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Core Values in Governance System: Search for Viable Good Governance Framework for Nigeria

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Abstract
The behaviors and attitudes of individuals of any given social system are greatly influenced by their values. However, the extent to which societal values have been mired in the attempt to conceive a Nigerian nation and the crisis of leadership that has bedeviled the process, have resulted in the emergence of a largely incompetent, mischievous and rogue leadership in the country. Undoubtedly, Nigeria today lacks value based leadership which can identify and apply common societal values to governance. Moreover, corruption and gross inequality in the distribution of wealth have flourished in Nigeria partly because of our inability to infuse values into the Nigerian concept. Therefore, this paper seeks to examine the utility of those values as concepts of governance in the previous generation as well as determined their suitability as tools of governance in the current climate of disillusionment in Nigeria. The paper employed the use of historical research method where secondary data from relevant books, journals, magazines, newspapers and internet materials were analyzed. It proffers that, for our society to be corrupt free, there is urgent need for us to recover and embrace such core values in order to confront corruption as well as the pervasive insecurity currently derailing the nation's effort towards economic and political sustainability. The paper concludes that, rediscovering our societal core values, will not only promote good governance but also help in confronting many of the socio-political problems that affects the Nigerian State at the moment.

Keywords: Values, Corruption, Governance, Leadership and Nigeria.

Introduction

Societies in the world particularly in the least developed countries are facing serious challenges of corruption in all aspect of their lives. This menace cut across all sectors, in both public and private institutions. Many a times, its antithesis, hinders societies from achieving meaningful development. Good governance, on the other hand is a vital element needed in every society, in order to address corrupt practices. Good governance encapsulates all the societal core values, principles, and ethics that members of different societies are expected to uphold in a prosperous society. Taylor (1996) defines Value as fundamental convictions, ideas, standards or stances which act as a general guide to behavior, or as a reference point in decision or the evaluation

of beliefs or action. Value is a companion of human conduct: partly directs one on what to do and how to do it. In Hausa society for example, the importance of the values of "Kunya" *modesty,* "Gaskiya" *Truthfulness,* "amana" *honesty,* and "adalci" *fairness* cannot be over emphasized. As observed by Buba (2015) "that the absence of any of these attributes in a person can be viewed as a character flaw, indicated by the subtractive adjective *rashi-n* "lack-of", e.g. *rashin gaskiya* "untruthfulness" *rashin adalci* "unfairness" e.t.c. Thus leaders must show the highest standard of fairness in order to command respect and approbation".

Similarly, the Fulani people are also known to value "Pulaaku" which expresses face-saving behavior. Pulaaku to the Fulbe people embodies shame. Mukoshy (2014) views "Pulaaku as behavior which refers to a *Fulbe* national entity or ethos that works like a magic; and it gives a picture of Pullo as just, honest, prudent, modest, patient, courageous, self-denying, generous, humble and vigilant with fortitude, however, never greedy, panicky, or to express pain, pleasure, or interfere uninvited, express ferocity, excitement and anger, or any state of mind".

However, scholars have traced aspect of values in different society especially in Hausaland where values, customs and traditions are established as laws governing the society. To mention just a recent related data Tukur, (1999) in his book detailed the cynical way in which Hausa society stick through their values to sanitize their way of life from immoralities. Tukur's views in his work relates embezzlement of public funds, excessive display of materialism, mismanagement of national economy, above all corruption is as a result of imposition of colonial values and thought experience that are reflected in our indigenous societies. To the understanding of this research, our core values should be revisited and adopted to checkmate the present Nigerian situation.

The increasing rate of corruption and corrupt practices in our society has reached unacceptable levels, leading government and international organizations to classify Nigeria as the 136th least corrupt nation out of 175 countries. (Transparency International on Corruption Perception Index, 2015). It is no surprise therefore, that a cardinal point of public policy of the current political regime is a total deconstruction of the root causes of corruption and the imposition of appropriate sanctions against corrupt individuals, particularly in the public sphere. Organizations such as the EFCC, ICPC and CCB as well as anti-corrupt units of the Buhari administration are all being strengthened to function more purposely and more efficiently in fulfilling their various constitutional and legislative mandates. Yet many corrupt officials appear to operate within morality systems which totally abhors their corrupt behavior. This disjuncture calls for a re-examination of the current governance structure, if any, with a view to interrogating its premises in the light of our epistemological understanding of alternative values and principles inherent in our traditional set up, as an attempt to identify values and ethos which have resonance with the pursuit of just and fair society. Therefore, this research will go a long way in emphasizing the need to embrace our societal core values which in return will bring about good governance and peaceful co-existence. It is also paramount to every member of our society because it addresses and pointed out values that everyone is expected to align with.

