

An Analysis of the Nexus Between Civil Society Organizations and Good Governance in Nigeria

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Abstract: This paper analyzes the nexus between civil society organizations and good governance in Nigeria. The paper predicates its analysis on some propositions extracted from the structural functional theory. On methodology, the paper relies substantially on secondary method of data collection which it analyzes using content analysis. The paper argues that civil society organizations as pillars of democracy have the capacity to deepen democracy and accordingly help to bring about good governance in Nigeria. By their origin and functions, civil society organizations are always better placed to apply pressure on the government and demand for policies and actions that foster democracy, development and good governance. However, the paper also reveals that civil society organizations in Nigeria are faced with numerous challenges, problems and constraints that impede or hinder their ability towards playing their good governance roles effectively. The paper therefore, recommends among other things that all concerned persons and bodies in the country should come together to help rescue civil society groups from their acute constraints and weaknesses and accordingly empower them with more efficient and effective facilities, resources, skills and methods of operations.

Keywords: Civil Society Organizations, Democracy, Development, Good Governance, Good Governance Deficits, Governance.

Introduction

Nigeria transitioned to democratic rule on May 29, 1999 after over three decades of military rule. Democracy is a system of government, which enables a people to freely choose an effective, honest, transparent and accountable government. It is a philosophy of government in which sovereign power is vested in the people and exercised directly or indirectly through a system of representation that involves periodic elections. Ideally, the practice of democracy should generate or facilitate opportunities for good governance, development and social progress. In fact, democratic governance should not only facilitate good governance but should also generate powerful processes of social and societal transformation. The restoration of democracy in the country on May 29, 1999 has however not helped in the attainment of the ideals of good governance in terms of observance of the principle of justice to all on equal footing by the relevant authorities, efficiency in public administration; development oriented budgeting and curbing corruption in our national life. The foregoing problems are all traceable to poor governance and political leadership deficiencies. Bad or poor governance has indeed become the major challenge and source of Nigeria's socio-economic crisis since the advent of the current fourth republic.

This paper is of the conviction that civil society organizations as pillars of democracy have the capacity to deepen democracy and accordingly help to bring about good governance in the country.

According to Nwachukwu (2008), by their origin and functions, civil society organizations are always better placed to apply pressure on the government and demand for policies that foster democracy, development and good governance. In addition, they are always better positioned in making sure that elections are open and transparent and demanding for reforms in institutions such as the judiciary, legislature, executive, police, local government, etc. Paffenholz and Spurk (2006), had also argued similarly that vibrant civil society groups are considered today as precondition to go beyond "formal" democracies, to achieve long lasting attitude changes and to overcome resistance by undemocratic leaders and elites. According to them also, an active civil society groups are widely accepted as critical to boost the accountability of governments towards their citizens, to strengthen public policy decisions and to increase the effectiveness of development interventions. The central argument of this paper therefore is that civil society organizations have the capacity to deepen democracy and accordingly help to bring about good governance in Nigeria.

Given the foregoing background and for easy of understanding, this paper is divided into eight sections. Section 1 is the introduction. Section 2 is the theoretical framework. Section 3 is the methodology. Section 4 and section 5 are the conceptual discourses on civil society organizations and good governance respectively. Section 6 explores good governance deficits in Nigeria while section 7 examines the nexus between civil society organizations and good governance in Nigeria. Section 8 is the conclusion and recommendations.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopted structural functional theory as its theoretical framework. Structural functional theory, which is also known as structural functionalism, originated in the sphere of social anthropology in the writings of Radcliffe-Brown and Bronislaw Malinowski. Talcott Parsons, Robert Merton and Marion Levy later developed it in the field of sociology. Gabriel Almond and his associates developed it into a tool of political analysis in political science. Structural functionalism is a derivative of the general systems theory. Just like the systems theory, structural functional theory is also concerned with the phenomenon of system maintenance and regulation.

The structural functional theory emphasizes the role of structures and functions in understanding the political processes and the conditions under which structures can perform and the functions could be fulfilled. The basic theoretical proposition of structural functional theory therefore is that all systems exist to perform functions through their structures. A structure is a pattern of behavior that has become a standard feature of a social system. Structures are arrangement within the system that carry out the functions, which could be from the system. Eminue (2001:90), defines a structure as “any human organization that can do things and have an effect on human beings and other human organization – a family, a public corporation, a court, a bureau, a legislature, etc”. A function on the other hand denotes the impact of a structure on another structure and the

interrelationships among various structures. Marion Levy (cited in Eminue, 2001:89), defines a function as a “condition or state of affairs resultant from the operation of a structure through time”. Function relates to the activity of a structure and its external effects. One can see from the foregoing that structural functionalism revolves around two main concepts namely, structures and functions; and it is based on this that Varma (1983), raised three basic questions: (1) What basic functions are performance in a given political system? (2) By what structures? (3) Under what conditions? He emphasizes that while functions deal with the consequences of patterns of actions, structures have to do with arrangements within the systems that actually perform the functions.

According to Almond and Powell (1966), the basic assumptions of structural functionalism are as follows:

1. That the society is a single inter-connected system in which each of its elements performs a specific function and whose basic goal is the maintenance of the systemic equilibrium;
2. That the society, being a system as a whole consists of its numerous parts, which are inter-related;
3. That the dominant tendency of the social system is towards stability, which is maintained by its own in-built mechanism;
4. That the system’s ability to resolve internal conflicts is usually an admitted fact;
5. That changes in the system are natural, but they are neither sudden nor revolutionary, but are always gradual and adaptive as well as adjustable;
6. That the system has its own structure, with its own aims principles and functions.

Structural functional theory is considered more apt and appropriate in this paper because of its utility and analytical strength in providing explanations for the interactive effects of certain elements and their consequences on other elements within the same political system. In other words, the role of civil society organizations in helping to bring about good governance in Nigeria can rightly be explained and analyzed in the light of the structural functional theory. The major proposition of structural functionalism is that all systems have parts (structures) that can be identified and which behave (function) in a coordinated and interdependent manner to achieve the objectives intended for them by the society in order to maintain systemic equilibrium, stability and development. As such, civil society organizations are put in place or formed to perform certain functions arising from societal demands to ensure functional and operational stability and progress of the system.

Methodology

The data that was used for this study was generated from secondary sources using documentary method. Accordingly, textbooks, journals, periodicals, monographs, seminars and conference papers, unpublished research works, newspapers and magazines, internet materials, etc, constituted the sources of data for the study. Thus, relevant data and information were collated from the foregoing sources and studied.

