

## Epistemic Reflection on The Implications of Dysfunctionalism of Governance in Nigeria

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### Abstract

*This paper explores the causes and epistemic implications of dysfunctionality in governance in Nigeria. It takes the democratic process as a kind of artifice. The assumption is that the constitutive and regulatory principles enshrined in the Constitution governance is framework for functional relations in the systems and institutions. But the constituted and regulatory provisions in democratic system of governance do not prevent dysfunctionality. The factors of dys-functionality in the democratic process raise questions about quality of knowledge that political office holders or fail to have. These concerns are epistemic in that leaders fail to understand and harness right knowledge from the retinue of Special and Personal assistants at their beck and call. Hence, the leaders fail to or refuse to know what is at stake and implications of having malfunctioning factors impede the course of good governance. The expository, analytic and critical reflective methods are used in the study. The paper underscores the fact in even in the face a bad constitution good will on the part of those in government suffices to fill up any dys-functioning lacuna in the political system. Though human interests are diverse and conflicts do arise, the philosopher-King tows the part of reason and pursues the common good of the citizens. Thus, Kant's categorical imperative is a necessary command of reason and guides towards a functionally harmonious democratic system of governance.*

**Key Words:** Governance, Dysfunctionality, Epistemic, Reflection, Categorical Imperative

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### I. Introduction

Nigeria is democratic state. The democratic system of governance anticipates functional relations attained through her political, social, legal, economic institutions among others. The relation of these institutions to her administrative tasks is a framework of structure and political culture as distilled in the *Constitution*. Resonate idea referent in the conception of democracy as the 'government of, by, and for the people' implies a rule-governed, function- driven, people-focused governance. By this framework and structure the government extracts social cohesion and attains social and economic growth and infrastructural development. Reference is here being made to the functionalist theory and Immanuel Kant's categorical imperative.

The supposition to functionalism does This does not deny facts of conflicts that may impair the government's efforts to good governance.

policies which consciously puts in place measures that counter conflictual situations that may derial the process. The *Constitution* expresses the ideal functional relations that ought to exist by which all the positive of good governance stand in defining relation, as properties, to the subject, namely democratic governance. This paper sets out to X-ray the factors that **mar** this envisioned functional relations that ought to lead to good governance. This dysfunctionality does hold implications for Nigeria. What are these implications? How do we understand that the above factors defy the rule of reason in governance? This are epistemic questions and have implications on the knowledge base of the democratic institutions of the country. This perception is imperative because no institution runs itself. The expository and critical reflective methods are used in the study. Of critical significance in the study is that the conception of a functional institution gravitates around the role of a subject who, being rational places everything he or she does on the altar of reason. Governance is no exception. The art of good governance requires good philosophical insight. In this case it points to the agential role, the political leader whose *goodwill* smooths and fills up gaps inherent in the system and policies.

## **II. Conceptual and Theoretical Framework**

The term 'democracy' though construed as paradigm to translating a set of related ideas into concrete actions, is inherently entangled in conceptual ambivalence. It is this ambivalence that gives further room to distort the relation of theory (as a set of ideas and principles that are set up as paradigm) to actions. Thus, in Chapter 21 his *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* Joseph Schumpeter observes that 'demos', 'people' and 'kratein', 'to rule' attached to mean the 'rule by the people' was seventeenth and eighteenth centuries convention aimed to redeeming the eroding confidence in monarchies in Europe. The 'people never actually rule' he argues. They can always be made "to do so by definition." Such phrases as 'the Rule by the People', 'the Will of the People' or 'the Sovereign Power of the People', etc are diffusing appendages on which to drive home the negating political ideology. (Schumpeter, 247). Schumpeter defines democracy in terms of democratic method, namely "that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions which realizes the common good by making the people itself decide issues through the election of individuals who are to assemble in order to carry out its will." (Schumpeter, 250). By 'people' and 'rule' Schumpeter means that people have "the opportunity of accepting or refusing the men who are to rule them in a 'free competition' in which would-be leaders scout for the votes of the electorate. (Schumpeter, 285). But the 'political will' of the people does not exist anywhere as a political factor and is not entitled to such respect. If this were not then "everyone would have to know definitely what he wants to stand for." (Schumpeter, 253). This concern raised by Schumpeter above is both an epistemic and ethical question. The political leader in Plato's best estimation is the statesman, the Guardian of the city. He is the philosopher-king, one whose basic orientation is knowledge (not gain or fame) and the truth of things and wisdom to sound judgement to what must be done. (Plato, *The Republic* V11,475c). He is most foresighted in considering what is best for the State, is selfless and is more prone to dedicate himself to achieving such ends.

