

Islam, Good Governance and Nation Building

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INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is a multi-cultural and multi-religious society where there are several cultures, ethnic and religious groups living together.¹In contemporary Nigerian society, religious pluralism is a datum. The country is heterogeneous in culture and in terms of religion, practicing the major religions of African religion, Islam and Christianity among others.²Islam precedes the birth of Nigeria for centuries, but Nigeria at independence chose secularism based on the multi religious nature of the society. This has however not resorted to good governance for the Nigerian populace.

Political analysts believe that the problem of governance in Nigeria as a case study is traceable to post-colonial era. The succeeding governments since independence are characterized with flaws and shortcomings thereby making good governance a mirage. The intermittent intervention by the military in the political setting since the first coup in January 1966 did not also helped matter as the incidents of lawlessness, impunity, abuse of human rights, etc. pervaded the political landscape. The longest military rule in Nigeria being the period between 1983 and 1999, the short interim government of Chief Earnest Shonekan in 1993, being a necessity and therefore a mere intervention.

¹The challenge of managing Nigeria's political and ethnic plurality has not been an easy task. The ethnic problem has posed a number of threats to the legitimacy of the national government and its ability to offer leadership appropriate to the demand of nation-building. The mobilization of ethnic sentiments and solidarity seeking to gain or retain relevance has fueled anxiety, suspicion, fear of domination and outright conflicts.

²The overwhelming majority of the Northern population is Muslim, which is estimated to be over 50 per cent of the total population. Christianity is strong in the Southern region, accounting for perhaps 35 per cent of the total population of the country, while the balance of the population remains animists. See Dibia R., 'Understanding Public Policy in Nigeria: A Twenty-First Century Approach', (Mbeyi&Associates (Nig.) Ltd., Lagos, 2000). See also Sunday O. U. and Aluforo E, 'Challenges And Solutions To Ethno-Religious Conflicts In Nigeria: Case Study Of The Jos Crises', Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa, Clarion University of Pennsylvania, Clarion, Pennsylvania (Vol. 13, 2011), p 111.

By the return of democracy and the jettisoning of military rule in 1999, expectations and desires of the people were heightened by democratic development and socio-economic transformations. Essentially, there has been a desire for good governance wherein better conditions of life, freedom of speech and expression are guaranteed and promoted, and qualitative life, equity, justice and fairness of the citizenry are ordered and sanctified. It is also expected that the best democratic practices promote a corrupt-free society or at least minimize the perversion of public office and indiscipline in the society. While this expectation on the cleansing power of democracy cannot be disputed, events in Nigeria since the return of democracy leave much to be desired.

It is obvious today that good governance as a by-product of democratic culture is rarely experienced in Nigeria as in several countries of the world. Corruption has indeed become a permanent phenomenon that has eaten deep into the entire fabric of our society. It is therefore out of this abiding concern that scholars and civil society organizations devote considerable amount of time and resources to addressing the question of good governance which no doubt has been identified as a factor responsible for the proliferation of conflict in the country.

It is an undisputable fact that Islam is a comprehensive way of life, which covers every aspect of human endeavour.³ Prophet Muhammad put in place a practical mode of governance, which was earnestly followed by his companions. Islam is anchored in the idea of belief in and fear of Allah. Since Islam makes for sincerity of purpose, contentment and selfless service, and since every source has failed Nigerian leaders in achieving their avowed purpose and promises to the people, the paper therefore, recommends Islamic principles as possible alternative for good governance and nation building. However, a thorough and incisive investigation of the causes, and implications of bad governance, including the Islamic solution cannot be adequately treated without a careful look at some basic concepts.

³ Adebayo R.I., 'Islam, Democracy and Good Governance: A Glimpse of the Islamic Political Thought', in ORITA (Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies), December, 2010, p. 3.

DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

Islam

The word, Islam⁴ means submission to Allah the Almighty, the Creator and Lord of all creation, with the entire soul and body, by obedience to what He commanded and prohibited in His Revealed Law, by compliance and willful yielding of one's will to His Will and Judgments, and by acceptance of all that Allah has predestined for man on earth.⁵ Allah is the Most Beneficent and Merciful who knows all man's rightful needs, who enjoins all that is good and warns against all that is evil. Thus His revealed Law is perfectly suited to the universal needs, rights and responsibilities of man.