The secondary data that were generated in the course of this study were analyzed using content analysis. Content analysis has to do with the rigorous analysis and

examination of written records and documents in a critical, analytical, descriptive and explanatory manner so as to make generalizations and meaning from such written records and documents. According to Kerlinger (1977), content analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic, quantitative and qualitative description of the manifest content of communication. The central objective of content analysis is to convert recorded data or information into data, which can be treated in a scientific manner so that a body of knowledge may be built up. Content analysis as a method of analyzing qualitative data was used in this study to examine the nexus between civil society organizations and good governance in Nigeria.

Civil Society Organizations

There is no commonly agreed definition of civil society organizations. Attempts at defining or explaining the concept of civil society organizations have been very difficult and ambiguous. Merkel and Lauth (cited in Paffenholz and Spurk, 2006), define civil society organizations as the “arena of voluntary, uncoerced collective actions around shared interests, purposes and values”(p.2). Hall (1995), defines it as “an opposite of despotism, a space in which social groups could exist and move, something which exemplified and would ensure softer, more tolerable conditions of existence”(p.1). Bayart (1986), sees it “as society in relation with the state ... in so far as it is in confrontation with the state, or more precisely as the process by which society seeks to breach and counteract the simultaneous totalization unleashed by the state”(p.111). For Diamond (1996), civil society organization is the “realm of organized social life that is voluntary, self-generating, self-

supporting, autonomous from the state, and bound by the legal order or set of shared rules ... It involves citizens acting collectively in a public sphere to express their interest, passions and ideas, exchange information, achieve mutual goals, make demands on the state, and hold state officials accountable. It is an intermediary entity standing between the private sphere and the state” (p.5). Schmitter (1997), defines it as “a set or system of self-organized intermediary groups that:

1. Are relatively independent of both public authorities and private units of production that is, of firms and families.
2. Are capable of deliberating about and taking collective actions in defense or promotion of their interest or passions.
3. Do not seek to replace either the state agents or private producers or to accept responsibility for governing the polity as a whole; and
4. Agree to act within pre-established rules or in a civil nature that is conveying mutual respect”(p.240).

For Osaghae (1998), civil society organizations refers to “the formal and informal organizations, including social movements, which occupy the non-state sphere of public realm and functions in one or more of the following ways: articulating and promoting the interests of diverse groups within society with a view to devising ways in which conflicting interests and differences can be accommodated and resolved; defending individual and collective rights as well as

popular sovereignty against intrusions by the state and other powerful groups, including foreign interests; mediating relations between the state and the larger society; setting the rules or norms governing the state and society and upholding accountability of those in government; serving as the ultimate check to state power and its abuse; serving as the engine-room of private and local capital; and performing shadow state functions” (pp.19-20). Anheier and List (2005), define civil society as “the sum of institutions, organizations and individuals located between the family, the state and the market in which people associate voluntarily to advance common interests ”(p.54). They noted that the end of the cold war saw an increase in inter-state conflicts thus making civil society organizations to start pushing or advocating for good governance, democratization, conflict prevention, management and resolution. Civil society organizations according to Oshita (2007), encompass the business sector, academic institutions, clan and kinship circles, consumer advocates, community development initiatives, environmental movements, ethnic lobbies, faith-based organizations, human rights groups, labour unions, community-based organizations, peace movements, etc. He thus sees it as a space where voluntary associations deliberately seek to shape the rules that govern one or the other aspects of social life. According to the London School of Economics Centre for Civil Society (cited in Konteh, 2006), examples of civil society organizations are “Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs), peoples’ organizations, community-based organizations, civic clubs, trade unions, gender organizations, cultural and religious

groups, charities, social and sports clubs, cooperatives, environmental groups, professional associations, the academia, policy institutions, consumers/consumer organizations, the media, citizens' militia and organized religion" (p.273).

From all the foregoing definitions and explanations, one thing is now clear and that is the fact that civil society is the arena of organized social life. It is constituted by an array and complex network of associational groups that intervene in social, economic and political process, but are not overtly interested in the capture of political power (Adejumobi, 2005). Civil society organizations therefore play different roles in different contexts, situations and culture. In other words, civil society organizations intervene in different ways. They advocate and take action primarily for social progress, development and the public interest. This is why Konteh (2006), writes that civil society organizations play a leading role in the promotion of good governance, poverty alleviation, education, health, infrastructural development, promotion and defense of human rights, peace building and conflict prevention.

Good Governance

The concept of governance is broad and subject to varying interpretations. The World Bank (1992), defines governance as "the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development" (p.1). Ikpi (cited in Eminue, 2005), sees governance as "the total ability to organize, synthesize and direct the various actions of the working

parts of a government machinery in order for such a government to perform meaningfully, creditably and acceptably ..." (pp.133-134). For Ogundiya (2010), governance is the process that is employed to achieve the noble end of the state. He further states that governance is better conceived from Harold Lasswell's traditional definition of politics as who gets what, when, and how. Thus, governance has a lot to do with the allocation of values in the society, which largely, is political in nature (Ndukwe et al, 2018). The UNDP (2006), defines governance as the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It comprises mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences. This definition indicates that for governance to exist there has to be the interplay of a country and its citizens in a relationship. In that relationship, governance attains a reality, in this case in the form of a political entity (that is, the state) to exercise power by organizing and administering its functions through relevant establishments. This process brings to the foreground the role of procedures, actions and entities that make it possible for citizens to communicate concerns, exercise rights, undertake responsibilities and arbitrate disputes (Waema, 2011). One can see from all the foregoing that governance simply refers to the way and manner power and authority are exercised by the government vis-à-vis the management and development of a country. However, the international community and development scholars no longer talk merely of 'governance' but of 'good governance'.

Defining the concept of good governance can

be difficult and problematic. This is because the concept has different definitions and interpretations depending on who is defining or describing it. Atake and Dodo (2010), defines good governance as the making and implementation of policies that will affect positively on citizens of a country. Babatope and Oladipopo (2010), see it as “the promotion of the wishes and aspirations of the majority by the leadership and the strict adherence to transparency, accountability and the rule of law by the leadership”(p.188). Odock (cited in George-Genyi, 2013), defines it as “a system of government based on good leadership, respect for the rule of law and due process, accountability of the political leadership to the electorate as well as transparency in the operation of government”(p.57). For the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2002), the defining properties of good governance include, among other things the fact that it is participatory, transparent and accountable. It is also effective and equitable. In addition, it promotes the rule of law fairly and ensures that the voices of the poorest and the most vulnerable are heard in decision-making over the allocation of development resources. In addition, political, social and economic priorities are based on broad consensus among the three stakeholders – the state, the private sector and civil society. According to the UNDP, the concept of good governance has these attributes or characteristics:

- (i) Adoption of a participatory approach, (ii) Transparency and openness,
- (ii) (iii) Accountability by assuming responsibilities for actions, (iv) Effectiveness, equity and

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fairness, (v)

Endorsement of the rule of law, (vi) openness in decision-making, (vii) Formulation of national agenda through consensus between the state, the private sector and the civil society, all of which serve as stakeholders in governance.

