

In search of good governance in Nigeria: the Islamic paradigm

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Abstract

In 2014, Nigeria lavishly marked her centenary anniversary with fanfare. Notwithstanding the colossal amount spent on it by the Federal Government, there were diverse feelings concerning the historical event. The political class jubilated because at least Nigeria maintained her unity in spite of all odds. To the economists, it was worthless considering the down-turn of the economy and dwindling industrialization. To the elites, the flamboyant ceremony was meaningless because not much infrastructural or technological development was accomplished given the long age of the country; while to the common man it was a sheer waste of fund where poverty rate is outrageous. Apparently, the bane of the low development in Nigeria lies on purportedly bad governance of various administrations in the country over the years. Hence, the purpose of this study is to search for principles of good governance. Coincidentally, there is on-going clamour for change in the Nigeria political landscape promising to give the nation a new beginning. Therefore, considering Islam as a comprehensive code of conduct and a complete way of life whose rules withstand the test of time, the paper examines its provisions on governance with a view to exploiting such as paradigm for good governance in Nigeria. The study adopts historical and analytical methods to review governance in Nigeria vis-à-vis the search for more viable options from Islam.

Keywords: Centenary, Development, Poverty, Governance, Paradigm

Introduction

Governance is a system by which a nation or community is administered or governed. It is the process through which “a plurality of actors aim to produce and deliver public purpose in the broad sense of political visions, operative plans, problem definitions, policy solutions, infrastructures, regulations, resource allocations, and public services”². Apparently, governance can be described as existing either for the public good or for self-interest of the political actors. Nigeria had witnessed varying dimensions in governance since its birth a hundred years ago. Hence, the phenomenon of good governance or otherwise finds index in government. To some Nigerians the country is a failed nation prompted by selfish leadership, corruption cankerworm and moral decadence while to some others Nigeria is a great nation at her age³ at least for holding her unity despite diversity. These contending views notwithstanding our concern arises from the point of emerging problems in the country with regards to security challenges, economic doldrums, political turbulence, massive unemployment and the gap between the rich and the poor among others. These predicaments

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² B. Badie, D. Berg-Schlosser and L. Morlino (eds.), *International Encyclopedia of Political Science* Vol. 4. United Kingdom: SAGE Publications Ltd; 2011, 1029.

³ I. O. Tony: “Nigeria from 1914 Until Date” risenetworks.org/2014/01/07/nigeria-from-1914-until-date accessed 30 August, 2015.

necessitate the need to diagnose the governorship problems and to search for basis of good governance.

Given the strength of Islam as a complete code of life for man in all ages, attempts were made in this paper to examine the provisions of Islam on governance with a view to advancing same as paradigm for good governance in Nigeria. The paper postulates that the Islamic provisions on *mas'uliyah* (accountability), *'adala* (justice), *taqwa* (God consciousness), *shura* (mutual consultation), *amanah* (trust) and many others are viable and effective antidotes for good governance.

Concept of good governance

Good governance refers to acceptable standard or model for how states and nations should be governed by the constituted authority. Thus, Jega defined good governance as “responsibility and responsiveness of public officials – both elected and appointed – or the governors, to the electorate – the governed, aspirations of the governed, as well as acting in accordance with their dictates”⁴. Factors that precipitate good governance include adherence to the rule of law in the enthronement of the leaders, transparency, accountability, inclusiveness, effectiveness and impartiality⁵. Anything short of these leads to bad governance as is usually the result where corruption, nepotism, favoritism, injustice and lawlessness prevail. Often than not, good governance inspires physical and socio-economic developments, reform agenda, security of lives and properties and installation of judicial independence all of which are catalysts for political stability and national development. Good governance, otherwise described as managerialism⁶ or entrepreneurial government⁷ presumes the citizens as customers whose aspirations should attract topmost concern in governance. By implication, good governance orchestrates taking the nation’s destiny in the hands of the people themselves rather than allowing the national resources to be controlled by the foreign authorities as is the case in Nigeria leaving the citizenry to wallow in abject poverty.