Islam is a comprehensive and universal religion for all races and classes of people not inclined to serve a specific category or group of people but specially aimed to address the needs of all humanity with its moral, spiritual, social, legal, political and economic systems. Its moral purity and clarity, simplicity in a strict monotheistic creed and faith, and comprehensive prohibition of all types of criminality, oppression and injustice appeals to all classes and categories of people, regardless of race, culture, education, social and economic status. The aim of Islam is to establish the ideal human society and brotherhood spreading general benevolence and the divine guidance among men for their betterment and salvation. Part of its mission is to establish justice at all times and at all levels, to maintain amicable relations even with potential enemies as long as there are no open acts of hostilities, and to promote peace whenever possible.⁶

⁴Islam etymologically derives from the Arabic word Salam or Salama, which means peace, surrender, submission. See also I.R.A. Ozigboh, *An Introduction to the Religion and History of Islam*, (Fourth Dimension Publishers Ltd, Enugu,1988), p. 33.

⁵N.J. Dawood, *The Koran* (translated), (Penguin Books Ltd, Middlesex, 1978), p. 10. See also Qur'an 2 (Baqarah) vs 31 where the Almighty Allah states in the Glorious Qur'an in relation to Prophet Ibraheem : "Behold! His Lord said to him: Submit. He said: I submit to the Lord and Cherisher of the Universe).

⁶ See Qur'an 60 (Al-Mumtahanah) vs. 7-9

If a nation fails to administer justice then inevitably it will deliver injustice. In order to build a sound society, a systematic framework must be structured. Thus the basic premise of an Islamic state is an ever-revolving domain, applicable to government and politics. Its major inter-components, such as economics, judiciary, and social order are sophisticatedly correlated, and in part, contribute to other components within society, such as preventing corruption, applying fair penal codes, providing rehabilitation and alternative solutions to immoral establishments, eliminating nepotism, honoring and commissioning experts, and facilitating economic and technological growth.⁷

Good Governance

Governance is the activity of governing a country or controlling a company or an organization; the way in which a country is governed or a country or institution is controlled. Governance as a term is broader than the concept of government even though it has the same etymological roots as the latter term. Actually, the term, governance and government are derived from the word “to govern”. Government, according to the New Collins dictionary is defined as the group of people who govern a country or state, while governance according to the same dictionary is regarded as “the action, manner or system of government. Governance also encompasses the processes for carrying out the activities of government.”⁸

The concept of governance is usually preferred with the adjectival word; “good”. Why do we have to qualify it? Is it necessary and what is the implication of qualifying governance? Basically, it has to be so qualified because history has shown that the end as well as the means of attaining that end are not generally shared or understood in the same manner by all.⁹ A political community is so diverse and

⁷M.A. Sayed, *Shariah and Good Governance*, p. 5. Available online at <http://iecoc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Shariah-and-Good-Governance.pdf>. Accessed on 15/09/2015.

⁸Governance is also described as an act controlling the affairs of the nation by making decisions and executing them on behalf of the citizens. It is the activity of governing a country or controlling a company or the way in which a country is governed or a company or institution is controlled. See also A.O. Olayiwola, ‘Leadership, Corruption and Governance in Nigeria’, *European Journal of Business and Social Sciences*, (Vol. 2, 2013), p. 7. Available online at <http://www.ejbss.com/Data/Sites/1/vol2no9december2013/ejbss-1308-13-leadershipcorruptionandgovernanceinigeria.pdf>. Accessed on 15/09/2015.

⁹According to UNDP, governance can be said to be good governance provided it is committed to and capable of effectively addressing the allocation and management of resources to respond to collective problems

conflictive for one to think that everyone has the same frame of mind or the same frame of action as to what is the purpose of a state and the direction it should take or be taken to.

However, it is imperative to stress that the concept of good governance is not peculiar or strictly applicable to the state alone; it also applies to organizations both governmental and non-governmental.