According to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (UNESCAP, 2013), for governance to be termed ‘good’, it must be participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, information sharing, capable of managing conflicts, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive, and follows the rule of law. It also assumes that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into consideration, and that the voices of the most vulnerable in the society are heard in decision-making. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of the people. The UNESCAP identified eight major characteristics of good governance as: (i) participatory, (ii) consensus oriented, (iii) accountable, (iv) transparent, (v) responsive, (vi) effective and efficient, (vii) equitable and inclusive, (viii) follows the rule of law. One can see from all the foregoing that the definition, interpretation and characteristics of good governance changes according to the institution and persons defining it. This might be the reason why Ladi (2008), posits that the concept of good governance has today taken the toga of a ‘container concept’ that encompasses a category of growing list of principles.

From all the foregoing definitions and interpretations of good governance, one can now summarize good governance as the process whereby public institutions conduct public affairs and manage public resources in

an effective and transparent manner so as to guarantee the realization of human rights. Good governance accomplishes this in a manner essentially free of abuse and corruption, and with due regard for the rule of law. Good governance therefore, ensures the rule of law, promotes due process, improves efficiency, facilitates accountability, tackles corruption, salutes excellence, insists on productivity, and delivers high quality services to the people. It also places great emphasis on pragmatic strategies for achieving positive and cost-effective results in public administration. Thus, good governance is about effective and transparent leadership that produces results, which together transform the socio-economic conditions of a nation (Gana, 2006). In most developing countries today, the concept of good governance has taken root as part of the conditions imposed by donor institutions before providing development assistance. The concept is also part of a wider public sector reform programme that is often externally driven through the World Bank and other donor institutions. Good governance is therefore high on Africa's development agenda.

Good Governance Deficits in Nigeria

Nigeria transitioned to democratic rule on May 29, 1999 after over three decades of military dictatorship. The restoration of democracy in the country till date has not helped much in the attainment of the ideals of good governance. The operators of the three organs of government viz the executive, the legislature and the judiciary have left much to be desired in terms of the provision of good governance in the country.

The executive arm of government is always readily identified with the government. The executive is the organ, which is responsible for implementing the policies, programmes and decisions of government with immediate and direct effect on the lives and activities of the people. The executive arm of government is therefore supposed to make good governance its hallmark. However, since 1999, the executive arm of government appears to be the worst culprit in the area of good governance deficits in the country. Since the advent of the Fourth Republic, the executive (especially the Presidents and some Governors) have been excessively absent from governance. This can be better appreciated if we understand the enormous powers that are given to the President and Governors under the 1999 constitution such that their absence from office usually puts governance on sabbatical. Leadership vacuum or excessive absenteeism from governance characterized governance under Olusegun Obasanjo administration (1999 – 2007) whereby the former President travelled out of the country ninety-three (93) times and spent three hundred and forty (340) days abroad in his first three years. This was different from the three hundred and fifty four (354) days he spent or utilized to visit the thirty six (36) states of the federation. Similarly, two governors from the South-south and the North-west zones of Nigeria were governing their states from foreign western capitals (Adeosun, 2012).

The epileptic and lackadaisical functioning of the executive arm in terms of absenteeism continued under President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua administration. For about six months before he died, President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua was no longer conscious and was therefore unable to handle the

governance of the country at the federal level while his inner cabinet turned him to a meal ticket and were "... prepared to run the country aground for as long as their own position was guaranteed and their meal ticket was not allowed to go in peace" (Fasan, 2013). It is on record that the Late President Yar'Adua left Nigeria on health ground and spent one hundred and nine days (109) outside the country on medical check-ups (Anyanwu et al, 2010) and on each occasion refused or failed to hand over power to the then incumbent Vice-President, Goodluck Jonathan, as stipulated in section 145 of the 1999 constitution. Similarly, in early 2017, President Muhammadu Buhari traveled out of the country for three months because of an undisclosed ailment. Even though he handed over power to Vice President Yemi Osinbajo, government remained largely in limbo given the long absence of the President and amid the nations' serious economic recession in decades (Ayodeji, 2018).

Under President Muhammadu Buhari's administration, good governance deficits also manifested in the delay in the appointment of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation and Ministers. It took President Muhammadu Buhari six (6) months before Ministers with different portfolios could be appointed. According to Udo (2015), the foregoing situation weakened the day-to-day running of the different Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) while coordination and implementation of government policies and programmes came to a standstill.

Still on good governance deficits on the part of the executive arm, Ayodeji (2018),

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observes that the performances of many of the past and present Governors, Ministers, MDAs, police and other security agencies that are supposed to be the foot soldiers in the policy implementation of the President are failing in their statutory functions. Aside dwindling federal revenue allocations to states due to economic downturn, many of the states in Nigeria have not been alive to their statutory responsibilities to their citizens via the mismanagement of public funds. Worried by the huge debt owed workers across the states in Nigeria, President Muhammadu Buhari, on separate occasions, provided funds for state Governors to settle accumulation of salaries and pensions arrears through bailout funds and Paris club refund. However, mismanagement of these funds arising from governance deficits is still noticeable in many of these states. Based on the personal observation of this writer; and printed daily and social media reports, it is evident that many public service workers and pensioners are yet to have their backlog of salaries and pension cleared in many states of the federation.

The foregoing anomalies can be traced to the problem of corruption. Corruption is obviously a major cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabric of the nation. All the three arms of government and other state institutions are immersed in corruption such that corruption has now become a norm in the Fourth Republic (Ogundiya, 2012; Salihu and Bakare, 2018). The executive arm of government because of the visible and enormous resources at their disposal appears to be the worst culprit in corrupt practices in the country. Some instances or examples will suffice here. There were reports of how President Olusegun Obasanjo, in a bid to install his preferred candidate as the Senate President, initiated the Fourth Republic

National Assembly into corrupt practices from the first day of its inauguration in 1999 (Ameh, 2016; Odum, 2018). President Olusegun Obasanjo also received donations, contributions and/or gifts from private organizations and individuals against the stipulations of the constitution to build his personal library while still in office. This was clearly an abuse of official position to further private interests. In another vein, a Senate Committee pronounced his Vice-President, Atiku Abubakar, guilty of corrupt enrichment. The Senate Committee said that Atiku Abubakar diverted the sum of US\$ 145 for his personal use (Salihu and Bakare, 2018). Apart from the above, President Olusegun Obasanjo's daughter, Iyabo Obasanjo-Bello, a former Senator of the Federal Republic was involved in two separate scandals. In December 2007, Iyabo Obasanjo-Bello was involved in a contract scandal amounting to N3.5billion involving her and an Australian firm. According to the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Senator used her mother's maiden name, Akinlawon to hide her identity in the contract (The Punch, March 19, 2008). Senator Iyabo Obasanjo-Bello was again involved in another financial scandal of mismanagement of funds in the Ministry of Health. Iyabo Obasanjo-Bello was later arraigned in court over N300 million unspent budget scam (This Day, August 6, 2008). Evidently, Olusegun Obasanjo's tenure witnessed various forms of political/electoral corruption and these must have led Balarabe Musa to say, "no government can be more corrupt than the government of Obasanjo" (cited

in Olorode, 2016, p.85).