Thus, this research intends to examine critically, societal core values, with particular reference to specific groups. The research also interested in understanding what values each group is expected to uphold. While stressing that, for our societies to be corrupt free, there is need for us to embrace some of our inherited values as part of the larger governance structure.

The methodology employed in this paper is historical research method. Thus, secondary data from relevant books, journals, magazines, newspapers and internet materials were analyzed to determine ways in which societal core values have becomes a vital element needed in every society, in order to address corrupt practices and good governance crisis in Nigeria. (Osunde, 1993) observed that the historical research method is very important because it involves investigating, recording, analyzing and interpreting events with a view of arriving at a plausible explanation.

Therefore, the paper is divided into sections. Section one covers the general introduction, section two handles conceptual clarification, section three deals with theoretical framework, section four examines the nature of traditional values in Nigeria as well as moral and ethical values in some selected societies. Section five deals with the overview on contemporary relevance of values to governance in Nigeria while section six handles conclusion and recommendations.

Conceptual Clarification

It is pertinent that we briefly clarify on the concept of values, core values and good governance in order to appreciate their interconnectedness and relevance in the context of enhancing effective, efficient and sustainable good governance framework for Nigeria.

Values: Values can be defined as a standards or principles by which human beings are influenced in their choice among alternative course of action which they perceived as being open to them. Values are cherished and acceptable standards of behavior, they are the highest ethical parameters and criteria through which individuals, groups and societies or government order their goals, determine their choice and judge their conducts (Ihedoro, 2006). Values cannot function in socio-cultural vacuum since there is need for it to serve societal purposes. The positive or dominant values that serve different societies along with Nigeria include respect and honour accorded to parents, elders, men and women of honour. Love and protection of the family and family name has been the practice in traditional and contemporary society of Nigeria.

Core values: Core values are the selected standard of behaviors that are fundamental, acceptable, right and cherished pattern of behaviours that are capable of enhancing national integration unity, and good governance in Nigeria (Falade and Falade, 2013). In the Nigerian traditional society, the core values have to do with what is desirable, virtuous and acceptable. It has been conceptualized by many scholars. Henslin (2008) considered core values as the standards by which people define what is desirable or undesirable, good or bad beautiful or ugly. He explains that core values are bases that

guides our preferences, choices and show what we consider important. They are the selected standards of behavior fundamental to developing a stable and progressive society passed from generation to generation. Therefore, the term 'core values' could also be used interchangeably with norms or moral rules rooted in considerations of intrinsic goodness, a blueprint for behaving, which give people an identity.

Governance: Governance is the sum total of the many ways, in which individuals or institutions, public or private, employed in the process of managing their common affairs. It is a continuing process through which conflicting or diverse interests may be accommodated and cooperative action may be taken. It 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 (Commission on Global Governance 1995). It has four features: governance is not a set of rules or an activity, but a process; the process of governance is not based on control, but on coordination; it involves both public and private sectors; it is not a formal institution, but continuing interaction.

From the aforementioned definitions of governance, we can see that, essentially, governance means exercising authority to maintain order and meet the needs of the public within a certain range. The purpose of governance is to guide, steer and regulate citizens' activities through the power of different systems and relations so as to maximize the public interest. Therefore, governance refers to the process of political administration, including the normative foundation of political authority, approaches to dealing with political affairs and the management of public resources. It particularly focuses on the role of political authority in maintaining social order and the exercise of administrative power in a defined sphere.

Good Governance: According to Madhav (2007) good governance has much to do with the ethical grounding of governance and must be evaluated with reference to specific norms and objectives as may be laid down. It looks at the functioning of the given segment of the society from the point of view of its acknowledged stakeholders, beneficiaries and customers. With this, the term good governance symbolizes a paradigmatic shift in the role of government in modern time, capable of appreciating other values outside democracy. The question dealing with governance, though significantly related to democracy, is culture specific and system bound. It depends to a large extent on the historical experiences of a nation, its cultural mores, aspiration of the people and the stated political and economic objectives of the state, including individual and group preferences, current issues, the expectations of the governed, the nature and type of the political system, the ideological and religious predisposition of the state and a host of others.

