

# **CONSTRAINTS AND IMPEDIMENTS OF GOOD GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA: FUTURE PROSPECTS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

African continent is under transition. Most of the countries in Africa are conflict ridden societies and most of them are facing bad governance challenges. In some countries there is intractable political wrangle going on from last so many decades and still conflict is unresolved. The African Continent is a true political and social mosaic. There are countries that are making a real move towards democracy. There are others in which the democratic experiment is in fragile situations. In many others, the political, social, and State infrastructure has failed. This study is a scholarly output to look at the challenges which Africa as a whole is facing in the field of good governance. What are the future prospects will be also highlighted.

Keywords: Good governance, Constraints and Impediments, Future Prospects

## **Introduction**

Since the end of the 1980s the issue of good governance is dominating the international discussion about development and international assistance to Africa. However, governance is a broad concept, not easy to define, and many related concepts are attached: the issue of democracy and development; popular participation and development; corruption and development; and also the issues of state capacity and development. The late 1980s and 1990s were characterized by concerted struggle for democratization and the clamour for good governance on the African continent. The thirst for freedom and justice, the political fallouts from the structural adjustment programmes and the entrenched autocratic and repressive political systems dominant in the larger part of Africa's post-colonial history provided the incentive and legitimacy for popular democratic struggles in Africa. The democratic struggles triggered constitutional and political changes and reforms in many countries compelling the holding of elections and granting of civil and political freedom. Between 1996 and 2006, 44

elections were conducted in Sub-Saharan Africa, and between 2005 and 2007, 26 presidential and 28 parliamentary elections were held in Africa.

Aisha Abdullahi, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, was speaking to the press on Monday 20, May, 2013 in Addis Ababa on the topic, "From OAU to AU: Decolonization, Democratization and Development." "Some of the key issues that engage the continent's attention include, human rights with particular emphasis on the enforcement of all human rights instruments adopted so far at the national level; human security by focusing on improving the totality of individual security by tackling emerging threats such as climate change, human trafficking, arms smuggling, cyber security, piracy and other such threats; and peace and security through the ending of the scourge of war which continues to take its toll on the human resources of Africa and reduces the quality of life of many African citizens in war torn parts of the continent."

"As the OAU/AU celebrates its 50th anniversary, the focus should be on promoting peace and stability through integration, greater unity, democratization and sustainable development. This would lead to a peaceful, prosperous and united Africa driven by its own citizens,"

She further said.

*The democratic process has taken different turns and trajectories in different countries, with different levels of progress. While elections have become more regular, and other components of liberal democracy relatively improved compared to the situation that obtained two decades ago, the quality of democracy and governance remains suspect in many countries. Strengthening democratic governance in terms of the building of democratic institutions and the capacity of the state to manage the political and economic processes of society for developmental purposes remains a major challenge for many African countries.<sup>1</sup>*

According to an assessment by the African Development Bank the importance of the concept for African development is related, first of all, to the necessity to create the basic extra-economic conditions that are important for the growth of African economies, as for example, an effective public administration, a functioning legal framework, efficient regulatory structures, and transparent systems for financial and legal accountability. In this context, it is the issue of the quality of the public goods supplied at country level that makes good

governance such an important concept. Secondly, the concept of good governance refers to the developmental potentials of the democratic challenge in Africa as accountability, rule of law, freedom of expression and association and public choice of government are important elements of Africa's renewal. Thirdly, good governance refers also to the consolidation of market reforms although quite different development paths are possible within the context of market-oriented economic systems; good governance therefore requires an adaptation and continuous improvement of market oriented systems in a specific socio-economic context, especially in Africa.

Hon. Paul Muite so aptly described

*"The African Continent is a true political and social mosaic. There are countries that are making a real move towards democracy. There are others in which the democratic experiment started off hopefully but are now sliding back into the old ways of autocracy and repression. In others, the political, social, and State infrastructure has collapsed. Yet, in a few others, chaos, genocide and terror are predominant".<sup>2</sup>*

The entire African continent is under transition. Most of the countries in Africa are conflict ridden societies. In some countries there is intractable political wrangle going on from last so many decades and still conflict is unresolved. The conflict situations have been controlled in Sudan after dividing the country into two parts South Sudan and North Sudan by the United Nation interventions. Some countries are facing strong conflicts such as Mali, where rebels are fighting with the government forces on the issue of power politics. In some countries there is ethnic conflict, such as Nigeria; here it's a long story of conflict between two communities Muslims and Christians. Here so much human rights violations are taking place daily. Somalia is under the conflict crises from a long time still conflict is going on there which affects badly the innocent people of this country. In Ethiopia there is ethnic animosity between Christians and Muslims which is still unresolved. And recently the situations of Libya and Egypt are also volatile and critical. Africa continent as a whole is facing so many nation building challenges such as: corruption, conflict, crime, poverty, bad governance, malaria, HIV and lack of good infra-structure etc.