Cunningham agrees with Aristotle that democratic governance can be ineffective. Being ineffective means that it "does not or cannot take appropriate measures to achieve the goals of the society it governs". It may become *anomic* if it has "lost the ability to formulate and pursue common goals at all and democratic politics had become mainly 'an arena for the assertion of conflicting interests'." (Cunningham 2002, 17).

In Karl H. Marx's dialectical materialism consciousness is a reflection of a form of the material, the economic. He observes the contradictions in the economic opportunities between the 'political leaders'(bourgeoisie) and the mass of the poorer population (proletarians). This contradiction generates a tensed struggle among the people between the very rich, the *bourgeoisie* and the very poor, the proletariat. The reason for the struggle is the control over the nation's resources for ease of life, and on the other, the dire need to sustain life.(Marx, 200). This determinate "mode of production of material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual process of life", of consciousness itself. (Marx, 51).

### **Governance, Constitution and Structure of Functionalism**

The government is an administrative process carried out through a well-structured framework of institutions where principles of governance are regulated(Ake, 126f). To govern is to exercise legitimate political power in administration so as to transform the country's human and natural resources, create social values and protect lives and property of citizens through the country's social, political, moral and economic institutions.. Institutional provide structural arrangements for decision-generating processes and implementation of policies. Governance is an inclusive task of harnessing resources, creating institutions, formulating policies, putting in place a framework of processes by which to transform the country according to her development plans. In the *Politics* Aristotle defines constitution as the "arrangement of magistracies in a state." (Aristotle, *Politics*,1184]. This could be said to be about principles and functional roles. Given the country's Constitution, enabling Acts, and Bills, etc what the country's leadership need do is to galvanize and transform all the country's human, material and non-material resources so that through the social, economic, moral, legal institutions the government promotes the cause of common good, secure lives and property and advance national interests. The constitution is the artifice, the crafted arrangements and constitutive principles envisioned in the functional relations that are perceived and put in place. The Constitution stated these assumptions thus:

*We the people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria: HAVING firmly and solemnly resolved: To LIVE in unity and harmony as one indivisible and indissoluble Sovereign Nation under God...: AND TO PROVIDE for a Constitution for the purpose of promoting the good government and welfare of all persons in our country on the principles of freedom, Equality and Justice, and for the purpose of consolidating the unity of our people: DO HEREBY MAKE, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES the following Constitution. (The 2011 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, xx-xxi, italics, for emphasis).*

It also asserts in 14.(1) that the Federal Republic of Nigeria is a State based on the principles of democracy and social justice for which it declares that:

- (a) Sovereignty belongs to the people of Nigeria from whom government through this Constitution derives all its powers and authority;
- (b) the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government; and the participation by the people in their government shall be ensured in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution.

The objectives and directive principles are in the main sets of fundamental obligations which she owes to the people. In Chapter Two of the amended 2011 Constitution it is stated that: "It shall be the duty and responsibility of all organs of government, and of all authorities and persons exercising legislative, executive or judicial powers, to conform to, observe and apply the provisions of this Chapter of this Constitution." (13)

So, the idea in the concept *constitutionalism* is limiting. It implies that the government should be legally limited in the exercise of its powers. Legitimacy is a core value in the idea of constitutionalism. This value goes beyond the idea of legality. The idea in the concept *legality* requires that government officials' conduct be in accordance to "pre-fixed legal rules". The envisioned rationale is requisite of the rules. It is constitutive. Compliance with its regulatory principles legitimizes the roles of the political actors. The question of *legitimacy* checks whether the act of a government is legitimate and whether government officials conduct their public duties in accordance to laws already determined in advance. This is the Constitution, that it is drafted in advance to constitute and regulate a framework of governance. (Waluchow, Web). The government is at task to working out appropriate means to a desired end. First, he defines "the purposes which governments are required to promote" and then inquired into what form of government that best fulfills the purposes.