Assessment of the Nigeria political history

It is discernible that for a better assessment of governance in Nigeria there is a need for recourse to the political history of the nation. History bears the fact that what is being identified as the Nigeria nation today had incorporated a number of kingdoms (*e.g.* the Benin, Yoruba, Urhobo kingdoms), caliphates and empires (*e.g.* Sokoto caliphate, Kanem-Borno and Hausa-Fulani empires) which enjoyed some forms of independent governance prior to the advent of British imperialism⁸. The present day Nigeria (plus or minus some territories) came into existence with formal amalgamation of conquered territories of the North and South in

⁴ A. M. Jega, *Democracy, Good Governance and Development in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited, 2007, 158.

⁵ Badie, Berg-Schosser and Morlino (eds.), *International Encyclopedia of Political Science* ..., 1016.

⁶ O. E. Hughes, *Public Management and Administration: An Introduction*. Second Edition. London: Macmillan, 1998, 177.

⁷ D. Osborne and T. Geebler, *Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1992, 20.

⁸ S. O. Aghalino, “History of Nigeria from 1914 to Date” www.slideshare.net accessed 30 August, 2015. See also S. M. Jamiu, *Islam & Politics in Nigeria 1903 – 1983*. Ilorin: Lavgark Investment Ltd; 2010/1434 AH, 74-76.

1914 by the British Colonial Governor, Lord Lugard⁹. The amalgamation was of course a marriage of inconvenience laden with suspicion and mistrust between the diverse ethnic groups¹⁰. However, through the philosophy of give and take by the founding fathers of Nigeria's politics and the people at large, a national spirit was evolved with the goal of attaining independence from the shackles of the imperialists. Until Nigeria gained her independence in 1960 and republican status in 1963, the British dominated the political and economic control in a manner that primarily favoured the interest of the colonial powers.

Consequent upon Nigeria's independence in 1960, it was anticipated that governance will forebear brighter prospects where Nigerians will live in justice, peace and prosperity as could be found anywhere else in the developed world. Contrarily, despite the independence, Nigeria is yet to lift her head from technological and economic dependence on the developed world. Nigeria still reclines on neo-colonial heritage politically, economically, educationally and even in orientation. Beside, Nigeria had been engulfed in political instability and bad governance. Moreover, the political tensions, which Nigeria has experienced since independence, are rooted in part in the regional structure of administration imposed by the British. The North and the South dichotomy influenced governance; hence, the constant desire by the different ethnic groups in Nigeria to respectively control the national government and ensure access to the national revenue or resources¹¹. From 1960 to date governance had been by Nigerians ruling themselves. Within a period of 55 years (*i.e.* 1960-2015), Nigeria experienced various forms of governance under either civilian administration or military dictatorship. The civilian governments had been either of parliamentary or presidential system. In all, there had been fifteen (15) leaders in Nigeria each one with distinct form of governance. It is often being widely acknowledged till date that the pioneer civilian leaders of the first republic between 1960 and 1966 proved their sincerity of purpose in governance. They were selfless in service and aversed amazing wealth; yet the administration was truncated prematurely in a coup d'état in 1966 on the excuse of ethnic chauvinism, tribalism and sectionalism.

The military juntas assumed governance between 1966 - 1979 and 1983-1998. For the military having taking longer period of governance in Nigeria, little applaus need be passed on the regime for bringing about some level of infrastructural developments, creation of many states as possible and instilling some level of discipline (which though was not allowed to survive) among Nigerians through military doggedness. However, the military administration was faulted for its disregard for human rights, zombie approach, high handedness, dictatorship and discreet corruption¹². The authoritarian regimes of the military variety had given rise to so many complex and interrelated processes, most of which have significant negative consequences on governance in Nigeria¹³. Political instability and corruption are some of the devastating consequences of the military rule. Hence, there were

⁹ A. Abdullahi, "Nigeria Political History – 1914 to Date" www.vanguardngr.com accessed 30 August, 2015.

¹⁰ Tony, "Nigeria from 1914 Until Date"...

¹¹ R. Dibia, *Public Administration, Politics and Change in the Principles of Governance in Nigeria*. Lagos: Mbeyi & Associates (Nigeria) Limited, 2004, 25.

¹² Tony, "Nigeria from 1914 Until Date" ...