Africa is a continent on the margins of world politics. This is even more the case today, with world public opinion and policy makers more turned into developments in the Middle East and elsewhere. Over the last few years, donor's aid to the continent has declined markedly, due to the international economic crisis. Still, the continent struggles to address its developmental challenges tirelessly. Since its establishment in 2002, the African Union (AU) has spearheaded common African efforts to this effect. Indeed, the real conundrum in Africa is not lack of resources, but rather lack of good governance. Africa is rich in natural resources, but cannot exploit them adequately and properly, in spite of recent achievements. This is first and foremost due to governance problems such as weak institutions, absence of rule of law and rampant corruption. Democracy requires more than free elections. Beyond elections, the quest for democracy and good governance in Africa often snags on structural problems, including state fragility, institutional weakness, tribalism, and conflict and ethnic discrimination, vested interests, crime networks, corruption and lack of democratic culture. These are all demanding problems that need concerted action. The AU is in the vanguard on these efforts, with sophisticated kit of political, strategic, legal and institutional tools.<sup>3</sup>

At the national level, wars, civil strife and the proliferation of light weapons militate against the efforts of some countries in the establishment of sustainable development. Some countries are still handicapped following current conflicts and others by the challenges of recovery following the termination of conflicts. The challenges following these include the consolidation of national capacities for the prevention of governance crises, conflict and natural emergencies and taking initiatives on peace-building. Furthermore, relating to national security, there are challenges in the capacity to manage cross-border population movements and coping with drug and small arms trafficking, epidemics, and human trafficking, to mention a few.

African countries have taken a number of necessary and bold initiatives on governance as one of the essential factors for sustainable economic growth and development for the alleviation of poverty. But these initiatives are still constrained by a number of critical challenges that should be tackled to enhance the prospects of governance and if development objectives are to be attained.<sup>4</sup>

## **Good Governance in Africa**

Africa has come a long way to good governance; its experience in this is even exemplary in some cases, especially in view of its widespread underdevelopment. Africa has the right to take pride in its achievements. Yet, it should strive to build on them, address structural problems and confront future challenges. In this regard, it is most decisive to win the battle for peace and security, the people of Africa must achieve its struggle in the field of good governance and development if they want to see shining and progressive African continent free from poverty, conflict and other challenges. It is also imperative that Africa invests more in developing its own financial and human resources, in line with the principle of African ownership. In addition efforts in this field at continental, regional and national levels should be better monitored, with emphasis on delivering concrete results and ensuring efficiency, credibility, accountability and responsibility in all public and private sectors. For that purpose Africa also need support and assistance from the international donors and international organisations. One of the main challenges which Africa is facing is the bad leadership and institutional failure. People need to give power to good leaders who have a dream to change Africa towards development and prosperity, for this purpose power needs to be given to those who are able persons for leadership and good governance.

A history of colonialism, armed conflicts, mismanagement, lack of rule of law and corruption has meant that despite its abundant natural resources, Africa remains underdeveloped and in poverty, hunger, natural disasters and endemic diseases are prevalent. Conflict in Africa is a major challenges which most of the countries in Africa are facing from last three four decades and conflict is still unresolved in most of the countries. Government is spending a lot of money on the preventive measures to control the menace but still the governments are not successful in managing the conflicts. These resources and money could have been spent on developmental purposes. No continent has been so mistreated, martyred and misunderstood as Africa has been over centuries. Yet, Africa is a very rich continent and beautiful and agreeable place, inhabited by decent and industrious people. Africa has probably the largest reserves of untapped natural resources in the world, of gold, diamonds, oil, natural gas and various minerals and fruits, but these are often the sources of violent conflicts that have destructive consequences for the economies of African continent.<sup>4</sup>

Africa was also the cradle of human civilization and a cultural centre of great importance, a fact that was ignored by the colonial masters and imperial powers. It is pertinent to understand that the African continent had its own civilization, with its own traditions and value system, political systems, organisations, religions, languages, and different means of managing and resolving conflicts. These all reflect the spirit of solidarity, harmony and peaceful co-existence for which the African people were renowned. All this was neglected and destroyed under the process of colonialism and imperialism era. Indeed, the manner in which the colonial administrations governed their colonies virtually ensured the failure of Africa's transition to independence, especially their common policy of "divide and rule" and their effective use of tribalism, racism and assimilation to promote their policies and just fragment this great African nations for securing their political means.