Apart from the problem of corruption, President Olusegun Obasanjo was also known to be authoritarian and dictatorial in governing the country. His deployment of military troops to attack Odi village in Bayelsa state and Zaki-Ibiam in Benue state which resulted in the murdering of innocent citizens readily comes to mind. His unconstitutional withholding of Lagos state local government funds is also a case in point. His refusal to pay deserving states the 13 percent derivation fund is also another case in point. The foregoing infractions among others were some of the reasons why the House of Representatives under the leadership of Ghali Umar Na'Abah attempted to impeach him on August 13, 2002. President Goodluck Jonathan's administration just like that of Obasanjo also recorded some corrupt activities and impunities, which according to Bakare (2015), "threw the country to the most downward depth of corruption" (p.182). The fuel subsidy scam according to Odum (2018), remains one of the most recurring cases of corruption associated with that period. And just as Obasanjo got donations from private organizations and individuals to build his personal library while still in office, Olorode (2016), points out that Jonathan also received donation of a church in his hometown of Otuoke. Clearly, the sixteen collective years (1999 – 2015) of the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) as the party in power were riddled with cases of unbridled corruption. Ogali (2014), draws attention to the reports that highlighted few aspects of the corrupt practices, which indicated that a total of \$182 billion was stolen from Nigeria and laundered offshore between 2000 and 2009 as well as the N3.655 trillion that was fraudulently shared by the subsidy thieves between 2000 and 2011.

The current administration of President Muhammadu Buhari has also witnessed some acts of corruption. The first issue that caught people's attention was the distortions and padding that attended the 2016 budget - the first annual budget prepared under President Buhari's presidency. Others are the scandal relating to the claim that the Presidential Initiative on the North East (PINE) spent N270 million on clearing of grass; the issue of the two houses worth \$1.5 million that the Chief of Army Staff, Lt. General Buratai, purchased overseas; the government's inability to follow up with the Halliburton scandal, which the American government had already prosecuted from their end; inability of the government to unravel the real owner(s) of the over \$43 million found in Ikoyi apartment; FOREX subsidy scam, etc (Odum, 2018).

At the state level, the former Governor of Delta State, James Ibori, was arrested on 129-count charge by the EFCC of laundering over N9.1 billion. Another notable case of alleged corrupt practice was by Orji Uzor Kalu, the former Governor of Abia state. He was accused of using his loot of N3.1 billion to fund Slok Airline and two banks in the Gambia and Sierra Leone. He also owned some houses in the UK and USA (Ademola, 2011). Another ex-Governor Diepreye Alamieyeseigha of Bayelsa state pleaded guilty before a Nigerian court to charges of corruption, money laundering brought against him by the EFCC, and he was subsequently sentenced to two years in prison. The former Governor of Jigawa state, Saminu Turaki was accused of spending N36 millions of public funds to acquire oil blocks from the Federal

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Government. Ex-Governor Jolly Nyame of Taraba state was charged with stealing N1.6 billion belonging to the state. Former Governor Chimaroke Nnamani of Enugu State and two of his former Commissioners, Peter Mba and Spine Ejiofor were charged of corruption and money laundering by the EFCC. He was indicted by the EFCC for stealing close to N6 billion from the treasury of Enugu State, proceeds with which he bought 172 houses and invested in several businesses that are now confiscated by the EFCC through a court order. Some other former Governors charged for various financial crimes are Edo state Lucky Igbinedion, Ekiti State Ayo Fayose, Rivers State Peter Odili, Imo State Ikedi Ohakim, Benue State Gabriel Suswan, etc. One can see from all the foregoing that majority of the successive Nigerian leaders (executives) since 1999 have one way or the other been guilty of and complicit in institutionalizing corruption in the country. It is in view of the corruption and mismanagement that had characterized Nigeria and which has plunged the country into economic misery that Nuhu Ribadu, the Former EFCC Chairman said that the over \$400 billion that had been looted from the Nigerian treasury by the leaders is "six times the total value of resources committed to rebuilding Western Europe after the second World War" (Ademola, 2011).

Achieving good governance in Nigeria is also a function of a vibrant, active and effective legislature. This is because the legislature performs an important role in assembling, assessing and articulating the people's views, needs, expectations and aspirations within the context of national development. The legislature is the most representative of the three organs of government as it is composed of elected representatives of the Nigerian

people. Indeed, the legislature constitutes the hub or chief organ of popular government anywhere in the world today. Much as the legislature is indispensable in the democratic process, one expects that the legislative institution in Nigeria will at all-time strive to meet up with the high expectations reposed on it by the constitution by performing its sacred duties diligently. However, the scorecard of the Nigerian legislature since 1999 till date vis-à-vis good governance has been abysmally poor. Some instances will suffice here.

According to Saliu and Bakare (2018), the legislature in Nigeria has continued to make headlines in the national dailies mostly for negative reasons. These range from issues of excessive politicking and needless confrontations with the executive to corrupt-related behaviours, thus immersing the institution into the mud of negative public perception. Aside the fact that State Assemblies have been reduced to rubber stamp by state Governors; some members of the National Assembly have over time been enmeshed in scandals and corruption. For example, former Speaker of the House of Representative, Salisu Buhari committed forgery and perjury regarding the falsification of the certificate he claimed and tendered (The Punch, August 9, 2000). There were also allegations of perjury, financial impropriety, among others, levied against the former Senate President, Evans Enwerem, which eventually led to his impeachment on November 18, 1999 after the Senate was convinced of the allegations (Tell, August 9, 1999). Chuba Okadigbo who succeeded Evans Enwerem as Senate

President was also impeached barely a year in office, for corrupt practices which included spending N75 million to buy Sallah rams for some Senators (The News, April 4, 2005). There was also an allegation of bribery levied against former Senate President, Adolphus Wabara, and other Principal officers of the Senate by the then President, Olusegun Obasanjo, in a nationwide broadcast. Obasanjo revealed through the broadcast that the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) found out through their investigation that the then Minister for Education, Professor Fabian Osuji raised the sum of N55 million to bribe Senate President Adolphus Wabara and some other members of the Senate and House of Representatives so as to influence the Ministry of Education's financial appropriation in the 2005 budget (Obasanjo, 2005). This led to the resignation of Adolphus Wabara as the Senate President and the dismissal of Fabian Osuji as Education Minister by President Olusegun Obasanjo.