¹³ Jega, *Democracy, Good Governance and Development in Nigeria*, 77.

series of coup *d'etat*¹⁴ which led to the taking over of leadership - from one military government by another or from civilian by the military - on some ulterior motives. Given the global political trend for democracy, the military relinquished power to the civilian and exited from the political scene from 1999 to date. Through democratic process leaders were elected into positions of governance. Subsequently, there is a widespread devolution of dividends of democracy though with bias in favour of partisanship. Moreover, the civilian presidential system was not only found to be expensive, it makes corruption to flourish tremendously among all and sundry (*i.e.* politicians, elites and commoners) and in all sectors of the economy. Currently, righteousness is being thrown over-board while viciousness pervades the entire Nigerian society. Poverty is at its height and injustice prevails even in the court of law¹⁵. It is now survival of the 'sharp man' *i.e.* he who can outplay another in odious and criminal acts. Lawlessness and insincerity permeate the nation. The loathsome in governance prompted the clamour for change in leadership which presently ushered in a new administration in May, 2015 whereby Nigerians are full of high hope for good governance. Hence, the focus of this paper is desired to address this aspiration.

Precedence of good governance in Islam

It has been a common observation that Islam is a religion that transcends dogmatic rituals. Hence, it contains a comprehensive and perfect code of life (Q.5:3) that embraces all aspects of human endeavors. This position is further corroborated by the Quranic claims that nothing is being left untouched in the scripture (Q.6:38). The Quran, which is the primary source of guidance and legislation in Islam is supplemented by the *Hadith* (Prophetic traditions) for purpose of elucidation and amplification on its principles. The two books are therefore indispensable theoretical references in matters of precedence in Islamic ideology. Similarly, the political life of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and the rightly guided caliphs provide sufficient legacy particularly as a frame work for discourse in this context. Therefore, combination of these sources avail us with parameters on the precedence of good governance in Islam.

The principles of good governance are derived from several verses of the Glorious Quran (24:55; 22:41 *etc.*). Essentially, the emphasis is on the fact that a chosen and appointed leader is like any other fellow, being a vicegerent of Allah in the position he occupies. This presupposes that his actions in governance should conform with the dictates of Allah and the rules of law rather than predispose himself to his whims and caprices. Hence, the Qur'an admonished:

O Da'ud! Verily! We have placed you as a successor on the earth; so judge between men in truth (and justice) and follow not your desire for it will mislead you from the path of Allah ... (Q.38:26)

¹⁴ Nigeria has had eleven series of coup *d'etat* between 1966 and 1996 with five successful, two abortive, one attempted and three alleged. For details see – “The History of Coup D’etat in Nigeria” <http://info-naija.blogspot.com.ng/2009/03> accessed 30 September, 2015.

¹⁵ “Fraudulent, Corrupt Persons Occupying Judicial Offices in Nigeria”. www.vanguardngr.com accessed 30 August, 2015. See also Vanguard Newspaper, June 16, 2015.

Although, the name of Prophet Da'ud is specifically mentioned in the injunction, he was simply adopted as a case study of a king or leader on whom the injunction applies.

The Qur'anic principles of good governance were actually exemplified in the statesmanship of the *'ummah* (Islamic state in Madinah) by Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Indeed, he was apparently just, truthful, firm, selfless, democratic, patient, kind, considerate and of course exemplary in governance. These qualities were exhibited in the course of decision making processes through mutual consultation¹⁶; presiding in judgment between members of his community without fear or favour regardless of creed or ethnicity¹⁷; benevolence and equity in administration and magnanimity towards friends and foes alike¹⁸ and leadership by example¹⁹. Given his unquantifiable experience in leadership he postulated several theories and guidelines for good governance²⁰. His outstanding achievements as an astute and charismatic leader was universally acclaimed not only by his disciples but also by his critics. Pertinently, Joseph Hell was cited to have remarked thus:

Muhammad is a great man without whom the world would appear incomplete. He initiated and brought to fulfilment spiritual forces that would never have come to birth without him. The extra-ordinary vitality of these forces proves even today positively that the founder of Islam belongs to the past and to the future, and to both so completely that they cannot be distinguished from the present²¹.