After getting their independence, they still are facing multifarious urgent challenges and impediments in nation building process. After independence founding fathers of OAU showed vision in creating an umbrella organisation for unity and development of Africa. The Charter of the OAU cites as one of its main objectives: "to promote the unity of African states, eradicate colonialism and provide a foundation for cooperation among states."<sup>5</sup>

In his memorable book/ *Speak of Freedom*, Kwame Nkrumah, the former President of the Republic of Ghana, expressed the same concern when he stated that:

*"The whole of Africa must be free and united, only then we will be able to exercise our full strength in the cause of peace and the welfare of mankind."*  
*Nkrumah consistently advocated the immediate establishment of a United States of Africa that would assume the responsibility for making political unity and economic development a reality in the continent.*<sup>6</sup>

### **Good Governance for Stability and Prosperity**

The deep rooted desire for unity and development will be best served by good governance, manifested through the promotion of democratic principles, popular participation, human and people's rights and the rule of law. The concept of good governance was once defined by a number of international institutions, including World Bank, IMF, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), as the capacity of a country to establish a "framework of

order and stability, formulate and implement effective policies and create an environment durable for economic and social development.’’ The idea of good governance has attracted the attention of most African leaders now, and the extent to which African countries have practiced it, over the last two or three decades of democratization, should be noted.

Over the past few years, however Africa has also experienced some obstacles to and failures in the promotion and maintenance of democratic principles that were required by the 1990 declaration of the OAU. There have been examples of legitimately elected governments being overthrown by military juntas. The misuse of power is manifested in arbitrary arrests and extra-judicial killings in many African countries, which create a massive displacement of millions of Africans. These continued violations of human rights and internal armed conflicts have caused the exodus of countless Africans as refugees to neighbouring countries. Africa is currently host to over six million refugees and nine million internally displaced people. African leaders recognised that the resurgence of the coup d’etat as a phenomenon in Africa represented a serious threat to peace and security and the process of democratization in the continent. Coup d’etats are also unacceptable because they contradict the joint commitment of African leaders, made at the 26<sup>th</sup> ordinary session in July 1990, to promote a democratic environment and principles. The 2000 Declaration was a historic and imaginative measure on the part of African leaders, which provided Africa with the mechanism for an immediate response to any illegal intervention in the democratic process of an African country. This mechanism helped to isolate the regimes which came to power through Coup d’etat in Guinea Bissau, The Comoros, Niger and La Cote d’Ivoire in 1999.

There is also genuine concern about how democratic governments in Africa can effectively protect millions of their people. The new African democracies and liberal governments are primarily concerned with introducing the free market and privatization in their countries, to satisfy the demands of the IMF and the World Bank. But it is clear that this process does not necessarily benefit the entrepreneurs and business people within those countries. People centred development will only flourish under good governance. Conflicts, underdevelopment and misery are negation of this kind of development. Peace, stability, development is all interdependent. The dreams of developing and under developed countries will come true once they are going to establish good governance model in every institution be it public sector management or private sector management. Only through good governance the country can

come out from the plight of poverty and underdevelopment and will move towards prosperity. Conflicts arise when justice, rule of law, and order are absent in any society, so absence of justice, denial of human rights and democratic failure, pave way for conflict, disorder, dispute and political wrangle and backlash inside the country. Africa as a whole had tried a lot to come out from the challenges of bad governance, poverty, leadership crises, conflict and corruption but still there is much more needed to be done for the creation of successful, progressive and developed Africa. Good governance is the main instrument and tool which could be used for minimizing conflict situation in the African region.<sup>7</sup>

