

## ASSESSMENT OF GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNANCE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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### Abstract

This paper Assessed the activities of the Government and Governance on Economic Development in Nigeria. It was discussed under the following dimensions:

- The process of Election.
- Implementation of Federal Government Policies and manifestoes.
- Implementation of the State Government policies and manifestoes.

The study unveiled the abnormalities in Government and Governance in Nigerian, with focus on the process of election, implementation of Federal Government policies, and the implementation of the State government policies. High level and wide spread abnormalities were observed. Generally, Nigeria is faced with many problems, which include unfair government, misexpenditure, high inflation of goods and services, foreign exchange rate volatility, low productivity, poor infrastructure, hunger, insecurity, armed robbery, cyber crime among other things. As the situation is now, with the inherent abnormalities, Nigeria is tottering in the brink of economic dilemma, due to misappropriation which has negatively affected the economy. The paper therefore recommends that, there should be biannual workshops/seminars on value re-orientation, ethical standard living, responsibilities, good moral and empathic rejuvenation for who will be, and those occupying political offices, from the Presidency to the State, down to the Local Government Areas, among other things.

**Keywords:** Government, governance, abnormalities and Economic development

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### Introduction

Many definitions of abnormality have been proposed over the years, none has won total acceptance (Regier 2009; Boyssen, 2007). However, most of the definitions have some common features, often called the four Ds; via deviance, distress, dysfunction, and danger, implying that patterns of abnormality are typically Deviant: (different, extreme, unusual, and even bizzare), Distressing: (unpleasant and upsetting to the person), Dysfunctional: (interfering with the person's ability to conduct daily activities in a constructive way), and Dangerous: (behaviour becomes dangerous to oneself or others (comer, 2008). The abnormality in Government is perpetrated by human personalities in governance. According to United Nation Development programme (UNDP, 1997), Government is the system to govern a state or community, or viewed as a system of social control under which the right to make laws, and

the right to enforce them is vested in a particular group of people in the society.

While Governance is defined as the system of values, policies and institutions by which a society manages its economic, political and social affairs through interactions within and among the states, civil society and private sector. Also it could be viewed as the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels.

### Abnormalities in Government.

The abnormalities in Government will be discussed under the following dimensions:

1. The process of Election.
2. Implementation of Federal Government Policies and manifestoes.
3. Implementation of the State Government policies and manifestoes.

### **Electioneering process in Nigeria**

Nigeria presently runs a presidential system of Government and the independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is saddled with the responsibility of conducting elections, every four years. A fraud free and credible election is a necessary ingredient to the growth of democracy (FRN, 1999). However, election fraud has become a major challenge in the Nigerian political system. Till date, reports show that elections in Nigeria have been marred with vote buying, falsification of results, underage voting, and the use of security forces to intimidate voters, among other things.

All these abnormalities in the electoral processes are deviant behaviours of those in authorities, leading to dysfunctioning of the system (society) and most times result to dangerous situation. Election abnormality, otherwise known as election fraud, could be viewed as a deceptive or negligent interference with the electoral process that intends to prevent the outcome from reflecting the will of the people. Electoral frauds are committed with the aim of influencing electoral results to favour a candidate through the adoption of bribery, cheating, illegal voting, intimidation, alteration of results and fraudulent pronouncement of the loser as a winner with or without adjusting the electoral outcomes (Tunmibi and Olatokun, 2022).

The capacity of electoral officers to rig elections cast a shadow over the electoral process of many democratic countries, including Nigeria.

### **Electioneering abnormalities in Nigeria.**

Records have shown that elections and electioneering in Nigeria have generated strong hostility that threatens the unity of the country. According to Azikiwe (1964), the first pre-colonial election in Nigeria, which was in 1959, was marred by irregularities, as the colonial masters requested evidence to investigate the matter. Then, the post-colonial elections of Nigeria's first Republic (1960-1966) were greatly marred by electoral manipulations of documents. Also, the 1964 Federal elections and 1965 Western region elections, the first of such to be conducted after the colonial era, were

characterized with massive irregularities.