The concept *structure* envisages a paradigm that transforms a given state or phenomenon. The democratic governance is our ontological state, the body polity or rather the given political culture or process, a phenomenon. The idea in that which is structured is a process that is ordered, constituted of a set of ideas relating to practical consideration. Thus, politics may be expressed as a science of set of rules for process of actions about who, how, and why someone governs in order to attain certain ends. The *Constitution* is a conceptual and theoretical framework to achieve this. As such, it is constitutive and regulative. It represents an instrument from ideas to actions and plays a transforming social role from the domain of descriptive or definitive instrument of reality into a social order. It plays a heuristic function. (Ricoeur, 67) in that it fixates and gives patterns to thoughts, consciousness, political attitudes, etc of any reality.

Kant's philosophy is woven around the imperative of intuited rational principle, namely, the categorical imperative. The concept, *categorical* derives from the Greek "Kategorikos", meaning "unequal", absolute or unconditional. In Peter Angeles' *Dictionary of Philosophy* the categorical imperative is "the necessary and absolute law beloved to be the ultimate rational foundation all moral conduct" and human actions. (Angeles, 35). In other words, William Turner observes, it is "unconditionally authoritative and its command is unconditionally a law of human conduct." (1929-543). It suffices as objective moral principle insofar as it exerts obligation for a Will is a command (of reason). (Hutchins, 265). The assumption this has in Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* is that it is only human subjects that order their thoughts and consciously apply them into actions. The moral principles are universal, necessary and objectively true. (1998, 678). It does not persuade or advise (hypothetical). (Turner, 542). But does this principle really command absolutely such that a moral subject must align his or her actions according to the moral dictates? Immanuel Kant's categorical moral imperatives tells us that moral laws conceived *a priori* legislate necessarily. Thus, from the certitude of the intuited *a priori* principles perceptions and justification of understanding of how things must be done is attained. But does the perception of categorical moral principle ensure strict regulation in the face of adverse economic need? How does a moral agent that internalized the regulative moral principle act when confronted with choices of death or survival situation? Conversely, does material exigency impinge on the perception of legislating moral authority?

Actions of individual citizens reflect or are reflections of the actions of groups of individuals idealized as associated, structured and system-related and interactive social components (Onyeneke, 28-29). The functionalist sociological theories construe the society as organic and as constituent of inter-related parts function for the well-being of the society. The society exists as structured in the economic, educational, correctional, religious, familial, and other structures that all play a particular role in social groups and the community. Robert Merton held that the manifest or latent functionality that impact positive and/or negative on the society, or dysfunction help the society to run smoothly. (Website).

The functionalist sociological theories construe the society as organic and as constituent of inter-related parts. These function for the well-being of the society. Nigeria is a sovereign state. Her over two hundred ethnic nationalities were carefully hedged together by the 1914 amalgamation policy of then Southern and Northern protectorates. She has struggled to realize the dream of a united and prosperous nation through credible political system, formulation and actualization of government's policies and developmental plans through numerous constitutional, economic and national development plans.

The basic features of constitutionalism are: (i) Popular sovereignty (ii) Separation of Powers (checks and balances), (iii) Responsible and accountable government, (iv) Rule of law, (v) independent judiciary (vi) Respect for individual rights, (vii) Respect to self-determination, (viii) Civilian control of the military, and (ix) Police governed by law and judicial control. (Bazezew, Web).

### **Dysfunctional Factors in Nigeria's Democratic Governance**

But it is not as if the various governments never put anything to plan. Since her independence there have been the 1962-68, 1970-74, to the current Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP), 2017-2020, and the 2021-2025 medium term National Development Plan which is aimed to harness the country's economic potentials from all sectors for a sustainable, "holistic and inclusive and participatory national development, developed by the different facet of the Private Sector, Sub-national Government, Civil Society Organization (CSO) and facilitated by the Federal Government of Nigeria." (NDP, 2021-2025). But against the backdrop of several subsisting development challenges that informed the of the plan namely, low and fragile economic growth, insecurity, weak institutions, insufficient public service delivery, notable infrastructure deficits, climate change and weak social indicators" remained acute and seem to have defied solution.