Conflict is the major challenge to Africa, it's the conflict which divides Africa into different compartments and creates disharmony among the communities and creates underdevelopment. The need of the hour is that African Union, civil society, educational institutions, think tanks and charismatic leaders should come along and joins hands for the reconstruction and resurgence of new Africa free from conflict and full of peace and development. Peace is a precondition for development and prosperity in any region of the world. Africa needs good leaders like Nelson Mandela who fought against racial discrimination which is called in international politics (apartheid movement), a leader who always talked about peace and cooperation for the African region and other parts of the world. He always stressed on peace and harmony. He joined the people of Africa and created in them courage, discipline, obedience, and independent attitude and sense of integrity, that type of leaders are needed to be given power who will be ready for changing Africa towards enlightenment and development.<sup>8</sup>

### **Culture of Peace & Good Governance**

The end of the Cold War brought to the fore a fresh upsurge of conflicts and domestic tensions that have arrested Africa's development in almost every respect, and jeopardized the unity of the continent. In Liberia, Somalia, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Eritrea, the world has witnessed the near disintegration of African nations. In Angola, Burundi, Rwanda and Democratic Republic of Congo the international community has watched helplessly as the destruction of property, massacre and even attempted genocide have been inflicted on African people. The quest for tolerance, a culture of peace and unity has been at the centre of political endeavours in the African continent. Africa has to learn lessons from its past mistakes and follow some developed countries as model for their development. Especially



Africa as a whole can learn a lot from the Asian countries in the field of development and advancement.

African national governments, regional organisations, civil society have organised activities and launched many activities to promote these ideals, in the hope of consolidating peace and unity and accelerating popular participation in development. More recently UNESCO and AU have embarked on important joint initiatives in this area, bringing together civil society and government together to have a discourse on this subject.

It is appropriate in this context to mention the OAU's plan to establish OAU Clubs or Associations in member states of the organisation. The constitution of OAU Clubs enshrines the following objectives:

1. To popularize and fully support the objectives and principles of the OAU;
2. To promote national and international peace, understanding, tolerance, solidarity, cooperation and respect for human rights;
3. To contribute to the promotion of genuine peace, justice, security, full participation and empowerment of women;
4. To contribute to the strengthening of OAU capabilities in conflict prevention, management and resolution.<sup>9</sup>

The need of hour in Africa is to build and promote a culture of peace because new conflicts are emerging in African continent, particularly the ethnic animosities between the communities. A culture of tolerance and consensus building is needed to be highlighted by the government and civil society in general. A continent is experiencing a wave of ethnic intolerance virulent and xenophobia and it's essential to forge and inculcate a culture of tolerance among people, especially young people that sustained over the years ahead. Our efforts towards the promotion of African unity will not achieve the intended results unless they are supported by a culture of peace and tolerance. It's crucial to work even more sedulously at promoting inter cultural communication and civic educations, schools, as basis on which to build a culture of peace and cooperation.

There are strong linkages and relations between good governance, peace and development which cannot be separated from one another. There is consensus on this issue that those

countries where there is good governance have very less examples of conflict and rivalry. Democracies are always compatible with one another. Any democratic country which really has established good governance agenda will not prefer to go for war, they will try always to be in peace and even if there will be any dispute they will try to solve it amicably. Good governance will create avenues for peace and within peaceful conditions people can think about developmental process.<sup>10</sup>

African Union is trying a lot to establish peace in the conflicting regions of the Africa. They have discussed different agendas for reformation and reconstruction of Africa but still there is lot to be achieved. Conflicts must be assessed by scholarly lenses so that the nature of the conflict will transform amicably without any political wrangle and dispute. Kant says, people who feel secure and free, governed by the rule of law and not of men, are much less likely to go to war with each other-either within or across borders- than those who don't. There are plenty of examples all around the globe that peace and security being at risk when governance breaks down.