Nation Building

Nation is defined as a country considered as a group of people with the same language, culture and history, who live in a particular area under one government. The Webster's New College Dictionary, defines nation as "a stable historically developed community of people with a territory, economic life, distinctive culture and a language in common". Furthermore, the Thesaurus Dictionary defines nation as "people in a land under a single government; a community or people living in a defined territory with organized authorities. In the modern period, nations have replaced empires as the basic unit of human political organization."¹⁰

Nation-building refers to the process of constructing or structuring a national identity using the power of the state. It is thus narrower than nation formation, the broad process through which nations come into being. Nation-building aims at the unification of the people within the state so that it remains politically stable and viable in the long run. Nation-building can involve the use of propaganda or major infrastructure development to foster social harmony and economic growth.¹¹

¹⁰O.N. Ojoajogwu, 'Religion as a catalyst of nation building in Nigeria', Net Journal of Social Sciences (Vol. 2(2), June 2014), p. 73. Available online at <http://www.netjournals.org/pdf/NJSS/2014/2/14-022.pdf>. Accessed on 20/09/2015.

¹¹In his 2008 Mustapha Akanbi Foundation lecture, Ibrahim Gambari identified many components of nation-building: Firstly, it is about building a political entity which corresponds to a given territory, based on some generally accepted rules, norms, and principles, and a common citizenship. Secondly, it is also about building institutions which symbolize the political entity – institutions such as a bureaucracy, an economy, the judiciary, universities, a civil service, and civil society organizations. Above all else, however, nation-building is about building a common sense of purpose, a sense of shared destiny, a collective imagination of belonging.

Nation-building is therefore about building the tangible and intangible threads that hold a political entity together and gives it a sense of purpose. Even in these days of globalization and rapid international flows of people and ideas, having a viable nation remains synonymous with achieving modernity. It is about building the institutions and values which sustain the collective community in these modern times.

GOOD GOVERNANCE AND NATION BUILDING IN NIGERIA

The challenges facing governance in Nigeria is an issue that raises concern in the mind of political scientists, experts, researchers and students alike. Researchers in the past had given a critical assessment of the state of governance in Nigeria so as to identify the factors militating against good governance and with the mind of suggesting possible solutions. In their book, 'The Essence of Political Leadership', B.C. Nwolise and O.R.A. Ohaemesi identified the essence of governance whether at the local government level, state level, or national level to include the security, development, welfare and happiness of the people being governed. However, factors militating against good governance are such that cast doubts on the development of Nigeria as a nation. These include;

Bad Governance

Good governance is required for the growth and development of any nation. Unfortunately, in Nigeria bad governance is more common than good, resulting in disjointed development.¹²The World Bank (1992) identifies the main characteristics of bad governance to include: failure to properly distinguish between what is public and what is private, leading to private appropriation of otherwise public resources; inability

¹²The reverberation effects of the failure of leadership, corruption and bad governance are being felt across all sectors and segment of Nigeria-unemployment, insecurity, crude oil thefts, dearth of infrastructures, problems in education, health services, transportation, accommodation, communication, medication and so on and so forth. See A.R. Olayiwola, 'Leadership, Corruption and Governance in Nigeria', Journal of Education and Leadership Development, (Volume 5, 2013), p. 53.

to establish a predictable frame work for law and government behaviour in a manner conducive to development, or arbitrariness in the application of laws and rules; excessive rules, regulations, licensing requirement and so forth which impede the functioning of markets and encourage rent-seeking; priorities that are inconsistent with development, thereby resulting in misallocation of national resources; and exceedingly narrow base for, or non-transparent decision making. These and more are the features of most administrations in Nigeria. Scholars observe that successive administrations in Nigeria have not allocated much to the need of citizens, and, worse still, the meagre allocation are often diverted by government officials to their private accounts and projects.¹³ This attitude and many others are such that militate against good governance in Nigeria.

Insecurity

Since October 1, 2010, Nigeria's Independence Day, when there were twin bombings in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), the country seems to have parted ways with peace. At the moment, the country is battling to rescue over 200 school girls abducted by Boko Haram insurgents in Chibok, Borno state; the eastern states are being tormented by cantankerous kidnapers/abductors that have turned ransom payments and killings into a vocation.¹⁴ The armed robbery siege in the south west is gradually being overtaken by creeping scants of kidnappings. The general notion among law-abiding citizens of this country whose psyche has been brutalized is that government security apparati, including the military, police, State Security Service (SSS) and other intelligence agencies are incapable of guaranteeing the safety and security of Nigerians.¹⁵

¹³Vanguard (Vol. 25, Monday, December 24, 2012), p. 18.