Notwithstanding the socio-political challenges that bedeviled the *'ummah* upon the demise of the Prophet, his successors left indelible prints on governance for the succeeding generation of (Muslim) leaders. The first *khalif* (successor) was Abu Bakr. In his two year administration between 632 - 634 C.E he was ever humble and humane. He was never ostentatious but led a very simple and contented life²². His prudence induced the preservation of public fund from personal aggrandizements or wasteful expenditure. The second *khalif* was 'Umar b.al-Khattab who reigned between 634 - 644 C.E. He was just, diplomatic and pragmatic in providing welfare package for the citizens and initiating physical infrastructure. He advocated justice and equality whereby the pauper and the prince were treated with equity²³. The third *khalif* was 'Uthman b. Affan (644 - 656 CE). He was renowned for protection of the most vulnerable citizens, that is, women and children. He provided the welfare needs of his people by the construction of dams to supply water and to prevent flood, roads, bridges, mosques and guest houses²⁴. As a merchandize, he made asset declaration and

¹⁶ M. F. Gulen, Muhammad: *The Messenger of God (An Analysis of the Prophet's Life)*. New Jersey: Tughra Books, 2014, 240.

¹⁷ Ameer Ali, *The Spirit of Islam*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1978, 74ff.

¹⁸ Muhammad Husayn Hykal, *The Life of Muhammad*. Lagos: Academy Press Ltd; 1982. 168, 185-186.

¹⁹ Gulen, *Muhammad: The Messenger of God...*, 228.

²⁰ See – Maulana Fazlul-Karim, *Al-Hadis (An English Translation & Commentary of Mishkat-ul-Masabih)* Bk 11. Lahore: Malik Sirajuddin & Sons, 1979, 581ff.

²¹ A. Rahim, *Islamic History*, Lagos: Islamic Publications Bureau, 2001, 51.

²² M. O. A. Abdul, *The Classical Caliphate (Islamic Institutions)*. Lagos: Islamic Publications Bureau, 1980, 53.

²³ *Ibid*, 54. See also Jamil Ahmad, *Hundred Great Muslims*. np: np,1977, 35.

²⁴ Rahim, *Islamic History*, 88.

relinquished his possessions for the benefits of the downtrodden masses. The fourth *khalif* was ʿAli b. Abi Talib (656 - 661 CE). He had zero tolerance for corruption and negligence of duty²⁵. More importantly, the four orthodox caliphs made piety and accountability the foundation and cornerstone of governance.

Considering the vast records of success of governance in the political dispensations of the early Islamic history based on the divine injunctions, the Prophetic traditions and the precedence from the *khulafa' rashidun* (rightly guided caliphs) there are efficient and sufficient paradigm for good governance in the contemporary political system.

Towards good governance in Nigeria: antidotes from Islam

From the preceding unit, it is discernible that the theories of good governance was formulated in the Qur'an and the *Hadith*. Besides, its precedence was pragmatically set by the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and his orthodox successors through the establishment of functional Islamic state. Findings in this study has also revealed that there is a wide gap between what obtains of good governance in Nigeria compare to the tenets of Islam on stewardship. Although, Nigeria is not outrightly an Islamic state, it is on record that the country has predominant Muslim population²⁶. That not alone, of all the fifteen (15) heads of government that Nigeria has had from 1960 to date nine (9) were Muslims²⁷ including the incumbent. Although, it is not the focus of this paper to assess the level of performance of each of the leaders, it is curious to observe that minus the regimes Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida (1985 - 1993) and Sani Abacha (1993), that of all other Muslim leaders had overriding influence on the political and socio-economic changes in Nigeria. This, presumably are due to their religious inclination, that is Islam, among other things. This presupposes that the antidotes of Islam, if widely embraced without prejudice, are efficacious for the foundation of good governance in Nigeria.

In Islam the bedrock of good governance is piety, God consciousness and submissiveness to Allah as the Dominion of authority. Thus, the Qur'an reiterates that to Allah belongs the dominionship (Q.67:1) and He gives power to whom He wills or withdraws it from whom He wills (Q.3:26). That not alone, the Qur'an reads thus:

Allah has promised those among you who believe and do righteous good deeds, that He will certainly grant them succession to (the present rulers) in the land, as He granted it to those before them ... And He will surely give them in exchange a safe security after their fear provided they worship Me and do not associate anything (in worship) with Me (Q. 24:55).

²⁵ M. A. Khan, *The Pious Caliphs*. Great Britain: Diwan, nd, 228.

²⁶ According to the Africa Muslim Population statistics in 2014, the Muslim Population in Nigeria is 121.52m constituting 70% out of 173.6m. Retrieved from <http://www.muslimpopulation.com/africa> on 30 August, 2015.

²⁷ The ninth is the current President, Muhammadu Buhari who took over mantle of leadership on 29 May, 2015. For details on the list of the leaders see – “Nigerian Leaders since 1914” www.onlinenigeria.com/leaders.asp accessed 30 August, 2015.