There is really need of structural change in Africa, there is also need that rule of law, justice, liberty, equality all dimensions of good governance must be taken into consideration. Accountability, responsiveness, credibility and transparency are required to control the disease of corruptions which makes Africa as whole weak day by day. Popular participation of the people will give birth to the responsible political institutions in Africa. Therefore, need of the hour in Africa is that a robust and effective civil society is required which could be a check on the fraud people. Government is for the welfare for people if any government is not functioning well that must be changed by the free will of the people. People in Africa must stand up against all the maladies and loopholes which are weakening Africa as a whole except few countries. Religious leaders could play an important role in their communities and they can preach principles of peace and cooperation and will teach people preventive measures of conflicts. Strong judiciary is very important to book all corrupt leaders and those who are misappropriating public funds; it's only possible when there will be power shared between or among the organs of the government. Devolution of power, decentralisation and separation of powers are some of the important measures which Africa must take into consideration. The conflict can be minimized and controlled when justice will be done to all communities in African countries. Majority communities must respect the minorities they

should not feel insecure. There is dire need for Africa to change in the field of development and good governance. Greater investment is required so that unemployed youth could get job opportunities.<sup>11</sup>

There is need for the government to respect the fundamental rights and special rights of the people. State must work to protect the public interest, but what happens today that state is abusing its power against their own citizens which is totally unlawful act. Democratic society can grow only where people are free to think freely, walk freely, and discuss their social, political and economic issues without any fear. People must have the right of expression and criticism to put the government on the right track. Democracy can survive when all minorities will have the equal avenues and entitlement to develop themselves without any meddlesomeness from the side of the government except state can interfere when people are taking laws in their hands, when they are disturbing public order then state could take preventive measures but those preventive measures must be democratic not autocratic.

It's because of the bad governance other problems are taking birth, such as poverty, conflict, absence of peace, corruption and underdevelopment. Security and betterment of citizens is the primary function of any state. When state fails in any way in her objectives then it gives way to different challenges and problems. Finally people join together and stand up and show their backlash against government.

No doubt ethnic animosities in Africa is the major challenge which African countries are facing there is need that we have to propagate commonalities without discussing our differences in Africa thereby peace and harmony could be maintained among the different ethnic communities. Use of electronic media can be used for sensitisation of harmony and peace in Africa. There are other methods which can be used for instance, educational institutions, peace conferences, religious leaders, political parties, and leaders could definitely change the mindset of the people of Africa. There are some of the major challenges which Africa as a whole is facing that is bad governance, corruption and conflict. But mostly I have to say as a scholar of conflict resolution that conflict is here because of the lack of the good governance in Africa. There is need to cure these major diseases and reconstruct and reform Africa so that present generation as well as posterity would be very happy in peaceful, developed, shining, and progressive Africa, but ironically this is still a dream in Africa but the time is not far when we all will see shining Africa free from conflict and insecurity.<sup>12</sup>

The Charter of OAU, which was adopted by the leaders of 32 independent African states on 25<sup>th</sup> May 1963 in Addis Ababa, grew out of this debate and represented a judicious compromise between the notion of loose association of states and the federal ideal. The lofty objectives and intentions of OAU are articulated in Art II (I) of the Charter:

1. To promote the unity and solidarity of the African states;
2. To coordinated intensify their cooperation and efforts to achieve a better life for the people of Africa;
3. To defend their sovereignty, their territorial integrity and independence; to eradicate all forms of colonialism and racial discrimination from Africa;
4. To promote international cooperation, having due regard to the Charter of the UN and Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

### **Principles of Good Governance**

Good governance is an essential stage towards meeting the objectives of sustainable and people -centred development, prosperity and peace. Good governance is defined by rule of law, the existence of effective state institutions, transparency and accountability in the management of public affairs, respect for human rights and the meaningful participation of all citizens, particularly women, in political processes and decisions affecting their lives. It is a process in which people are empowered and have sufficient freedom to set priorities for their development needs, which take into account their specific socio- economic and cultural circumstances. In this way, good governance can play a crucial role in ensuring people oriented development in Africa, because it demands that all citizens and groups articulate their interests, needs and concerns. Africa as a whole has made a tremendous effort to submit itself to the imperatives of good governance by encouraging a wider popular participation in national issues, transparency and responsibility in the administration of public affairs and by gradually involving women more in the major activities of government but there is still a lot to be done.

African governments by taking responsibility for legal system have had greater success in making their public authorities accountable to the rule of law, and they have strengthened transparency and accountability, by supporting independent media and laying down mechanisms for monitoring of elections, to ensure that they are free and fair. We see good

governance as a process through which people, men and women are empowered to participate fully in decision making at local and national levels. This process will require democratic institutions in the African states to be introduced and enabled to operate fully and effectively.<sup>13</sup>

## **Major Constraints and Impediments**

### **Poverty**

Poverty affects civil society in many ways including the undermining of democracy. Democracy can hardly work in conditions where the people are poor and ignorant. Based on our experiences with past elections in Africa, the poor and illiterate may be influenced to sell their votes for a mere pittance.