In the House of Representatives, former Speaker of the House, Mrs. Patricia Olubunmi Ette was forced to resign after she soiled her hands in conducting the legislative affairs of the House by unlawfully spending the sum of N620 million in upgrading her official residence and awarded the contracts to her friends and associates (Dare, 2015). She also embarked on an outrageous spending extravaganza in the United States of America to celebrate her 54th birthday with a huge retinue of aids (Ajayi, 2007). Aside all the foregoing, there are other scandals and corruption cases that are yet to be resolved in the National Assembly. These include various vehicle purchase scandals; the Maina's N195 billion pension scam involving Senator Aloysius Etuk; the kerosene subsidy scam;

Esai Dangabar's police pension fund fraud involving members of the Senate joint committees on Establishment and Public Service Matters and State and Local Government Affairs; Stella Oduah's N255 million armoured car scandal; the missing N20 billion oil money; and the Farouk Lawan's \$620,000 bribe from Femi Otedola in the fuel subsidy scam, among others (Adams, 2015; Saliu and Bakare, 2018).

Indeed, the lists of corruption cases, scandals, misdeeds and financial impropriety of members of the National Assembly are many and have continued to characterize the activities of both chambers thus supporting the general belief among Nigerians that they are averse to good governance. According to Saliu and Bakare (2018), the instances of corruption activities are too enormous that the institution has become synonymous to 'house of corruption'. Accordingly, several people at one time or the other refer to the National Assembly as a den of thieves and self-centered people. For example, Former President Olusegun Obasanjo once described the National Assembly as "an assemblage of thieves and rogues". Earlier, Olaoye (2015), had referred to Nigerian legislators as 'legislathieves', as a result of the practice of self-appropriation of allowances such as furniture, wardrobe, newspaper, with outrageous amount and the secrecy surrounding the exact remunerations of the lawmakers. Indeed, Nigerian legislators have continued to intensify and institutionalize the culture of secrecy and high cost of governance vis-à-vis their alleged jumbo salaries, allowances

and funds for constituency projects. Till date, controversy continues to trail the salaries, allowances and funds for constituency projects of national lawmakers. There are wide allegations that Nigerian lawmakers earn far more than what the Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC), an organization solely saddled with the responsibility of fixing the emoluments of public servants in Nigeria, allocated to them. This entails earning self-appropriated salaries and allowances outside the purview of their official pay. According to Saliu and Bakare (2018), despite public outcry and the press triggering the Freedom of Information Act in this regard, the National Assembly remains adamant to public declaration of the actual entitlements of each member. The refusal to publicly declare their legislative pay is a sign that they are earning more than the legally appropriated entitlements (Mahmud, 2017). The foregoing clearly depicts high level of insensitivity and irresponsiveness to the plight of Nigerians and is obviously at variance with the ideals of good governance. It is clearly as a result of the foregoing too that the public perception of the National Assembly as a corrupt institution since the inception of the Fourth Republic has refused to abate. According to Egburonu, et al (2017), the National Assembly is seen as a conduit pipe through which public funds is siphoned, especially under the banner of constituency project fund and extraneous allowances that are shrouded in secrecy despite public outcry for the institution's finances to be made public.

Another issue that usually generates concerns among Nigerians vis-à-vis the National Assembly is their attitude towards the budget making process. Since the advent of the

Fourth Republic, the Nigerian lawmakers are known for their habitual delay in the passage of the Appropriation Bills. It takes an average of four to five months for the National Assembly to pass Appropriation Bill, making the budget year to be delayed by close to five months into the new fiscal year; an action which the executive usually decried (Ehikioya, 2019a). According to Saliu and Bakare (2018), for instance, the 2019 Appropriation Bill was passed and assented to by President Muhammadu Buhari on May 27, 2019 eating into the fiscal year by 5 months. Though the executive usually errs by failing to preset the Bill in record time to give the lawmakers the ample time to legislate on it, much of the blame is usually put on the legislature. Apart from the issue of time, there is also the allegation by the executive that the lawmakers usually insert projects secretly into the budget without the knowledge of the executive. This is one of the issues that led to the much publicized budget padding allegation in 2016 by House member Abdulmumin Jubrin which eventually led to his suspension for 180 legislative days by the Yakubu Dogara led House of Representatives. Budget padding is a dishonest practice whereby some unauthorized items and or huge amount of money is or are inserted into the budget for selfish reasons. This unwholesome practice, which is obviously at variance with the principles of good governance, is said to be a norm now in the National Assembly. According to Senator Babajide Omowore, lawmakers usually pad budgets to suit their interest because budgets usually come to lawmakers padded and lawmakers further pad the

Appropriation Bill in continuation of the corrupt practice (Omowore cited in Falodi, 2016). The 2019 budget also witnessed similar fate of padding. This was made known to the public when President Muhammadu Buhari grudgingly signed the 2019 budget into law after noting his displeasure on how the National Assembly inserted N90.33 billion new projects into the budget without the knowledge of the executive and claiming that the act would disrupt the efficient implementation of his policies (Ehikioya, 2019b).

It is obvious from all the foregoing that the list of corrupt practices, misdeeds, scandals and financial impropriety of the National Assembly since the advent of the present Fourth Republic are legion thus confirming a conviction among Nigerians that Nigerian lawmakers are anti good governance. This is why Akomolede and Akomolede (2012), averred that the financial irresponsibility of the National Assembly and the virtually lack of decorum in which their businesses are being handled turns them to law breakers and tarnishes their image such that it has left much to be desired regarding their good governance supportive roles. Similarly, Asa and Ikudehinbu (2014), have observed that "... the National Assembly has failed to utilize its enormous power to ease the economic and social hardship confronting the people of this country... except ... devising ways for their pecuniary benefits" (p.7). We cannot but also agree with Saliu and Bakare (2018), who concluded that despite some positive contributions, which the National Assembly has brought to Nigeria's democratic experience since 1999, the perceived negative input outweighs its positive thus the institution is believed to have failed Nigerians.

The judiciary, which is the third arm of government in Nigeria, also has some critical and vital role to play in bringing about good governance in the country. The judiciary is supposed to serve as guard of the guardian so as to ensure good governance. However, the lackluster and poor performance of the judiciary just like the executive and the legislature has also contributed to good governance deficits in the country. Writing under the caption, “Justice for Sale: The Corruption of the Judiciary”, Newswatch, June 27, 2005 avers that corruption has eaten deep into the judiciary thus eroding its role as the last hope of the common man for justice. Also, the Punch Newspaper May 5, 2005, in its editorial said that:

Graft has become a major threat to the basic democratic principle of equality before the law. Justice is often awarded to the highest bidder in many of the nation’s lower courts, as granting ex-parte motion has become cash and carry affair. Corrupt judges whose palm has been grease, brazenly granted prayers, which plaintiffs did not even ask for.