Hence, the National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-2025, sought to invest massively in infrastructure, ensure macroeconomic stability, enhance the investment environment, improve on social indicators and living conditions", etc. Specifically, the Plan the ambitious aims "to generate 21 million full-time jobs and lift 35 million people out of poverty by 2025; thus setting the stage for achieving the government's commitment of lifting 100 million Nigerians out of poverty in 10 years." The medium by which these are to be achieved, it says are through: "high quality economic growth and a more inclusive economy", leverage on its young workforce, and enhancing implementation capacity at national and subnational levels." As such **critical infrastructure such as Power and alternative energy, Rail, Roads, and Housing and ensure macroeconomic stability, enhance business and investment environment, and improving the living conditions of Nigerians would be put in place.**

**By 2025, the effective implementation of the Plan is expected to achieve average economic growth of 4.6 percent, would lift 35 million people out of poverty and created 21 million full-time jobs, and attained GDP growth ratio to 15 percent, improve health and education of the population.**

The degree to which a State fails to perform its statutory functions through the framework of legal, moral, economic, socio-cultural institutions the country may be characterized as failing or failed.

How do we account for the very form of dysfunctionality almost pervasive in Nigeria in the political, economic, social and religious sectors? It would amount to a contradiction to qualify a democratic system of governance as dysfunctional. But since the system of government is conceived in ordered functional relations to transform the country's political, economic, social, and moral institutions so as to improve the quality of living and protect lives and property, anything to the contrary would make the whole administrative policies and programmes, system and institutions dysfunction. By 'dysfunctionality' we mean the negative outcomes of government's policies, institutions, and development plans. In other words, the concept 'dysfunctionalism' refers to an "abnormality or impairment in the function of a specified bodily organ or system" (Web encyclopedia). There are factors that cause dysfunctionality in Nigerian institutions What then are the factors that cause dysfunction in Nigeria's democratic polity?

### **Inept Leadership**

Most of Nigeria's 'leaders' failed to perform creditably due to confusions and distractions from pursuing personal, ethnocentric and political loyalists' agenda, conflicting and uninformed suggestions from political personal assistants and special advisers, as well as from derailing bills that are passed at the legislative chambers. In most cases there is abuse of the principle of rule of law in determining and according rights and obligations. The leader must possess the insight of the *Philosopher-King*, master the art and principles of governance enshrined in the constitution, and as 'Guardian' of the State, focus on "things purely of the mind" (Plato, 7, 6, 484, d and 585, d ), substantially transforms the nation's institutions, advances the course of peaceful coexistence and general well-being of her citizens, and ensured that the State attained commensurable economic and infrastructural development. The exercise of political power is not absolute (Alake, Aderogba and Okwusidi, 2000, 77) but shielded by immunity clauses, most of Nigeria's leaders relapsed into culture of abuse of political power and breached the principle of the rule of law. This gives vent for the deficits experienced in governance.

### **Historical Illusion and False Self-Image**

A country whose leaders refused to learn from her past experiences often bask in euphoria of myth illusion and false self- image. It is ignorance, that lack of knowledge of true self-worth, of the relation between the historical past, through the present to the future. Such state of mental stupor does not allow one to perceive

the relation between envisioned theoretical framework and how the principles are translated into concrete human actions. It is illusion to savour such phrases as 'the giant of Africa'. 'this great country of ours', etc and hold it that she cannot collapse and the question of her unity is non-negotiable. Achebe describes penchant attitude as 'cargo cult mentality.' It reflects a "flamboyant (and) imaginary self-concept" oneself. This attitude is characteristic of most Nigeria leaders. They dwell on such world rather than understanding truly that the nation has been run down and grounding to a halt, that she is "one of the most corrupt, insensitive, inefficient places under the sun.... one of the most expensive countries and one of those that give least values for money. ....it is among the most unpleasant places on earth." (Achebe 1983, 10-11). It is not for nothing that Socrates advocates that "an unexamined life is not worth living" and Plato appreciates the role of the 'Philosopher-King' in the art of governance.