In his analysis, Odock (2006), sees good governance as "a system of government based on good leadership, respect for the rule of law and due process, the accountability of the political leadership to the electorate as well as transparency in the operations of government." He further opined that transparency as component of good governance has to do with the leadership, carrying out government business in

an open, easy to understand and explicit manner, such that the rules made by government, the policies implemented by the government and the results of government activities are easy to verify by the ordinary citizens. While accountability as a component of good governance refers to the fact that those who occupy positions of leadership in the government must give account or subject themselves to the will and desire of the society. Unfortunately, this process is lacking in the public domain in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

The research adopts normative theories of ethics which are meant to help us understand what actions are right and those that are in congruent. Popular among the theories include utilitarianism. And the proponents of the theory includes Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill, Henry Sidgwick, R. M. Hare, David Braybrooke, Peter Singer and the host of others. The major argument of the theory claims that man by nature is a pleasure-seeking and pain-avoiding animal. These two guides of human nature placed human beings under the governance of two masters, i.e. pain and pleasure. It lays emphasis on how pleasure and pain direct and determine the goodness and flaws of human actions, and this is referred to as "ethical hedonism" or rather the doctrine that everyone ought to seek pleasure not for self but for all mankind (Maxey, 2010)

Utilitarianism is a conceptual framework that can be used in conjunction with a cost-benefit analysis approach. In this framework, an action is said to be "right" as long as it satisfactorily causes good consequences compared to alternative actions, and it will be "wrong" if it doesn't. However, some objections were raised on ethical and psychological ground. It is also observed by some scholars that its precision was too exact for the facts which it had to deal with is human behaviour. And also its realism was too superficial to be true (Roger, 2010)

However, despite the criticism, the theory is very relevant as it was meant to provide guidance for human conduct on the basis of particular descriptions as well as opens up a gap between how one ought to think in context of moral deliberations which confer rightness or wrongness of actions.

Values and Good Governance
Nature of Traditional Values System in Nigeria

Nigerian core values are concerned with the rationalized logical outcome of the moral experience of our forefathers which are stretching back into the past. A cursory look at the traditions of most societies the now constituted Nigeria, would reveal unsurprisingly that all of those societies were value based. Cutting across all those traditions are values such as fear of God, high moral integrity, fair play, sense of social justice, honesty, honesty, concern for others, respect, social decorum, hospitality and patriotism among others. Most of the institutions that facilitated these values were local, and they were built around Kings, Chiefs, Emirs, clan system and the extended family system. For centuries, these values were central to both the

society at large and societal cohesion in the various societies constituting Nigeria before the formation of the present day Nigeria.

However, the traditional Nigerian man was firstly a member of his family, his community and his society. This accounts for why the traditional Nigerian was his brother's keeper. Nigerian core values could be seen in the catalogue of virtues, such as modesty, integrity chastity, vivacity, honesty, tolerance, truthfulness, self-discipline, brotherliness, honour, humility, patience, reverence or respect for old age, acceptable modes of dressing modes of dressing, modes of salutation an so on (Akinpelu, 1983). Iyamu (1992) observed that, core Nigerian Values hinges on the values of humanity and brotherhood, hospitality, abhorrence of stealing, respect for elders and constituted authority, loyalty to the family and community, honesty, truthfulness, virtues of cooperation, perseverance, self-control and discipline, dedication to duty, patience and tolerance shamefacedness of the female population, hard work and peaceful coexistence.

Uya (1992) as cited in Ecoma (2015) opines that, a traditional Nigerian, despite the multitude of diverse cultural traditions had a profound historical consciousness informed by his cosmology and world view. This world view emphasized the inseparable link between the past, the present and the future viewed as a basic continuum.

According to Ecoma (2015). Nigerian traditional core values has to do with what is desirable, virtuous and acceptable, they are selected standards of behavior fundamental to developing a stable and progressive society passed from one generation to another through oral tradition. He further lamented that the social control of traditional Nigerian society was achieved through these moral precepts rather than legal compulsion. Therefore, in every society across the globe, core values are given prime priority as social ingredients for social transformation, peace, unity, stability, growth and development.