In fact, some of the people in charge of law adjudication in Nigeria are flagrantly undermining their duties and positions through corrupt practices and incompetence (Ayodeji and Odukoya, 2014). A survey conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) with the support of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNIDOC) in 2017 showed inter alia that the judiciary was considered the second most corrupt institution by Nigerians behind the police which was considered to be the most corrupt institution in the country (NBS,

2017; Okakwu, 2017).

It is because of the foregoing that some judges have been axed by the government for corrupt practices and other acts of misconduct. Some of them are Wilson Egbo-Egbo of the Abuja High Court, Stanley Nnaji of the Enugu High Court, Okwuchukwu Opene and D. A. Adeniji of the Enugu Court of Appeal, Isaiah Olakanmi, former Chief Judge of Oyo State and Matilda Adamu, Chairman of the Akwa-Ibom Electoral Petition Tribunal in the 2003 general elections and her colleagues A. T. Ahura and A. Elelegwa (Nwachukwu, 2006). Others are Justices Adeniyi Ademola of the Abuja Division of the Federal High Court and Olusegun O. Tokode of the Benin Division of the Federal High Court who were retired and dismissed respectively (Adetayo, 2018). Also Justices such as Ofili-Ajumogobia, H. A. Nganjiwa and Agbadu James Fishim are currently under trial for corruption related offenses (Gbadamosi cited in Ayodeji, 2018). Apart from corrupt practices and misconduct in law adjudication in the country, the institution of the judiciary is also being challenged by factors such as delays in court proceedings, abuse of court processes, abuse of rule of law, culture of self-help, among others.

One can see from all the foregoing that the operators of the three arms of government have not done much vis-à-vis the attainment of the ideals of good governance in Nigeria since 1999. Their good governance deficits has rather manifested and continued to manifest in different forms and guises. Obviously the operators of these three arms of government see their positions in government as an avenue for primitive accumulation of wealth. Underscoring the unfolding governance deficits in Nigeria, Kesselman, et

al (2018), observes that, “democratization in Nigeria - 18 years after the exit of the military from power - has yet to produce effective accountable governance” (p.512). Similarly, in what appeared to be an admittance of good governance deficits in the country, Vice President Yemi Osinbajo agrees that all the three tiers of government, the executive, the legislature and the judiciary are corrupt and their performances have not only left much to be desired but have also affected governance negatively in Nigeria (Ojomoyela, 2016). Obadan (2001), was right when he argues that bad governance as typified in the tendency to divert public resources for private gain; mismanagement and misallocation of public resources; failure to establish a predictable framework for law and government behavior that is conducive to development; arbitrary rules and regulations which impede the functioning of markets and encouragement of rent seeking; setting priorities that are inconsistent with development, etc, is hostile to economic and national development. In such circumstances, he argues further that the authority of governments over their people tends to be progressively eroded and governance becomes eroded by systemic corruption and lack of accountability and transparency. All these provide opportunities for the well-connected elites and interest groups in the society to corner for themselves a sizeable proportion of the society’s resources at the expense of the masses. Obviously, the above descriptions symbolically represent the nature of Nigeria’s Fourth Republic.

Civil Society Organizations and Good Governance in Nigeria

The concept of civil society organizations assumed more significance with the end of the cold war in the late 1980s and early 1990s as a means to improve governance and democratization. As the cold war ended, there was the need to set good governance, the rule of law and respect for human rights as priority objectives in development across the world. Thus a vibrant civil society was considered as an important pillar for establishing and sustaining of democratization efforts. This is why almost all international donors today usually mention civil society as an important factor to influence decisions of the state before providing development assistance. International donor institutions usually highlight civil society responsibility for a democratic state and its dynamic role in pushing for social, economic and political change (DFID, 2001a; DFID, 2001b; DFID, 2005; USAID, 2005).

Civil society organizations are relatively new in Nigeria and Africa as a whole especially when compared with those in developed democracies of Europe and America. However, it has emerged as a very important concept in the democratization process in Africa. Civil society has been defined not only as the engine of democracy in Nigeria and elsewhere, but also as equally crucial to the vitality of the state (Eminue, 2001; Kukah, 2003; Nwachukwu, 2006; Nwachukwu 2008; Nwachukwu, 2017). This is why Chazan (1996), says that the nurturing of civil society is widely perceived as the most effective means of controlling repeated abuses of state power, holding rulers accountable to their citizens and establishing the foundation of durable democratic government.

As we saw in the preceding section, Nigeria's democracy has continued to witness repeated abuses of state power that has manifested in different forms and guises such as reckless misrule and behavior by elected officials, corrupt practices and abuse of office by public officials, lack of respect for the rule of law and due process, lack of political accountability and transparency, electoral malpractices and coercive politics, lack of popular participation, political violence, financial impropriety, etc. Democratic institutions in Nigeria such as the executive, legislature, judiciary, etc, exist only in form but not in content. Most elected representatives and political office holders still exhibit authoritarian and dictatorial tendencies while carrying out state matters. Such representatives instead of genuinely representing their people and constituencies will rather pay attention to their parochial selfish interests and that of their close supporters. In fact, the political environment is increasingly playing down on the political roles of the people thereby making them irrelevant in a system they are supposed to be sovereign. This is the main reason why the people are continuously finding it difficult to hold their representatives and political office holders accountable and answerable to them. Since democracy is all about the people, it is understood that any distortion on the role(s) they are supposed to play invariably translates to distortion on democracy itself.

However, civil society groups have the potentials to apply pressure on the government and demand for policies that foster democracy, development and good

governance. Also, they are always better positioned in making sure that elections are open and transparent and demanding for reforms in institutions such as the judiciary, legislature, executive, police, local government, etc. In other words, civil society organizations can positively and genuinely contribute to the deepening of democracy and accordingly help to bring about good governance in Nigeria by entrenching and legitimizing political institutions, processes and the culture of democracy as well as by contesting, de-legitimizing and opposing authoritarian, undemocratic and uncivil practices and dispositions (Jega, 2007).

It is well known that civil society organizations have provided services and direction to the Nigerian people for many years in the country. Their activities were manifest during authoritarian military regimes. It is on record that civil society groups played an important role in the ouster of military rule in the country and in bringing about democratic rule on May 29th, 1999. Civil society organizations such as Campaign for Democracy (CD), Civil Liberties Organizations (CLO), Committee for the Defense of Human Rights (CDHR), Transition Monitoring Group (TMG), National Democratic Coalition (NADECO), and many others used various means and strategies to fight military dictatorship. Having played this significant role in bringing about democracy in 1999, civil society groups should not rest on their oars but should rather work conscientiously hard to ensure that the much-desired task of deepening democracy vis-à-vis the provision of good governance is achieved in Nigeria. This means that they must double their efforts in this regard. Being able to do all these according to Jega (2007), requires "confronting enormous challenges

and surmounting them. Challenges associated with changing entrenched attitudes, behaviors and mind sets engendered under authoritarian rule; challenges relating to ensuring that institutions evolve and discharge their functions creditably; and challenges pertaining to ensuring that the in-built processes are transparent, effective and capable of yielding credible and acceptable results” (p.248).