### **Unhealed Wounds of the Past- the Nigeria -Biafra War**

For many people the Nigeria-Biafra war is a question that should never be raised. For some of the Nigerians it conceals experience of deep hurt which remains because it has never been discussed and settled. For others, it marks an ugly but punitive response, the effect of which no one wants to own. Yet for other Nigerians which think that for the above reasons and more, it is better to allow a sleeping dog. The Nigeria-Biafra Civil War was gory conflict which is traceable to political and ideological differences. The wound among those most afflicted remains fresh largely because the causative factors remained largely unresolved and unaddressed. Chinua Achebe carefully X-rayed it as a case of genocide. For instance, that while 100,000 casualties are estimated to have been suffered on the much larger Nigerian side, that of the Biafra side is over the over 2,000,000 who are mainly mothers, children and babies, and civilians. This casualty is as the "result of the blatantly callous and unnecessary policies enacted by the leader of the federal government of Nigeria" who also employed starvation as used as a "legitimate weapon of war." (Achebe, 2012, 228, 230-232). Besides, there was "information blockade" concerning the the prosecution of the war which was deliberate "attempts to fool the world about what happened in Biafra." Before the end of the war Pope Paul VI talked about possible "reprisals and massacres against defenseless people worn out by deprivations, by hunger and by the loss of all they possessed." (Achebe, 2012, 230). But seeing the Igbo people as "treasonable felons and wreckers of the nation" the federal government adopted a banking policy that "nullified any bank account" which the Biafrans operated during the war. In 1972 the federal government approved: "A flat sum of twenty pounds was approved for each Igbo depositor of the Nigerian currency regardless of the amount of deposit." (Achebe, 2012, 234).

Yet, the *Indigenization Decree, the Enterprises Promotion Decree* of 1974 while forcing foreign holders of majority shares of companies operating in Nigeria to hand over the "preponderance of stocks, bonds, and shares to local Nigeria business interests" (Achebe, 2012, 234) the policy further edged the Igbo people out of the economic scheme of things in Nigeria at a time when they lacked capital to buy shares and bonds in the companies. In all, Achebe avers that the Igbo people "were not and continued not to be reintegrated into Nigeria." For him this is one of the main reasons for the country's continued backwardness. This reason is not unconnected with leadership style in Nigeria which continued to enthrone "all sorts of banality, ineptitude, corruption, and debauchery (and)... mediocrity." [Achebe, 2012, 235, 236]. He asks why the war "has not been discussed, or taught to the young" at least on the strength of its merit so that further generation is saved from repeating the mistakes of the past if we Nigerians are not "too stubborn" (Achebe, 2012, 228) and perhaps, arrogant to learn from them. But in his opinion discussion of the War is "fundamentally important...to our humanity...in order to better understand ourselves and our neighbors. Where there is justification for further investigation, then I believe justice should be served." (Achebe, 2012, 228). It is therefore, pertinent to further this philosophical interrogation to ensure co-existence and cooperation, peace and unity.

### **Deficit in Governance**

Good governance that sees to positive transformation of the country's institutions, economic and social development, security of lives and property is a credit to democracy. But the score sheet of most of Nigeria's past leaders is abysmally poor in terms of providing good governance. Chinua Achebe in *The Trouble With Nigeria* bemoaned the "failure of leadership....the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal example which are the hallmarks of true leadership"(1983, 1). Riddled in corruption, embezzlement, inflation of contracts and floating bloated and "over-staffed and unproductive public service" which has continued today in the form of P.A.'s, (Personnel Assistants), SAs (Special Assistants), SSAs (Senior Special Assistants), etc to the chief executives and office of the first lady, etc Nigeria leaders have "betrayed irretrievably Nigeria's high destiny." (1983, 4). Jessop asserts that the rationale for State activity is 'substantive' found in the "definition and enforcement of collectively binding decisions" for public interest or common good. The state fails to do so if it is unable to effectively execute its developmental programmes and mapped projects by not obeying constitutional rules. {Jessop, 2000, pp. 11-32?}

### **Perversion of Justice**

There is perversion of justice in the land. Institutionally it comes in terms of violation of the provisions of the constitution in terms of dispensation of rights and privileges, making political appointments, circumventing sections of the electoral laws and guidelines in order to disqualify or/and have some edge over some political opponents and political parties, enthrone of nepotism and mediocrity, inequitable distribution of national resources. In *The Trouble With Nigeria*, Achebe notes that we “cannot extol the virtues(*sic*) of unity without first satisfying ourselves that the end to which the unity is directed is unimpeachable.” (Achebe, 15). Unity as a moral good cannot be sacrificed on the altar of any coercive means; the means does not justify the end.