During the second Republic (1979-1983), the rigging that characterized the election was even worse than the first Republic. Similarly, other elections in 2007, 2011, 2015 2019, and 2023 were characterized with irregularities such as, multiple voting, result manipulation, intimidation by security agencies, snatching and destruction of ballot boxes, late arrival of voting materials, among other ills. According to United State Reporter (2023), despite the irregularities, 2023 election reflected the will of Nigerians. This statement, however cast doubt on the integrity of the U.S Reporters.

### **State and Local Government level elections.**

Even at the State and Local Government level elections, the frauds or abnormalities manifested in different forms, such as:

- Using vote count to change an election result.
- Increasing the number of votes for the favoured candidates.
- Reducing the vote share of the opposition candidate.
- Under age voting.
- Mass voting by unregistered citizen.
- Snatching of ballot boxes and stuffed with thumb-printed votes.
- Switching the results to favour the ruling party candidate.
- Intimidation using private militant gangs or state security agents.
- Deliberate and improper counting of votes, and
- Media manipulation to announce or publish wrong results before the proper collation of results by the Electoral Commission.

Dele-ojo (2023), stated that the 2023 election was grossly marred by fraudulent practices: that The All Progressive Congress, Presidential victory in the February, 2023 presidential election was challenged by the Labour Party Presidential candidate, and that of People's Democratic Party Presidential candidate. That PDP won 29% of the vote cast, while Labour Party had 25% as announced by the INEC. The

same manipulation and falsification happened across the states and the Local Government Areas. The same fraudulent practices cut across the election at the, National Assembly, Governorship, State houses of Assembly and Local Government Areas.

### **Abnormalities and fraudulent practices in Governance.**

They are litanies of fraudulent/abnormal behaviours in governance. Some, of them are highlighted here: According to Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC, 2023), the followings were discovered from the public office holders.

- **Misexpenditure.**  
According to Riwano (2023), the Rural Electrification Agency Director and his team were suspended by Presidency for misexpenditure, amounting to over 1.2 billion naira.
- Also N58.5 million naira frauds were discovered from Minister of Humanitarian Affair. Punch Newspaper (2023) stated that, Presidency ordered that the Minister of Humanitarian Affair and Poverty Alleviation should be suspended for such misexpenditure.
- Salary frauds by absent civil servants were as well noticed (Edeth, 2022).
- Economic and financial crime commission (EFCC, 2023), equally stated that most of the State Governors committed the following crimes.
- Money laundering.
- Mismanagement of billions of Ecological Fund.
- Mismanagement of sure-p amounting to 2.3billion naira.
- Mismanagement of revenue from federation account amounting to 383 billion naira.
- Mismanagement of billions of naira from; excess crude oil of N55 billion naira, Paris Club refund of N12 billion naira, Agricultural loan of 2billion naira and security fund of 50 million naira monthly by the State Governors.

### **Federal Government Unfair Policies**

The worst of this is the bad governance which causes high cost of living, especially food stuffs and hunger in the country.

### **Nigeria's Economic quagmire.**

As results of abnormalities, Nigeria is tottering in the brink of economic dilemma, due to misappropriation, and insensitive government for over a decade. The people have been in a situation of economic difficulty, often caused by a combination of multiple factors, ranging from financial looting and embezzlement, persistent unemployment, lack of investment, rising taxes, inflation of goods and services and hunger on the land among other things.

### **Flash back**

In 1999, Nigeria's foreign reserve was at 56 million, he invested and it grew to 426million by the time he left office in 2006 (Punch Newspaper, 2023). Crude oil then was at 42 dollar per barrel to 46 dollar per barrel. However, Nigeria was indebted to Paris Club to the tune of 30 billion dollars. An appeal was made by the Federal Government and the Paris Club wrote off 18 billion dollar while Nigeria paid only 12 billion to clear the debt. Therefore, Nigeria was debt free in 2006 when President Obasanjo handed over the Government to President Yaradua. However, Yaradua did not stay long and died while Goodluck Jonathan took over. Then, the Government borrowed and was indebted to the tune of 6.7 billion dollars external debt owed to foreign nationals. Then Nigeria's exchange rate was about 156.7 naira to 1 dollar and latter moved from 158.6 naira to one dollar.