Since the advent of the Fourth Republic in 1999, civil society groups have intervened in different ways such as anti-corruption crusade, good governance advocacy, budget tracking, political reform advocacy, voter education, election observation, campaign finance monitoring, electoral reform advocacy, etc, in order to deepen Nigeria’s democracy and accordingly bring about good governance. Despite the good intentions of civil society organizations in this regard, it is regrettable to note that the citizens are yet to enjoy the dividends of good governance from their leaders. But this does not mean that civil society organizations have not recorded some successes in their different interventions.

For example, civil society groups have intervened in the area of anti-corruption crusade in the country. The negative impact of corruption on democracy, good governance and development is well documented in extant literature. Successive government in Nigeria particularly in the present Fourth Republic have made concerted efforts to tackle corruption in the country but the malaise remains endemic and intractable. Civil society groups have intervened in

different ways in order to contribute to the anti-corruption crusade. The Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) is a major civil society organization that has been working very hard in the area of anti-corruption crusade. According to Olukotun (2018), the SERAP, which was founded in 2004, has been very visible in public advocacy especially in the area of anti-corruption. It succeeded in securing court judgment in respect of the stoppage of public officials earning double pay in the form of pensions, as well as being currently on the payroll. This led to the then Senate President, Bukola Saraki, for example, forfeiting his pension from the Kwara State Government where he was a governor. Similarly, the signing of the Freedom of Information Act into law by former President Goodluck Jonathan on May 28th, 2011, after about a decade of consistent and fearless struggle and advocacy by civil society groups such as Civil Liberties Organizations, Media Rights Agenda and the Nigerian Union of Journalists, is one of the achievements of civil society organizations in Nigeria. The Freedom of Information Act was expected to consolidate the existing legal laws established over the years to help curb corruption, bad governance, create accountable and transparent government and contribute to empowering Nigerian citizens to exert some degree of control over the actions of their leaders and monitor the use of public resources (Dode, 2016; Egugbo, 2018).

Also, civil society organizations have over the years intervened to ensure that the rule of law guides the activities of the Nigerian government. This is in realization of the fact that the rule of law is the bastion of democracy and good governance. According to Egugbo (2018), when the death of former

President Umar Musa Yar'Adua almost created a constitutional crisis in Nigeria because of the political controversy that surrounded his death, it was civil society organizations led by Save Nigeria Group (SNG) that occupied Abuja in protest to ensure that the then Vice President, Goodluck Jonathan, was made acting President and eventually the President of the country in 2010. The National Assembly had to invoke the doctrine of necessity that helped them to elevate the then Vice President to Acting President. In a similar vein, the Save Nigeria Group (SNG) led other civil society organizations such as Democratic Social Movement (DSM), Joint Action Forum (JAF), Maryland I (MI), and the Campaign for Restoration of National Dignity (CARND), etc, in the anti-fuel subsidy removal protest in Abuja in January 2012. Their protest or demonstration made the government to reverse the deregulation policy and returned to the status quo regime of fixing pump price, which was put at 97 Naira per liter.

Civil society groups have also played tremendous and active role in the area of elections, election monitoring and voters' education and have from time to time expressed their opinion about the conduct of elections in the country. This is because of the fact that election is one of the most important mechanisms for the realization of the objectives of democracy and good governance. Civil society groups such as the Transition Monitoring Group (TMG), Human Rights Watch (HRW), CLEEN Foundation (CF), West Africa Network for Peace Building (WANEP), International Foundation for

Election Systems (IFES), etc, have over the years intervened in voter education and election monitoring in the country. For example, the Transition Monitoring Group (TMG), which is a consortium of domestic election observer groups reported that the elections of 2007 "were seriously marred by egregious irregularities and malpractices to the extent of not only compromising the integrity of the ballot in many states, but also calling into question the reliability and validity of the result declared by INEC (cited in Egugbo, 2018,p. 224). It is all obvious that the various reports of civil society groups particularly in the area of elections have helped to sensitize the voters as well as help the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the government to carry out some electoral reforms for the improvement of the electoral system in the country.

It is important to state now that the extent to which civil society groups can contribute to the task of helping to bring about good governance in Nigeria is related to the extent to which they (civil society) practice democracy internally. In other words, civil society organizations should have a democratic political culture while their activities and practices must be based on democratic conduct and ideals. Also, civil society groups must transcend ethnic and religious chauvinism or bigotry and uphold the values of patriotism, civility, rule of law, due process, tolerance, compromise, accountability and transparency, etc. All these they must do so as to help in the task of deepening Nigeria's democracy vis-à-vis good governance as well as helping the country to actualize her development objectives. Diamond (1996), has provided some advantages or benefits of an organized

civil society vis-à-vis democracy and good governance in the following context:

- i. An organized civil society serves as a watchdog to check the excesses of government, to expose and curtail or put a stop to human rights violation, abuse of the rule of law and infringements of constitutional provision.
- ii. Civil society organizations can supplement the role of political parties in stimulating political participation, increasing the political efficacy and skill of democratic citizens, and promoting an appreciation of the obligations as well as the right of democratic citizenship.
- iii. Civil society is considered as a crucial arena for the development of other democratic attributes such as tolerance, moderation, a willingness to compromise, and respect for opposing viewpoints which are better experienced in organizational participation in civil society.
- iv. It serves to enhance the bargaining power of interest groups and provides inclusive mechanisms for them through the articulation, aggregation and representation of their interests.
- v. Participation in civil society organizations will cut across and weaken long-standing regional, religious, ethnic or partisan cleavages and thus create a new type of citizenship in which individuals will more likely associate with different types of people with divergent political

interest and opinions. It thus provides alternative for negotiation and compromise in a multi-faceted society.

- vi. It helps in recruiting and training new political leaders, not only in technical and administrative skills but also in normative standards of public accountability and transparency. As time goes on, members of the civil society organizations gain skills and confidence that will qualify them for service in government or party politics.
- vii. Civil society organizations also disseminate information, thus helping citizens to collectively pursue and defend their interests and values. It thus provides citizens useful information about government activities that do not depend on what government says it is doing. By contradicting the official story, civil society organizations make it more difficult for government to cover up repression and abuse of power (pp.5-17).