¹⁴ P. Oromareghake, R. O. Arisi and O. M. Igho, 'Global Journal of Human Social Science', (Vol. 13, 2013), p. 50.

¹⁵The security challenges in the country caused by incessant attacks by insurgents in the North and kidnapping in the South are part of the numerous causes of unemployment in the country because no investor will like to put his money where he will be afraid of moving freely. See B. Bakare, "Addressing Youth Unemployment in Nigeria". Available online at <<http://businessdayonline.com/2013/11/addressing-youth-unemployment-in-Nigeria>>. Accessed on 20/ 09/ 2015.

Unemployment

Unemployment is a hydra-headed monster which exists among the youth in all developing countries. Experts believe that the number of jobless youth is twice as high as official estimate. Nigerian youths are trapped by unemployment. Studies have shown “the rising tide of unemployment and the fear of a bleak future among the youth in Africa countries have made them vulnerable to the manipulations of agents’ provocateurs”¹⁶.

Unemployment situation in Nigeria has become a conundrum. The recent recruitment exercise conducted by Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) where 1,254, 959 Nigerians obtained the form and over 520, 000 troop out to take the test is a typical example. Among these applicants are nursing mothers, pregnant women and physically challenged persons. During the exercise, about 20 lives of Nigerian youths were lost at stampede that ensued when applicants started scrambling for vantage positions to be screened.¹⁷The absence of job opportunities in developing countries is responsible for youth restiveness with disastrous consequences.¹⁸

Poverty

¹⁶ These include aggrieved politicians, religious demagogues, and greedy multinationals that employ these youths to achieve their selfish ambitions.

¹⁷The gory picture of youth unemployment in the country was painted recently by Dr.NgoziOkonjoIweala, the Coordinating Minister for the Economy and Minister of Finance, who said not less than 5.3 million Nigerian youths are jobless, while 1.8 million graduates enter the labour market every year. Previous statistics released by the National Bureau of Statistics however put the figure of jobless Nigerians at 20.3 million. See Ogun Update (A Publication of the Government of Ogun State), ‘Youth Employment: The Alternatives’, (Vol. 7, NO. 6, June 2014), p. 6. See also TELL, ‘Of Jobless Youths’, March 31, 2014, pp. 16 - 23. Available at www.tellng.com

¹⁸ See TELL, “2015: Can The Broom Sweep Away The Umbrella”, September 9, 2013, pp. 27 - 31. Available at www.tellng.com See also Ajufo B. I., ‘Challenges of Youth Unemployment in Nigeria: Effective Career Guidance as a Panacea’, (African Research Review, An International Multidisciplinary Journal, Ethiopia Vol. 7 (1), Serial No. 28, January, 2013). Available online at <<http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/afrrrev.v7i1.21>>. Accessed on July 11, 2014.

Poverty connotes inequality and social injustice and this traumatizes the poor. More than 70 percent of people in Nigeria are in abject poverty, living below the poverty line, and one-third survive on less than US \$1 dollar a day¹⁹. This figure includes an army of youth in urban centres in Nigeria who struggle to eke out a living by hawking chewing sticks, bottled water, handkerchiefs, belts, etc. the sales-per-day and the profit margin on such goods are so small that they can hardly live above the poverty line²⁰. Disillusioned, frustrated, and dejected, they seek an opportunity to express their anger against the state. Scholars have overtime agreed that there is a link among poverty, loss of livelihood, inequality, and bad governance as evidenced by the numerous violent protests against the wielders of power in Nigeria.