During president Buhari's administration he borrowed to the tune of 7.6 trillion naira between 2015 to 2020. By the time he left office, fuel price which was at 147naira in 2016 rose to approximate 320 naira in 2023. Then the Naira exchange rate was N638.7 to one dollar and the economy began to worsen.

Now, which is 2023, the exchange rate is between 1,423.26 naira and 1,550.45 naira for one dollar by 31 July 2024. Within the short period he has been in office, President Tunubu had borrowed

20.1 trillion naira from domestic foreign investors (Vanguard Newspaper, 2023). The money borrowed was partly for debt services instead of investment, because 96% percent of it is channeled to debt servicing.

### **Rising Cost of Governance**

The Senators and House of representative members earn about, 2 million naira and N3.2m naira yearly for what they called office running allowance in addition to their basic salaries of about 29.4 million per month and House of Representatives about 18.2 million in addition to their severance allowance (politic-naira land, 2023). These amount is too much, when compared to the civil/public servants' minimum wage of (N30,000) thirty thousand naira only. Those in government seem to be insensitive to the collapsed economy, power/electricity failure, decayed infrastructure, dilapidate public utilities, fallen standard of education, weak and devalued naira, and so on. If Nigeria were to be a company, it will run bankrupt, because the Government in power turned Central bank to printing Press, with every naira printed loses its value, at the time of President Buhara and Emefiele as the Central bank Governor.

The excessive borrowing and expenditure is weakening the economy because of bad decision of our leaders. The economic growth in Nigeria slowed from 3.3% in 2022 to 2.9% in 2023, due to very high inflation. The same looting and diversion of fund went on with the State Governors and other political office holders. During the 2023 budget, the Punch Newspaper stated that trillions of naira was approved for the 2023 fiscal year, plus supplementary budget, but unfortunately nothing was achieved

### **Conclusion:**

The study investigated the abnormalities in Government and Governance in Nigerian, with focus on the process of election, implementation of Federal Government policies, and the implementation of the State government policies. High level and wide spread abnormalities were observed. Generally Nigeria is faced with many problems, which include unfair government, misexpenditure, high

inflation of goods and services, foreign exchange rate volatility, low productivity, poor infrastructure, hunger, insecurity, armed robbery, cyber crime among other thing. As the situation is now, even the international community look at Nigerians with disdain (wikipedea, 2023).

### **Recommendations**

Based on the fore goings, the following practical measures are adduced to address these abnormalities in Nigeria government and governance.

1. The should be bi annual workshops/seminars on value re-orientation, ethical standard living, responsibilities, good moral and empathic rejuvenation for who will be, and those occupying political offices, from the Presidency to the State, down to the Local Government Areas.
2. Government should promote and encourage diversification of economy. By reducing over dependence on the crude oil export. Diversifying into agriculture and manufacturing services will boost the economy
3. During elections, forensic approach should be used and adhered to. It is a tool used to detect discrepancy in election outcomes.
4. Government should also invest in human capital and social development, such as education, health, poverty reduction, hunger, inequality, unemployment and insecurity.
5. Government should adopt a pragmatic and consistent monetary policy in the central bank of Nigeria.
6. Government should support private sector businesses for income generation.
7. They should foster regional trade integration to boost our economy.
8. Government should reduce cost of governance at least by 50% at all levels.
9. The citizenry should be educated to monitor government activities.
10. Civil Society should launch aggressive advocacy and awareness campaign against corruption and corrupt practices.
11. There should be strict enforcement of

penalties on corruption official or any body found culpable. If the above recommendations will be adopted it will go a long way to sanitizing the system and usher in the good Nigeria of our dream.

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