The foregoing analysis by Larry Diamond surely provides civil society groups in Nigeria with variety of ways by which they can contribute to good governance in the country. For example, it is obvious that Nigeria's democracy lacks the legal and bureaucratic means to check corruption but the civil society with its free, robust and inquisitive institutions and mechanisms has the capacity for pressing for institutional reforms, which can fill that gap. This is why Eminiue (2001), says that "civil society groups provide the basis for limiting state power and provides society with the most effective means of exercising control over democratic institutions. They also curtail the excesses of

the state by holding back the state's propensity towards tyranny and oppression" (p.157).

Just like Larry Diamond, Wole Soyinka (cited in Onah, 2007), articulates the various contributions he believes civil society organizations should be able to make to good governance in Nigeria in the following context:

- i. Through their engagements, civil society organizations should add value to peoples' participation in the nation's democratic process. They should be at the forefront of constitutional reform, protection and review process, and of policy and legislative reform that empower citizens and consolidate Nigeria's democracy.
- ii. They should be able to provide a voice for the participation of citizens in issues of national resource allocation and distribution. According to Soyinka, they should also engage in the budget process, particularly gender parity advocacy, to ensure equitable allocation of national resources. They should also undertake civil education in the area of human rights, electoral processes and gender equality.
- iii. An increased role of civil society organizations should be able to enhance governance through the greater participation of actors other than the government in support of the public good, the rule of law, transparent processes and citizen's participation in public affairs (pp.10-11).

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Despite all the foregoing positive nexus between civil society groups and good governance in Nigeria, it is pertinent to point out here that civil society organizations in Nigeria are faced with numerous challenges, problems and constraints that impede or hinder their ability towards playing their good governance roles effectively. According to Konteh (2006), most of the challenges of civil society organizations are because of the controversy over their identity, legitimacy and mandate. The very definition of what constitutes civil society is a major challenge. Critics of civil society organizations often question the moral authority civil society organizations have to represent the voiceless since they are not elected. Similarly, the very nature of their formation makes them only accountable to their financiers. Elected government officials are therefore often at pains in accepting criticisms from such 'self-styled' organizations and individuals. This is because government officials see themselves as having the only authentic legal authority and mandate to represent their people. Some people do not even see civil society organizations as representing their interest.

In addition, many civil society actors show uncivil behaviour and preach hatred against other groups. Also, civil society organizations sometimes engage in unhealthy competition for access to resources and for promoting their different agenda. This has contributed to the fragmentation of civil society groups to the extent that they rarely undertake collective actions. This shows a clear lack of coordination among civil society groups (Nwachukwu, 2018). The following are therefore some of the challenges, problems and limitations civil society groups face in making their best contributions towards deepening democracy for good governance in Nigeria:

Inadequacy of operational equipment and infrastructure.

- ii. Lack of specialized skills and qualified personnel.
- iii. Poor and inadequate funding.
- iv. Inadequate ideological base and poor internal management.
- v. Over-concentration in urban centres and thus the lack of a rural constituency.
- vi. Wastage or inefficient use of resources.
- vii. Dissipation of energy through unnecessary duplication of efforts and petty quarrels and rivalries.
- viii. Problem of lack of coordination and unity between and amongst civil society organizations.
- ix. Tendency to avoid partnership and opting for the do-it-alone attitude.
- x. Lack of sensitivity to the plural nature of Nigeria, and the impact of prolonged military rule on ethno-regional and religious divisions.
- xi. Crass opportunism and narrow mindedness of members of civil society organizations.
- xii. Lack of internal democracy and transparency.
- xiii. Infiltration of civil society organizations by the government (Nandole, 2003; Jega, 2007; Egugbo, 2018).

If civil society organizations in Nigeria are to continue playing an active role in deepening Nigeria's democracy vis-à-vis good governance, all hands must be on deck to overcome the challenges and problems discussed and outlined above.

According to Jega (2007), strengthening the capacity of civil society groups could entail the following:

- i. Acquisition of basic facilities and equipment, which are necessary for organizational efficiency, effectiveness and measurable output.
- ii. Promotion of increased and focused networking among civil society organizations.
- iii. Training of cadres in grassroots mobilization and advocacy.
- iv. Training of cadres for acquisition of leadership and good governance skills.
- v. Promotion of collaborative joint programmes of advocacy and mobilization.
- vi. Diversification of sources of funding through creative revenue generational activities.
- vii. Need to coordinate and control the civil society phenomenon in order to reduce excessive reliance on foreign grants (pp.255-256).

Also, Utomi (cited in Nwachukwu, 2008), has articulated the tools and resources required for effective civil society organizations participation in good governance and development. His postulations, which are no doubt relevant to our discourse here, are as follows:

- i. Comprehensive, effective and supportive civil society organization policy.
- ii. Facilitative regulatory framework.
- iii. Adequate technical and infrastructural capacity.
- iv. Impeccable research, advocacy, management, evaluation and dissemination skills.
- v. Extensive and effective inter-state networks, as well as intra-civil society organization partnership.

- vi. Suitable and effective institutional framework for self-regulation, partnerships and national, regional and international consultations (pp.221-222).

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper has attempted an analysis of the nexus between civil society organizations and good governance in Nigeria. It is obvious from all indications that democratic institutions such as the executive, legislature and the judiciary are not working optimally in Nigeria and this has had adverse effects on good governance in the country. Considering the fact that democracy has not taken its full shape in the country and bearing in mind that members of the political class alone are incapable of deepening Nigeria's democracy, this paper argues that civil society groups have important roles to play in bringing about good governance in the country. It is our view here that because civil society groups in the country have not organized themselves in vibrant and effective manner that the Nigerian state is experiencing the impact of governance in different negative ways. In other words, civil society groups have not been able to respond adequately to the challenges expected of them in enriching good governance in the country. There is therefore, the urgent need for the organs and institutions of civil society to re-order their priorities and rise up to the challenge by effectively and efficiently organizing themselves so as to be able to carry out the arduous task of helping Nigeria to

deepen her democracy vis-à-vis good governance. To do all these effectively, civil society groups need to undergo a process of internal democratic renewals and accordingly build structures that can effectively and promptly respond to state institutions.

However, bearing in mind the many problems, challenges and constraints of civil society organizations in the country, there is every need to strengthen them so as to maximize their contributions to good governance in the country. There is therefore, the urgent need for all concerned persons and bodies in the country to come together to help rescue civil society groups from their acute constraints and weaknesses and accordingly empower them with more efficient and effective facilities, resources, skills and methods of operations. It is pertinent to point out here that civil society organizations can only be effective in their contributions only when they function within specific national arrangements as it is within these arrangements that their contributions to good governance will make sense. Diamond (1999), has rightly emphasized that "civil society must be autonomous from the state, but not alienated from it. It must be watchful but respectful of state authority" (p.15) if it is to be effective in the task of helping to bring about good governance in the country. According to Aiyede (2001), civil society organizations marked by alienation and disengagement from the state will be feeble building blocks for democracy and good governance.

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