Moral and Ethical Values in some Selected Societies

This study is not preliminary in nature, scholars have traced aspect of values in different societies where a number of customs and traditions are established as elements governing the society. Tukur, (1999) detailed the way in which Hausa society stick to their values to sanitize their way of life from immoralities. Tukur's work relates embezzlement of public funds, excessive display of materialism, mismanagement of national economy, and above all corruption to the imposition of colonial values and thought experiences that are not reflected in our indigenous societies. On this ground, these core values deserved to be evaluated in the face of our current national predicaments.

Kirk-Green, (1974) define 'core value' as honourable, good character and code of conduct. He tries in his paper to review some related literature on values and morals not only in Hausaland and in Africa, but how some scholars view the concept of core value in western tradition. **Mutumin kirki** According to Kirk-Green in Hausa tradition, describes someone who possessed '*goodness in character*', someone '*with inner quality*', '*morals keep up*', draw his understanding from Hausa genres like oral

poetry and Literature. He continues in his explanation of 'kirki' as 'wellspring of virtue' 'mirrored person' in his analysis on some features of **Mutumin kirki** outlines stratum in which Hausas use in quantifying someone's good morals like: *Relationship with colleagues*, *Endowed with Truth* (The priority of truthfulness), *Trustworthiness* (reliable person/ keeping ones word), Patience (hakuri), Fair Share (hankali), Shame (expected personal reaction/Kunya), *Mutunci* (manners of treating others, the ability to respect peoples diginity), *Ladabi* (good manners), *Wisdom* (Hikima), *Just* (Adalci), *Faith in God* (Imani) *Radiance of presence* (Fara'a), *Avoidance* (Hankali), *Qualities of Leadership* (shugabanci). In summary to the very good piece of related data to this research, core values mean disposition of character. And character is like a tail: where ever you go, it follows you. In addition to Kirk-Green (1974), Frank and Virginia, (1933) shared same scholarly thought ironing out kirki as a distinct behaviour to Hausa people. In essence, the Authors summarizes that 'kirki' is an emotional concept, expressed through appropriated behaviour.

Core Values in Contemporary Nigeria

Since the amalgamation of Northern and Southern protectorates into Nigeria by the British in 1914, one of the most important political questions facing both scholars and policy makers has been how this vast, multicultural and dynamic country can be forged into a single nation. Ekanola (2006) observed that, in Nigeria today, rather than integrating into a cohesive community with a common sense of national identity and destiny, citizens of Nigeria are returning more and more to primordial affiliations for identity, loyalty and security. Instead of forging a united front and presenting a concerted effort to face the challenges of development in an increasingly competitive and globalized world, Nigerians are busy waging ethnic and religious wars.

This socio-political background and the little emphasis placed on core national values in Nigeria are partly responsible for the unpatriotic, disunity, inter and intra ethnic violence that characterized the nation. The predominant are values system of wealth and materialist acquisition, ethnic and tribal loyalty which are the fundamental obstacles to attain viable good governance and the survival of Nigeria as a nation.

In the same vein, Ifeanacho (2010) identifies materialism as one of the enduring Nigeria's core values today, the quest for accumulation of wealth is responsible for the high rate of corruption in the Nigerian governing system. This menace of corruption is a negative core value that militates against the viable good governance frame work for Nigerian society.

Values and its Contemporary Relevance to Governance

According to Amin (2015). In any social setting, the position of a leader is an important one, just as every human being is a social being; and so, needs to be guided morally and be subject to command and prohibition through some established system of values. He also maintained that, good moral values shape or influence leader's behaviors for good. Thus, when a society adopts bad values such as corruption,

injustice, nepotism greed e.t.c the resultant effect would be tragedies and unconditional politico-economic and social crisis. Thus, good value system ultimately produces good and sustainable society; while bad value system produces bad and weak societies.

Note however that, values such as materialism and even nepotistic behavior have been put to good use in some cultures where these values are regulated and controlled by a robust system of institutional checks and balance. U.S and South Korea are cases in point, for example.

Demonstrating the relevance of values, Achebe (2010) argued that "the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership values. There is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian land, climate, water or anything else. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to their expected responsibility to the challenge of personal example of patriotism, honesty, dedication, commitment and truthfulness which to him are the hallmark of true leadership"

In a related literature, Ibrahim, (2008) addresses similar stride on the peculiar behaviours of Maguzawa where he summarizes his findings as, even before the advent of Islam to Hausa Man, he demotes *indecency*, *blasphemy* and *immorality*. The findings in the study of related literature illustrate the need for government of Nigeria to revised its constitution especially laws enacted on crimes to capture the policy of culminating theft and fraud cases in medieval period by Hausa people in mitigating theft and other criminal offences in Nigeria.