As Acheampongonce said,

*"One man one vote is meaningless unless accompanied by one man with bread".<sup>14</sup>*

Apart from the subversion of the independence of the voter, poverty and ignorance do not provide a fertile ground for advocacy and the promotion of rights. The people are either too concerned with the practical details of where the next meal would come from, or are steeped in apathy. This works against the emergence of a robust and pro-active civil society that would work for the consolidation of democracy.

### **Corruption**

By its very nature, corruption is an abuse to all internationally acknowledged human rights. It creates a vicious circle where human rights awareness is constantly paired with and undermined by harsh realities of poor economic and political performance. Corruption is both the cause and the consequence of political turbulence, human rights abuses and under-development. Corruption is a challenge to everyone, and therefore action must be taken in various areas of society. The role of hard working pressure groups, such as civil society, and vigilant individuals cannot be emphasized enough.

Despite promising trends of democratization and stability in the last two decades, corruption and conflict remain a serious barrier to development in many African countries. Experts

estimate that African states lose as much as \$148 billion annually to corruption, amounting to approximately one quarter of GDP. Corruption in many sub-Saharan African countries has been entrenched for decades, often through systems of patronage and nepotism. Donors can sometimes unwittingly play a role in perpetuating the detrimental cycle of corruption through support to corrupt governments based on strategic interests, failure to regulate multinational corporations and permitting the shelter of stolen assets in banks and non-cooperative offshore financial centers, some of them in developed countries. The value of stolen assets held by banks in developed countries is estimated at \$20 billion to \$40 billion per year - a figure equivalent to 20-40% of flows of development assistance.

### **Corrupt Leadership**

Leadership involves goal setting or visioning, the capacity to motivate and/or inspire and mobilize efforts, energies, and talents to reach set goals. As Pat Utomi noted, leaders act as agents of their followers.

He further said

*"It is clear that Africa has a crisis of leadership because we can see clearly that a sense of service is in short supply. It was not always so. The independence struggle produced men who were willing to sacrifice for the common good. In the transition from colonial rule, as they moved from the outhouse to the Government reserved areas, the emergent leaders of Africa saw the tyranny of colonial agents as their model of leadership without recognizing, that leaders and tyrants are polar opposites. For Africa to be renewed, it has to rethink leadership."<sup>15</sup>*

We cannot say that Africa has totally failed in the mission of good governance but still it is trying to achieve progress and development. Some of the countries in Africa are trying better like, South Africa, Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Ghana, Botswana, Burkina Faso, and Namibia. Other countries are just trying to come out from the mess of the bad governance. Africa has to learn lessons from the Asian countries in terms of development and advancement such as, Japan, China, India, South Korea, Malaysia, and Singapore etc. The African countries need strong political institutions which must be just in policy making and policy implementation process. UN, UNDP, African Development Bank, and African Union can play vital role in changing the conditions of bad governance in Africa. The African countries need also strong

judiciary which could be a check on the misuse of power and corrupt politicians. Besides, credible, efficient, accountable, inclusive political institutions are the need of the hour in Africa.

Moreover, civil society could play an important role in changing the nature of the criminal and corrupt politics. Therefore, Africa needs a vibrant and robust civil society which can safeguard public interests. Public opinion is very important in any country so public opinion can be cited as one of the check on corrupt political institutions. Media can also play an important role in checking the dysfunctional political institutions. Religious leaders and organisations could play role of peace building if they will come on the commonalities. People must show active participation in the field of politics so that they should understand what their rights and privileges are in their countries it's only possible when they will be politically active. These all above examples are the examples of civil society as whole.

### **Lack of Vibrant and Robust Civil Society and Governments Constraints on Civil Society Organisations**

Civil Societies are catalysts for development and defenders of public interest, and their non-alignment with government efforts provides them a clear and constructive perception of issues. A constructive oversight function of civil society keeps the government on its toes and in some localities is the only source of opposition to the government. The role of civil society is not just in confronting government but also in complementing government role. However, a lot is yet to be achieved in this regard, as the mechanisms required for the good fight have not been effectively utilized. Various recommendations and declarations aimed at addressing civil society organization's institutional problems have been made in recent years. Mobilizing the action required has, however remained a daunting challenge, as civil society organizations have operated under severe constraints, notably the detention of their members, interference with foreign travel, public vilification by government, surveillance by security agencies, and the obstruction of their legal

### **Unresponsive Government**

Civil society organizations have no political power to affect policies; they can only act as a pressure group. As such, a responsive government is needed to give effect to the activities

and efforts of the civil society. What is objectionable in Africa is that State authorities most times view third sector institutions with mistrust. They are treated worse than opposition parties. This antagonistic attitude does not allow civil society to constructively engage government.