Those who if We give them power in the land, enjoin the observation of the prayers, payment of *zakat* (alms tax), doing of good and forbid the vice. And with Allah rests the end of (all) matters (of creatures) (Q.22:41).

Firstly, these verses awaken the consciousness of the leaders to believe in Allah as the source of power; so it is needless wrestling for it by all means talk-less of bloodletting. It is pertinent to observe that the contrary holds sway in Nigeria politics where many politicians struggle for power at all cost; hence, they hire thugs for all kinds of dastardly acts during electioneering campaigns or for political overtures²⁸. Secondly, the verses advocate the features of good governance to include sacredness of governance as a trust from Allah; righteousness and piety by the leaders; service to Allah and humanity (*i.e.* protecting the weak and caring for the needy) and temporal nature of authority/leadership for an appointed time (*i.e.* tenureship), hence power shifts from one to another according to the divine will. Moreover, the injunctions enjoin social justice and leadership by example as much as it indicates that fulfilment of righteousness in governance fosters security, orderliness, peace and prosperity. Contrarily, the Nigeria experience reveals that governance is predominated by sit tight syndrome and inordinate ambitions. Hence, the current wave of insecurity, anxiety and lawlessness. Besides, Islam considers good governance as an act of *'ibadah* (worship) and therefore exhorts selflessness in the discharge of the political responsibilities. It is thus pertinent to view governance from the concept of Islamic eschatology (*al-ukhrawiyyah*); that is the ultimate destiny of mankind and the world. This presupposes that a ruler should bear in mind that governance (or the entire earthly life) is a stage in which he takes his entrance and exit and later on he is called upon to render account of his actions. In that wise, while the unbelieving leader thinks of his perpetuity in office, a believer who has the opportunity for governance being bestowed on him by Allah thinks of the transient nature of the leadership position, his mortality and unknown time of death, the ephemerality of the world, resurrection after death, accountability, divine judgement and final abode of paradise and hell for good doers and evil doers respectively²⁹.

As a trustee, Islam charges the leader who holds reign of governance to discharge his responsibilities dutifully, sincerely and faithfully by rendering the trust (*amanah*) to their rightful owners (Q.4:58). Invariably, accountability (*mas'uliyah*) in stewardship is vital in Islam as a factor for good governance. The leader is required to be thoroughly transparent in office. Considering good governance as an act of *'ibadah*, Islam does not conceive leadership as a means of self-enrichment in any form nor as an immunity for transgression against the law politically, morally, or financially. Hence a leader is held absolutely responsible for his actions. Thus, the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said: "every one of you is a steward and is accountable for that which is committed to his charge. The ruler is a steward and he is accountable for his charge..."³⁰. Furthermore, a leader is also deemed to be responsible for service delivery in his administration and the official conducts of his lieutenants. Hence, the

²⁸ "Violence and Thuggery in Nigerian Elections" <http://thelawyerschronicle.com/violence-and-thuggery-in-nigeria-elections> accessed 30 September, 2015.

²⁹ Is-haq Akintola, "Good Governance in Islamic Eschatology: Ahmad Sani as a Case Study" in Is-haq Akintola, Badmus O. Yusuf and T. M. Salisu (eds.), *Correlates of Islam*. Zaria: The Ahmadu Bello University Press Ltd; 2009, 123.

³⁰ Abi Zakariya' Yahya b. Sharaf An – Nawawi, *Riyad'us Salihin min Kalami Sayyid al Mursalin*. Ibadan: Iksan Islamic Publishers, 1985, 180.

need for adequate supervision and control. The legacy of ʿUmar b. al-Khattab and ʿAli b. Abi Talib are pertinent in this regard. The former was reported to have deposed a renowned Muslim army general, Khalid b. Walid, as an Army Commander on the ground of extravagance and financial impropriety³¹ while ʿAli dealt ruthlessly with his corrupt state officials and as well rebuked his blood relations for illegal use of the state resources³². Therefore, relevance of the Islamic principles of transparency and accountability for good governance in Nigeria forbears asset declaration, prudent management of resources, fiscal and budgetary control, fairness in resource allocation and financial discipline. The same principle applies to offering employment opportunities on the basis of merit rather than mediocrity or ethnic chauvinism.