Inadequate Educational opportunities and resources

Quality education has a direct bearing on national prestige, greatness, and cohesion. The knowledge and skill that young people acquire help determine their degree of patriotism and contribution to national integration and progress²¹. Research has shown that most of those youths who engage in restiveness had finished their primary and secondary education, others are undergraduates of various institutions (polytechnic and universities) while few are graduates of various disciplines. Further investigation revealed that they joined militancy and became restive because of lack of job opportunities. Some claimed

¹⁹ United Nations Development Programme rated Nigeria as one of the poorest countries of the world in 2003 with 70% (over 91 million Nigerians) living below the poverty line which is one dollar per day. It must be noted that the condition remains the same today and this means that 127,403,223.2 going by the population result released by NPC in 2007, live below one dollar per day in Nigeria. See Akinlade, M. T. and Igbalajobi M., 'Good Governance: A Variable Tool For Nation Building In Nigeria', International Journal of Advanced Legal Studies and Governance, (Vol. 3 No.1, April 2012), p 82.

²⁰ Unemployment and poverty are two basic problems plaguing many developing nations of the world. High rate of open unemployment especially among the youths in developing nations is as prevalent as the rate of underemployed which are the major factors responsible for low standard of living in developing nations. Poverty is therefore widespread both in the cities and urban areas of Nigeria and other developing nations of the world. See Ogunrinola, I. O., 'Informal Self-Employment and Poverty Alleviation: Empirical Evidence from Motorcycle Taxi Riders in Nigeria', International Journal of Economics and Finance, (Vol. 3, No. 2, May 2011). Available online at www.ccsenet.org/ijef. Accessed on July 11, 2014.

²¹ According to Population Reference Bureau, 2006, between 2000 and 2004, about 30 percent of Nigerian youth between 10 and 24 were not enrolled in secondary school. Perhaps the prohibitive cost of acquiring education is responsible. The aftereffect of this situation is that thousands of young people roam the streets in cities in Nigeria. Those who manage to complete secondary school have no opportunities for tertiary education. Having been denied the chance to reach their potential, they are disorientated and readily available for antisocial actions. Worse still, some who struggle to enrol in various educational institutions drop out due to lack of basic learning facilities.

lack of money to go to school and fulfill their expectations as their parents are poor and, or dead. Others said they dropped out of school for lack of sponsor²².

Lack of Basic infrastructure

Most rural communities and urban slums in Nigeria have no access to portable water, health facilities, electricity, communication facilities, industries and commercial facilities, etc. Behind social unrest in the country is the agitation for equitable distribution of resources²³.

Inadequate Communication and information flow

Communication creates room for sharing information. It helps people express their thoughts and feelings, clarify problems, and consider alternative ways of coping or adapting to their situation. Such sharing promotes social cohesion. People must have access to communication facilities, to communicate with the people making the decisions that affect them. Sadly, rarely do people in Nigeria participate in decision-making processes on issues that affect their lives. Studies reveal that inadequate communication and information flow is one factor militating against good governance in Nigeria²⁴.

GOOD GOVERNANCE AND NATION BUILDING: THE ISLAMIC EXAMPLE

Islam cares for the human soul and gives utmost attention to governance that encompasses the individual and the society and deals with all of man's stages of life: as an infant, a child, a youth, middle-aged, and old person. Allah sent prophets and messengers as teachers and educators, as guides and preachers. He

²²See Oboada A. U., Daniel E. E and Nwachukwu P. O., 'The Challenges of Youth Restiveness and Educational Development in Rivers State', *International Journal of Scientific Research in Education*, (Vol. 7(2), June 2014), p. 108.

²³Dibal R.A., *The Causes of Youth Restiveness and Violence in Northern Nigeria*, Youth Initiative for Advocacy, Growth and Development, Canadian International Development Agency, (CLEEN Foundation, Lagos, 2001), p. 36.

²⁴ An effective way of curbing bad governance is to evolve dialogue as an efficient paradigm for effective governance. Any potential conflict-prone situation also should be nipped in the bud through collaborative efforts and involvement of all segments of the population: opinion leaders, chiefs, youth, women, etc. See Oboreh J. S. and Donald I. H., 'Youth Restiveness and Industrial Disruption in the Niger Delta', *American Review of Political Economy*, June 2011, p. 30. See also Adagba O, Ugwu S. C. and Eme O. I. 'Activities Of Boko Haram And Insecurity Question In Nigeria', *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review (OMAN Chapter)* (Vol. 1, No.9; April 2012), p. 93.

revealed books in order to lead mankind out of the depth of darkness into light by the leave of their Lord, to the way of Him the exalted in power, worthy of all praise.