According to Professor Ihonvbere

*"The main human rights issue in contemporary Africa is what to do with the non-hegemonic, unstable, repressive and exploitative postcolonial State. The State has been more a weapon of intimidation and abuse than one with a sense of nation and mission designed to revolutionize the social formation, protect the citizenry and promote an enabling condition conducive to popular participation in development. In fact Africans relate to the State as an arrogant, wicked, aloof, violent, and biased force that must be avoided, manipulated, cheated, and dismantled as opportunity permits. Its total failure to improve on the conditions of the people, effectively mediate conflicts, protect the rights of the citizenry, and articulate a viable consistent agenda for growth and development has reduced the worth of the state in the eyes of the people. The State is simply an enemy of the people with structures that are biased - - ".<sup>16</sup>*

Examples abound in Africa where government goes out of its way to stifle the voice of civil society organizations. Cases of political prisoners in Africa are largely stories of civil right activists who dare to challenge government.

One can say that the greatest problem of civil societies in Africa stems from government intolerance. The primary focus of civil society in this kind of environment is survival. This affects drastically their input to Governance. As Professor Ihonvbere also pointed out, to the vast majority of people in Africa, the State, its institutions and custodians are largely irrelevant to their quest for survival. Thus, human rights discourse and activism cannot be initiated without a direct and strong attention being paid to the nature, composition, legitimacy and relevance of the State. The truth is that if the State were transparent, accountable, sensitive, and democratic, human rights would not be violated. There is therefore a direct correlation between a badly constituted and structured State and human rights abuse. An unstable, uncertain and undemocratic State cannot protect human rights.



This means that the nature and character of the State has direct implications for the human rights environment in any nation efforts etc.

Countries, in Africa, also needs strong commissions for controlling corruption and misuse of power, like other countries in Asia and America governments they use for controlling corruption. Africa can learn a lot from America and Asia in the field of good governance and development.

The condition in most of the countries in African continent is very terrible in terms of good governance and development; this worst condition can be changed when we really apply good governance for rejuvenating, reconstructing and reforming the entire African continent. People must learn lessons from past mistakes they have to give power to those who are honest and effective leaders, not vote on the basis of caste, colours, region, religion, and community interests rather people must vote on the basis of national interests.<sup>17</sup>

### **Conflict**

The story of Africa is a story of a diverse culture and people who are always in conflict. There are always stories of civil unrest in one part of Africa or another. Ethnic distrust and rivalry has continued to slow down the pace of development and realization of good governance in Africa. The nations' wealth is most times spent in quelling one uprising or another. From Nigeria to Zimbabwe, Rwanda to Sudan, Liberia to Democratic Republic of Congo, cases of ethnic conflict and civil unrest are reported. These nations are the more impoverished and human rights are trampled upon. In this kind of conflict, human rights issues are not properly addressed and a lot of abuses are recorded. In most cases civil society organizations are co-opted into the conflict and the chain of distrust widens. In some cases, the human right communities lack the capacity to intervene and their work in the area of human rights protection suffers. Again violence in Africa destroys the economy and the people are all the more impoverished. Economic and social rights are reduced to mere theories and the continent is worse off for it.

Conflict also continues to hamper African development. Although there has been a decline in the past two decades, in 2006 almost half of all the world's high-intensity conflicts were in sub-Saharan Africa. The costs of these conflicts, both direct and indirect, are numerous. The cost of armed conflict in 23 sub-Saharan African countries between 1990 and 2005 has been

placed at \$284 billion. This is an average of \$18 billion per year and represents an average annual loss of 15% of GDP, which is one-and-a-half times the average African spending on health and education combined. These macroeconomic impacts are massive, but do not tell the story of the dramatic human impacts in affected regions. Compared with peaceful countries, sub-Saharan African countries in conflict have, on average 50% more infant deaths; 15% more undernourished people; 20% more adult illiteracy; and 2.5 fewer doctors per person. In addition, government spending, which could otherwise have been directed to social sectors, goes into military spending during times of conflict.