### **Incompatible Religious Ideology**

Ideology is a set of ideas or beliefs shared by a group of people. It is often advanced by one to extract, more or less coercive, a commitment to desired attitude, response or action from the Other. We pitch Christianity against Islam in terms of which utilizes itself into coercive and radical ideological weapon dysfunctional in Nigeria. All christian denominations in Nigeria conduct their activity peacefully. They do not make its adherence imperative or as a condition for co-existing with the Other. Christians do not convert members by force of arms nor attempt to fight for their God. Jesus Christ lived by and taught this. An example is when he chided Peter at the garden of **Gethsemane**. But one may not same the same with Islam where fundamentalists diffuse and divorce the sense peaceful cohabitation with non Muslims. The *Boko Haram* insurgency and terrorism is a troubling Nigerian experience. *Boko* (Hausa) *Haram* (Arabic) respectively means ‘western education or book’ and ‘forbidden’ or sinful’. It is committed to pursuance of propagation Islamic religion and agenda. Originally known as *Jama’atu Ahlissunah lidda’ await wal Jihadi* the group refers to a “people committed to the propagation of the prophet’s teaching and Jihad” (Akinyeye, 2020, 39). The movement broadened ideological frame from a rejection of western education to calls for the rejection of secularism and the establishment of an Islamic state. This call represents a set of “ethical ideas” about how Nigeria should be governed. So, **Boko Haram** and other insurgent and terrorist groups are easily hijacked to murder and abduct people, destroy farmlands and vandalize public infrastructures and institutions [Anyanwu and Nwanaju 106-108; Olomjobi, 2020, 32] so as to pressure government and people to advancing economic and political interest of Muslims and enthrone of the Islamic state in Nigeria. This mainly accounts for the dysfunction experienced in Nigeria inasmuch as it grounds for irreconcilable basis for coexistence in Nigeria and the realization of good governance through institutional reforms.

Nigeria may be said to be a failed state if she manages to exercise some measure of political control in the development of her public institutions, in creating social and moral values, fostering a sense of national identity and unity, and security of lives and property. So, paying less attention to values that transform the country and to the principles of equity and justice which nurture faith, unity and peace, most leaders of successive Nigerian governments tolerated these dysfunctional irruptions either in paternalism or scared of ripple effects of crushing them. So, we experience weakening of central political authority which legitimacy is questioned and that fails to protect the citizens from terrorists, bandits, Fulani herdsmen attacks and religious extremism.

### **Insecurity**

Security is a primary consideration for peaceful atmosphere that investments and development to thrive. Nigeria has been faced with scourges of insecurity challenges such as Pogroms against the Igbo people leading to the Nigeria-Biafra civil war, communal and ethnic conflicts, political assassination and electoral related violence, problems of marginalization and secession, those related to religious intolerance and extremism, banditry, Killer herdsmen terrorism, abductions and organ harvesting, etc. There has been millions in loss of lives and property. Moreover, the insurgency in the North-East by Boko Haram and the Niger Delta is scary for investors and threatens the corporate existence of Nigeria. People and groups now tend to resort to self-help which is a “recipe for anarchy, breakdown of law and order and huge threats to safety of lives and property if left unaddressed for too long.” (Yagboyaju and Akinola, 1-10). Although Nigeria parades a robust security *apparati* (the police, Army, Navy, Air Force, National Intelligence Agency (NIA), Department of State Services (DSS), Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA), Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Federal Roads Safety Corps (FRSC), Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), Nigeria Prisons Service (NPS), Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), Federal Fire Service and National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), National Agency for Food and Drugs Administration and Control (NAFDAC), Standards Organization of Nigeria (SON), etc.) there has been increasing threats to social and economic security in the land points to dysfunctionalism. The Nigeria Police Force is overwhelmed with the task of providing adequate security for the citizens. There has been charges of corruption and extra-judicial killings. (Nigeria-2018 UN HR Violations Report, 12). Poor remuneration and inadequate number of police personnel are draw backs on their performance.