Similarly, Limburger and Burks (1956) believed that, a well-ordered society required a government, based on superior morality rather than on superior power. Thus, in order to achieve good governance, the political ruling class should represent the highest type of morally integrated individuals upon whom both political and social responsibilities were to fall.

However, Noor, (2008) observed that, the ethical code for an effective leadership, encompasses the traditional ethical ideas of personal integrity; honesty and mutual respect which deserve consideration in governance framework as well. Thus, ethics becomes the new priority agenda for political leaders and policy makers.

Now, although values may be relative, and are not different from values that dominate in most successful countries all around the world, their application for the good of society varies, ranging from society to society. A large number of this variation as noted earlier, has to do with the establishment of institutional practice, governed and regulated by a political culture that promotes good governance and purposeful leadership.

The only difference being that those values were successfully infused into modern leadership style in those other countries through the core national values, cultures and religious sanctions over time; which have succeeded in showing what is good and what is bad either to one self or to others. For example, most leaders of the western capitalist countries who are championing democracy, uphold the principle and values of sincerity, honesty, promise keeping, kindness, sympathy, trust and respect for not only humanity but of animal as well.

Conclusion

Nigeria has undergone and continues to undergo political changes of far-reaching proportion. These changes are most manifested in the area of governance system which has been attracting attention largely due to poor economic development performance which has recorded in Nigeria since attainment of independence in 1960. The socio-political background and the little emphasis placed on core values in Nigeria are partly responsible for these, resulting to unpatriotic leadership, disunity among citizens, intra and inter-ethnic violence as well as good governance crisis that characterized the nation. The predominant are values system of wealth and material acquisition, ethnic and tribal loyalty which are fundamental obstacles to attain viable good governance and the survival of Nigeria as a nation.

Thus the paper dwell into identifying societal core values and their applicability to governance with the aim of attaining a viable good governance framework for Nigeria. It sees values in an ideal democratic setting to consist some sets of basic principles according to which a good governance can be attained. While good governance is an effective terminology that is applicable to all sections of the society. However, the paper identifies that, good moral values shape and influence leader's behaviours. And when society adopts bad values such as materialism, corruption, injustice, nepotism greed and imposition of authority against the people's will, etc. the resultant effect would be tragedies and unconditional politico-economic and social crisis.

Therefore, the paper concludes that, it is only when our inherited core values are applied to governance, and also people in various sections conduct their affairs in a socially responsible manner, then, the objective of achieving the larger good of the largest number of people in the society cannot be achieved. Moreover, governance is good provided it is able to achieve the desired end of the people in terms of justice, equity, preservation of the rule of law, openness and transparency, accountability as well as improving the living standard of the populace.

Recommendations

The study recommends that Nigerians need an urgent innovative value orientation programme that can facilitate the development of core values as well as civic and political ideals in the citizens. This will make Nigeria's dream of good governance to come into reality.

Also it recommends that, a religious or ethical dimension of due process should be observed to fight injustice, corruption and moral decadence by inculcating a strong moral character which will enable the political leaders to see their position as servants, holding a public trust. This will invariably improve the culture of transparency and political accountability in public life and encourage growth and development of true democratic ideals.

Moreover, research institutes and professional bodies should be encouraged in order to create awareness, enlightenment and political orientation by organizing workshops, seminars and training for public office holders. This will make people to

acquire the required skills and be instilled with knowledge of governance, leadership and public accountability.

At the same time, virtues and core values demonstrated by our first generation leaders such as sacrifice to work hard, justice, loyalty, integrity, honesty, trust and patience should be emulated by our contemporary political office holders in pursuing the great national goals ahead of the country.

Similarly, it is highly recommended that, more programme should be sought to re-orientate, inculcate and compel Nigerians to believe in ways consistent with established norms and values.

Lastly, there is a need to evolve for Nigeria, a just and egalitarian society where the government is guided by the aspiration of the people. This will bring about the need to have some well committed and morally guided leaders to face the good governance challenges in Nigeria.

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