The African Development Bank defines governance as a process referring to the way in which power is exercised in the management affairs of a nation. It is stated that the AfDB has decided to give due recognition to good governance because, in its opinion, governance is central to creating and sustaining an enabling environment for development and sound development. The main objective of the policy is to mainstream governance into the AfDB's operations.

### **Denial of Human Rights**

In most of the African countries the army and police are really misusing their powers and violating the basic human rights and fundamental rights of the people in most of the places in Africa. Human rights protection is the main debate in today's Africa. Security and respect to human dignity is the major duty and function of the state. The interest of the state should not be received by killing the innocent people. But ironically modern states have failed to a major extent in protecting the human rights. Today everywhere a massive violation of human rights is taking place, especially in underdeveloped and developing countries of the world.

Apart from this many people do not enjoy the basic amenities and needs which must be provided by the state to the people. People don't have proper electricity, balanced diet, good clothes, and better houses to live. Most of the people don't go to school because they cannot pay the school fee, if some people in Africa are going to schools and getting success in receiving then another problem arises that is they remain jobless. Because of the poverty people use to go for criminality in many countries in Africa.

### **The African Development Bank cites following elements of good governance in Africa:**

- 1- Accountability:** Elected individuals and organisations charged with a public mandate should be held accountable for specific actions to public from which they derive their

authority. In a narrow sense, accountability focuses on the ability to account for the allocation, use and control of public assets in accordance with legally accepted standards. In a broader sense, it is also concerned with the establishment and enforcement of rules of corporate governance.

- 2- Transparency:** The policies of the government should be publicly available and confidence developed in its intentions.
- 3- Combating Corruption:** Assistance should be provided to fight the abuse of public office for private gain.
- 4- Participation:** Stakeholders should exercise influence over public policy decisions and share control of resources and institutions that affect their lives, thereby providing a check on the power of government. This process occurs at various levels: at the grass roots, local government and regional and national levels through flexible and decentralised forms of government.
- 5- Legal and Judicial Reforms:** A pro-governance and pro-development legal and judicial system should be created in which the laws are clear and are uniformly applied through an objective and independent judiciary.<sup>18</sup>

## Conclusion

Good governance being an adjective expression connotes certain value-assumptions, whereas governance as a process denotes a value-free dispensation. Good governance is associated with efficient and effective administration in a democratic framework. It is equivalent to purposive and development oriented administration which is committed to improvement in quality of life of the people. It implies high level of organisational effectiveness. It also relates to the capacity of the centre of power of political and administrative system to cope up with the emerging challenges of the society. It refers to adoption of new values of governance to establish greater efficiency, legitimacy and credibility of the system. Good governance, is thus, function of installation of positive virtues of administration and elimination of vices of dysfunctionalities. In short, it must have the attributes of an effective, credible and legitimate administrative system- citizen-friendly, value-caring and people- sharing.

Good governance as a model pertains to nation state which handles its people to lead peaceful, orderly, reasonable, prosperous, participatory lives. Minocha quotes World Bank guidelines and more operationally defines its criteria as “political accountability, availability

of freedom, law abiding, bureaucratic accountability, information available transparently, being effective and efficient, and cooperation between government and society’.

The concept of ‘good governance’ derives its relevance in the context of mis-governance which includes malfeasance. In many countries, the democratic form of government has proved to be ineffective for checking swindling of public funds for private gains by the elected leaders as well as permanent-bureaucrats. Misuse of power, fraud, chicanery and embezzlement of funds are systematically perpetrated by the leaders of government and their unions. Mis-governance is found all around the world, especially in developing countries, in rampant degree. The concept of good governance becomes attractive as a remedy against this state of affairs.

African policy makers and the people of Africa have to change the condition of Africa and they have to strive for achieving a shining and progressive Africa. The peaceful, prosperous and developed Africa could be achieved once all the stakeholders are ready to go for a change. And for changing Africa one needs to have good governance mechanism which could play a role of stabilising the entire African region. The challenges and constraints which the African continent is facing could be managed and transformed by establishing the good governance mechanism in true sense in Africa. A dream of peaceful, progressive and developed Africa is not far from us, one day it has to become true but we all have to be well prepared and strive for this goal.

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