Moreover, Islam considers justice and equity (*ʿadalah*) as key factors of good governance. Justice in this context refers to equal treatment of citizenry whereby there is no favoritism for the royalty nor cruelty against the peasantry. It also embraces the protection of the weak from the powerful by securing for him his rights from all manners of oppression. In other words, preventing the influential personalities from exploiting the masses. In addition, justice should be upheld in all judicial matters no matter whose ox is gored. Typical examples abound in the legacy of *Khalif* Abu Bakr who publicly vowed on his inauguration that “in my sight the powerful and the weak are alike and to both I wish to render justice”³³. Similarly, *khalif* ʿUmar did not hesitate to inflict hard punishment on his own son for committing a criminal offence in the state; while he also upheld justice against Jablah b. Al-Aiham Ghassani, a statesman in Syria in a suit between him and a poor citizenry³⁴.

For governance to be impactful and efficient, Islam places *shura* (mutual consultation) in a pivot position. *Shura* allows for participatory government whereby the citizens are given the opportunity to have a say in governance. This principle takes its root from the Qurʿan (Q.3:159 and 42:38) thereby institutionalizing consultation or advisory council in governance. The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) laid precedence of this style by consulting his companions in the affairs of the *ʿumma* on politics, warfare and international relations³⁵. For instance, Salman al-Faarisiy, a Persian, was renowned in a *shura* session with the Prophet and his companions for his ingenious and brilliant proposition for the construction of a trench in a warfare to barricade attack on Madinah by the Meccan disbelievers³⁶. This was a novel war approach to the Arabs which rendered the insurgents helpless and induced the victory of the Muslims. *Shura* involves a continuous dialogue between the governed and the governor(s) until a consensus emerges. It is quite an effective process in decision making for good governance. It restricts the executive’s power leaving no loopholes for the potentiality of dictatorship or callousness. *Shura* represents an indigenous

³¹ Rahim, *Islamic History*, 85.

³² Khan, *The Pious Caliphs...*, 229.

³³ Rahim, *Islamic History*, 55.

³⁴ Ahmad, *Hundred Great Muslims*.

³⁵ M. A. Al-Buraey, *Management & Administration in Islam*. Saudi Arabia: np, 1410 AH/1990, 80.

³⁶ Khalid Muhammad Khalid and Abdel-Hamid Eliwa, *Men and Women Around the Messenger* Vol.1. Translated by Muhammad Mustapha Gemeiah and Abdel-Hamid Eliwa. Egypt: Dar Al-Manar, 1423AH/2003, 31.

principle of representative or constitutional government³⁷. The spirit of *shura* is not necessarily that of simple majority vote but one of reasoning and conviction. Thus, neither numerical strength nor personal status (rank) is of any significance in decision making process; rather the basic factor that underlies *shura* discourse is the particular needs of an individual, community or national expediency. This was manifest in the precedence cited on Salman al-Faarisiy where his minority opinion was over-whelmingly embraced by the Prophet and the companions notwithstanding his origin. It is apposite to observe that governance in Nigeria presently involves three arms i.e. Executive, Legislature and Judiciary³⁸. Moreover, the presidential system in vogue encourages appointment of Ministers across the states of the Federation, Hon. Commissioners and Special Advisers to the Executives³⁹. The primary objective of these provisions is to allow for wider consultation and participatory governance by the grass root politicians, commoners, elites, legal practitioners and so on in order to ensure good governance. However, not until the present administration took over in May 2015, this goal remained a mirage due to insincerity, self-centeredness, lack of trust, gross misconduct and indescribable level of corruption. Given the change in administration presently, which is only four to five months old, and the clamour for change in the system of governance, it is germane to propose for a re-orientation of both the leaders in governance and the people being governed in accordance with the Islamic tenets.

In as much as governance is of two indispensable sides i.e. governor(s) and the governed, the discourse on good governance is incomplete if it only centers on one side of it without the other. The attitude of the governed goes a long way to determine the establishment and sustenance of good governance. Thus, it is reiterated in the Qur'an:

Verily! Allah will not change the condition of a people as long as they do not change their state (of goodness) themselves (by committing sins and by being ungrateful and disobedient to Allah)... (Q.13:11)

And it is He Who has made you generations coming after generations, replacing each other on the earth. And He has raised you in ranks, some above others that He may try you in that which He has bestowed on you ... (Q. 6: 165)

