5.00, 2.50, 1.75, 1.75, 4.00 and 3.0 with their respective standard deviations of 0.83, 0.77, 0.00, 0.87, 1.23, 1.23, 0.00 and 1.00. The mean rating for item 17 and 18 is 1.75 which is lower than the acceptable criterion of 2.50. Which means that council chairman does not appoint kings or high chiefs as adviser and does not also consult with civil servants in the local government council. This is not a wise decision or operational order where civil servants are only seen but not heard. However, the aggregate mean rating is 2.91 and standard deviation is 0.74 showing an acceptable score. This shows that communal participation in local government administration is encouraging in Bomadi and Patani local government areas, Delta State, Nigeria. The 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria guarantees a democratic process through which local, state and Federal representatives are selected.

**4.4 Table 4: leadership style that accommodates communal participation**

| S/N | ITEMS   | TOTAL | MEAN $\bar{X}$ | S.D  | DECISION |
|-----|---|-------|----------------|------|----------|
| 21  | Chairman and councillors are educated             | 200   | 5.00           | 0.00 | SA       |
| 22  | Supervisors and advisers are appointed            | 200   | 5.00           | 0.00 | SA       |
| 23  | Chairman accepts advice from appointees           | 200   | 2,50           | 0.87 | A        |
| 24  | Councillors make bye laws and chairman assents    | 200   | 3.00           | 1.00 | A        |
| 25  | Budgets are approved by the councillors           | 200   | 3.00           | 1.00 | A        |
| 26  | Projects are executed across the communities      | 200   | 2.2            | 0.82 | N/A      |
| 27  | Councillors can impeach chairman on breach of law | 200   | 1.00           | 0.00 | N/A      |
| 28  | Impeachment process is cumbersome                 | 200   | 5.00           | 0.00 | SA       |
| 29  | Chairman and team respect traditional fathers     | 200   | 2.50           | 0.87 | A        |
| 30  | Chairman supports community projects              | 200   | 2.50           | 0.87 | A        |
|     | Aggregate mean and standard deviation             | 200   | 3.96           | 0.69 | A        |

*Computed by the researcher, 2020*

Result in Table 4 showed that items 21-30 had mean ratings of 5.00, 5.00, 2.50, 3.00, 3.00, 2.2, 1.00, 5.00, 2.50 and 2.50 with standard deviations of 0.00, 0.00, 0.87, 1.00, 1.00, 0.82, 0.00, 0.00, 0.87 and 0.87 respectively. The mean ratings for item 17 and 18 fell below the acceptable criterion of 2.50 which denote that there was political bias in projects execution and that the council chairman cannot be impeached for any gross abuse of the constitution and oath of office by the councillors alone. This is an impunity to bad governance. However, the aggregate mean rating is 3.96 and standard deviation is 0.69 showing an acceptable leadership style is operational in the two local government areas. This acceptability correlates with a democratic leadership style which affirms Chaskin (2007) and Blair (2000) submissions that democratic leadership style fosters communal participation and enhances participatory democracy.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusion

Communal participation and popular representation have been established by scholars as key components of good governance in the world. Good governance is all about the people and without popular participation there cannot be good governance but mere governance. This is the major reason for adding the adjective 'good' to the noun 'governance' in the 90's. It has also been entrenched that community participation in ancient past is the traditional model of good governance in Africa. In traditional trend, the entire members of the community are mobilized in making decisions for the progress, peace and unity of the community. Communal participation

therefore entails popular participation, popular representation, and consultation of stake holders, consensus orientation, and adherence to the rule of law as well as entrenching community vision for its overall development. The study had the following specific findings, that communal participation is practiced by communities in Bomadi and Patani Local Government Areas of Delta State, Nigeria; that, communities and wards are represented in the local government council administration through elected chairmen, councillors and appointed supervisors and advisers. However, participation is not well entrenched in the local government council. Lastly, the community leadership structure and the local government councils operate a democratic and egalitarian leadership model.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the fore goings, the study recommends as follows:

That government should evolve a more pragmatic administrative approach by partnering and consulting with community leaders in decision making, projects initiation, planning and execution.

That government should effect communal participation through regular town hall meetings with community leaders and good governance and mass media sensitization to enhance good governance at the grassroots level.

And to ensure quality representation at the local government through popular participation, credible, free and fair elections be conducted by the state electoral umpire (Delta State Independent Electoral Commission, DSIEC).

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