Incessant bombings by Boko Haram Herdsmen assaults on farming populations in the North-East and Middle-Belt, and pockets of areas in the East and West have led to increased poverty and hunger among the rural populations. Besides, the problem of sustainability, raw materials that would have been drawn from the farm harvests are lost. These activities force out industrialists from the area. (Ibegbu, C. 2012). Insecurity, Terrorism and Intelligence Failures in Nigeria. Retrieved on June 30, 2012, From URL: <http://www.nigeriavillagesquare.com/articles/cecil-ibegbu/insecurityterrorism-and-intelligence-failures-in-nigeria.html> ]

### **Lack of the Sense of Common Purpose**

Faith is one the major articles in Nigeria's national Anthem, fervently learned and sung by school children and often forgotten by the 'politicians'. In national life and polity there is so much distrust and suspicion among Nigerians as there is the North-South, Christians-Muslims, ethnic and political parties divides, etc that is informed not by reason but more often than not by 'genuine ignorance of ourselves, our history, and culture, or some age-old prejudices that will not go away.' (Kukah, 100) . We are on guard and circumspect that nothing good comes the Other's way and turn around to blame him/her for misfortune that is suffered. Thus, prejudice, disunity, lack of faith in the Other, ignorance, etc are like canker worms and viruses that destroy a nation because these nullifies established protocols and procedures of doing things. The book of Hosea decried that nations perish for lack of knowledge (4:6) and Amos asks: "Do two walk together unless they agree" (3:3). That is why some members of Houses of Assemblies dissipate lots of energies and time arguing illogically on sensitive national issues while at ease with irrelevances and frivolities and lobbyists for infamous Bills.

### **Reflections on the Epistemic Implications of Dys-functionalism**

The adjective *epistemic* refers to and questions the assumption and implications of that which subject matter relates to knowledge. The subject matter (in our context) relates to the question of dysfunctionality in Nigeria. Given her democratic experience, we would be asking what is it that has made governance in Nigeria dysfunctional? Do we attain this knowledge by toying with mere political concepts such as democracy, constitutionalism, rule of law, development, etc alone? No. Within the framework of our present concern, Nigeria's body polity is an ontology which life, systems and processes entails not only a sociology but requires an *episteme* thereon. Having examined some of dysfunctional factors, reflection takes us from *what* do we *know* to *what* do we hope for in Nigeria from her past political experience. The continued dysfunctioning factors inherent in our democratic system of governance is grinding Nigeria to an economic, political and social halt. The deficit in good governance is orchestrated by hyper inflation, government's heavy dependence on foreign borrowing, rise in petrol pump price in the midst of low productive economy have made life unbearable in Nigeria. With the high level of unemployment Nigeria has, high rate of poverty and hunger in the land, some people resort to organized crime like 'kidnapping' for ransom, organ harvesting, etc not only to leverage up but as 'pay back' to a society and government that is visibly insensitive to their fate, this because of the opulence of the political leadership who would rather scuttle the '*EndSaars*' '*EndBadGovernance*', etc are considered legitimate moves to call attention to the plight of the citizens. The few that are employed live below 'living' wage and the federal government only recently approved the monthly minimum wage of seventy thousand Naira (#70,000) which is about the cost of a local bag of rice. Scarce resources that could have been channeled into critical productive ventures are diverted to tackling her intractable security challenges. There is now a questioning of the assumptions in federal government running a democratic system of governance when there are little of anything democratic and federating about it. The problems that give rise to these are more of human factors and systemic. It is the political subjects that run and drive the system, that inject values and sense good purpose in the process of governance. Ignorance, Socrates noted, is the cause evil. The present political woes of Nigeria is the consequent build-up of structures that are erected on error. These are accentuated in the following.

1. There has been a shift from developmental to consumerist state. The status of a developmental State neither arise from the size of budget allocation, amount foreign borrowing mortgaging Nigeria's untapped natural resources and size of government officials and political appointees. The government borrow to service bloated cost of governance and to take care of the luxury and ostentatious life-styles of government officials, not for investments in economic and infrastructural development.

1. Governance is determined not by much of reason and logic of the art of good governance but by aggrandizing power of passions and sentiments that underlie most body polity in Nigeria. Good promises made at political rallies are rarely remembered once in power. There are no feedback mechanism to evaluate what the government has promised and put in place and where it is heading to.