These verses signify that good governance does not lie only with the leaders; rather the role of the populace in evolving good governance and change cannot be over-emphasized. In addition, as much as governance is a trust on the leader so it is a trial for the led in respect of faithfulness, loyalty and co-operation. It is thus essential that the citizens should exercise their rights of enfranchisement, in determining who occupies the stewardship position(s). In Islam, the appointment of a leader is made through the *shura* that is advisory or consultative process. Contrarily, in a democratic setting, leaders are appointed through the process of election by eligible voters as applicable in Nigeria for instance. Bearing in mind that Nigeria is not an Islamic state; that the election process is prescribed by the law of the land; and that

³⁷ M. Kerr, *Islamic Reform: The Political and Legal Theories of Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida*. Berkley: University of California Press, 1966, 134.

³⁸ For details see - *1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (amended)*, 2011; Sections 4 – 6.

³⁹ *ibid*, Sections 147, 151 and 192.

the Muslims cannot afford to fold their arms in this civic responsibility; the election style becomes acceptable and should be embraced as a matter of necessity (*darur*). It is worthy of note that discharging the enfranchisement rights faithfully determines the quality of leadership and governance.

Islam advocates allegiance, obedience and loyalty to the constituted authority. As long as the leader is constitutionally enthroned, Allah enjoins obedience to the authority upon the people (Q.4:59)⁴⁰. However, obedience is not due to the wicked, hard hearted and oppressive leader(s) who violates the rule of law (Q.76:24). Moreover, maintenance of law and order is obligated on the governed. Hence, the Qur'an reads: ".....do not create disorder on the earth once it has been set aright; that will be best for you if you are believers" (Q.7:85). In addition, co-operation with the government on one hand and among the citizenry on the other is another impetus for good governance. Lack of co-operation could make the nation ungovernable. Thus, it is essential to "...cooperate with one another in righteousness and piety but do not cooperate with one another in sin and transgression" (Q.5:2). The people ought to cooperate with the government by availing the leaders with good advice and constructive criticism possibly through mutual consultation or referendum; rather than destructive on the platform of opposition. Furthermore, signs of cooperation includes patience, mutual understanding and mutual commitment to good governance between the leaders and the led.

Conclusion

It has been observed that despite the centenary age of Nigeria, the nation is still being challenged with the desire for good governance. Since her independence from the British imperialists in 1960, the country has had fifteen (15) leaders to date inclusive of the present one which came on board barely five months ago. The paper therefore made a cursory assessment of the Nigeria political history and discovered that by and large, governance had been pre-eminently corrupted by selfish leadership, God fatherism, nepotism and ethnic chauvinism; all of which had negative influence on stewardship. Multi-farious challenges that ever stormed the governance necessitated over-whelming agitation for change. Hence, the need to search for paradigm for good governance. Islam as a religion that encompasses principles and guidelines for all spheres of life availed humanity with desired precedence in this regard. Both the Qur'an and *Hadith* provided theoretical framework while practical examples abound in the precedence laid by the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and the rightly guided Caliphs in the governance of the *'ummah*. Essentially, the paper identified the indices of good governance in Islam to include piety and righteousness (*taqwa*), sacredness of governance as a trust (*amanah*) from Allah, service to Allah (*'ibadah*) and humanity, probity, transparency and accountability (*mas'uliyah*), justice and equity (*'adalah*) and mutual consultation (*shura*). In addition, Islam advocates obedience to constituted authority, allegiance, loyalty and co-operation by the governed as factors of good governance. The paper situated these factors within the Nigerian context in order to inspire good governance; hence, the following recommendations:

⁴⁰ This ordinance is further encapsulated in several traditions of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as expounded in Fazlul-Karim: *Al-Hadis*, 587ff.

- i. political aspirants should hold leadership as a trust and should be God-conscious in office.
- ii. eligible Nigerian citizens regardless of faith should endeavor to exercise their rights of enfranchisement, though legitimately, in order to ensure that positions of authority are occupied by deserving people.
- iii. both the leaders and the followers should develop new (Islamic) political orientation and always uphold the rule of law in order to inject sanity into governance.
- iv. Nigerians should avoid political violence of any kind given the Islamic philosophy that dominionship belongs to Allah and He bestows or withdraws it at will.
- v. the objective of having three arms (Executive, Legislative and Judiciary) in governance should be allowed to hold sway unfettered to induce participatory governance.

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