2. There are usually no evident demonstration of *good will* on the part of political leaders and those in governance. A good leader demonstrates significant measure of *goodwill*, a kind of empathy about what he/she does or dispenses to the people. It is what is required when interpretations of some constitutional provisions are not so certain, when the government has to go beyond what is lawfully provided to allowing what is understandable, social and morally permissive and defensible because it is good and valuable. But lack of

*goodwill* breaches right administrative procedure. It is self-interest, ethnocentrism, ambivalent religious ideologies that precludes the role *goodwill* in the leader to qualitatively influence the course of good governance in Nigeria no matter the kind of lapses inherent in the constitution.

The general effects that these precarious situation have on the nation are mass poverty and high unemployment rate in the land, great sufferings of the people among few opulent aristocratic class, crippling general economic stagnation, increased cost of governance, bloated budgets, increased foreign borrowing, increasing national indebtedness. Given these challenges some of the past leaders made good attempts to overhaul the nation's politics and bring about institutional change. But this resulted in cycles of civilian and military governments that rather pursued different projects rather than sustaining those earlier ear-marked in the country's development plan.

### **III. Concluding Remarks**

Good governance must be as sustainable as it promotes social and economic development, inclusive and participatory rather than sectional. It must be transparent, creates values and responsive to the need of the people, and respects the principle of the rule of law. The form of democratic governance that is guided by these principles is truly functional. Dysfunction creeps into the democratic system of governance when epistemic questions as they relate to knowledge of the nature and assumptions in the constitution constituted and regulative principles of governance are taken for granted. In the latter life of the nation it is more the less educated people that make it to the presidency. Some political advisers who happen to be well-educated lack the moral power to advice aright. More often than not, mediocrity is sacrificed at the altar of meritocracy. The whole question of dysfunctionality is reducible to lack of knowledge on the part of those in governance. It is the errors of the human factors that drive wedges on the grinding wheels of democracy as a functional system which operate on the relation of subject to its attributes. The Constitution provide the principles by which the subject matter is attained with definite objective results. But a disturbing issue in Nigerian politics is where 'structure' is misconceived as a robust political clout, or 'capacity' that an aspirant or political figure has. That is, the ambience of coercive control and political support a 'politician' has to influence the political process and electoral outcome rather than due consideration to the constitution.

The direct consequence is leadership failure. Good leadership ushers in good governance. Good governance is one that transforms and enhances the creative and developmental capacity of the economic, social, human, material and intellectual resources. But why there is mis-governance there will be political conflicts due to poverty and inequity in distribution of resources, etc.

Unity is a function of justice, equity, freedom and fairness. Unity is not a flag to hoisted and clung unto. It is a relational function and attainment. It is a moral and epistemic function. It is not a relational state to be protected with either guns or by a set of hegemonic slogans. Thus, chants of the 'unity of this country is non-negotiable' does not really make it one. The sense of *common good* is the foundation of the principle of reciprocity in a 'common wealth'. This understands that given diverse human interests there is a common bond around which all personal interests revolve. The principle of *common good* is norm-guiding for all whose interests are at stake to accept on the basis of the values they placed of the perceived goods. (Asouzu, 2003, 86). It is imperative that the leader is deeply informed and understands the nature of the *common goods* which ethnic groups of diverse interest lay claim to. It is this knowledge that informs the rationale for moral question in meeting up with the diverse interests of the people taken as agreeable value-wholes. It requires prudence and good will to translate principles into right actions. It is not in doubt that Nigeria has enormous potential of material, and human resources. What is simply required is logic of good policies and programmes that are well-coordinated and well-driven policies for maximal transformation of the social and economic institutions. Will such logic exclude consideration of equity among relations, allocation and disbursement of privileges? And what use is a robust policies without a class of egg-heads (not the retinue of Personal Assistants, Special Assistants, senior technical Assistants, etc that regularly characterize paternalistic official lists of Nigerian political leadership) that interpret, reconcile implications, guide in the implementation of government policies and programmes? Nigeria cannot be regard as 'failed' State since it does not lack "major attributes of sovereignty or cohesion" (Lewis, 83 ) but on the strength that as a State her political, economic, legal, religious and socio-cultural institutions have failed to transform the country. Again, Nigeria is not poor for lack of the requisite resources or capital necessary for economic and social development.

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