Good governance is pivotal to the growth of any society. To bring about this, the Prophet (SAW) framed correct social, political, educative, as well as religious and economic policies which include:

Societal Reformation

Apart from spiritual resurrection wrought by the holy prophet (S.A.W), he brought about a marvellous moral and psychological metamorphosis of his followers. The conditions prevailing in Arabia (as also the world conditions) at the time of the advent of the Holy Prophet was that of a society in disarray. Compare the same with the conditions that prevailed at the time of his demise, and the conditions that prevailed during the rule of his immediate successors, the four rightly-guided caliphs, and you will have to admit that the Holy Prophet effected a complete transformation, an absolute metamorphosis. He raised the morals of his followers to sanity and angelic heights. By emulating the Holy Prophet, they became God conscious, and the presence of Allah became for them a living reality. For this reason, they eschewed evil and tried to do good deeds²⁵. Arabia, which was a land of warring tribes, where there was no law except the law of the jungle, became a veritable paradise on earth, with complete peace and tranquillity and respect for people's life, property and honour. The Arabs became one united, God-fearing nation under the holy prophet. The holy prophet not only preached that Muslims are brothers, but he also preached universal brotherhood of mankind.

Peaceful Co-existence

²⁵Drunkenness, gambling, debauchery, adultery, incest, human sacrifice, female infanticide, blood-feuds and tribal warfare, rapine, plunder; all such evils ceased to exist. No police force was needed to control such crimes. Slaves ceased to be treated as worse than beasts; and slavery as practised elsewhere ceased to exist. Women ceased to be treated as mere chattel. See Altaf A. K., *Islam A comprehensive guide-book*, IdaraSirat-i-mustaqeem, Pakistan, (1st ed., 1981), p. 75.

As its name signifies, Islam is a religion of peace and security²⁶ and so almost the first thing which the holy prophet did on settling down in Medina was to enter into a solemn pact with the Jews of Medina²⁷. Quran has invited all People of the Book to retain their faith and reach an agreement with Muslims over commonalities as this will be the firmest ground for peaceful coexistence. Aside this, the Prophet also organised his followers into a well-knit and disciplined community. Despite differences of language, colour, race, country of birth, and social and economic status, they all became one Ummah - brethren in faith, living in peace and harmony. They acted on the Holy Prophet's precept that a Muslim is one from whose hands and tongue a man is safe.

Exemplary Leadership

Under the magnetic personality and exemplary leadership of the holy prophet, all vestiges of race superiority, all distinctions of Quraish and non-Quraish, Arab and non-Arab, all distinctions based on class and colour completely disappeared, and all became brothers in the true sense. The only distinction was that of piety and righteousness. Also, the two groups of Ansar and Muhajirun (Helpers and Emigrants) became like blood-brothers²⁸ and they were so treated in matters of inheritance during the period when they were cut off from their kith and kin. While the Ansar considered it a privilege and honour to assist their Muhajir brothers, the latter did not wish to be a burden on them for long. Very soon the Muhajirun through trade, industry and hard work, were able to stand on their own feet. Later when the

²⁶Islam was the greatest blessing for mankind ever. It set men and women free, through obedience to their Creator, from slavery in all its manifestations. Muhammad, the Messenger of God, was the supreme emancipator of mankind. He extricated man from the "pits of life". Islam means to submit or to surrender with a full realisation of God. Man abandons his ego, his freedom, and surrenders himself before God completely. In all matters of life he obeys God's commandments. He begins to lead a restrained life instead of a permissive one. This is what is called Islam. See Maulana W.K., *Islam and Peace*, p. 24.

²⁷The pact, Medina charter or constitution, was a detailed document and contained 52 clauses. The charter was the first constitution in human history. In brief, it granted the Jews equal rights, with full liberty to follow their own faith without any interference by the Holy Prophet or his followers; it stated that the Muslim and the Jews were allies and would help each other; that neither party would commit aggression against the other; and that, in the event of an attack on Medina, both Muslims and Jews would defend it.

²⁸ This wonderful position of brotherhood and compassion between the Muhajirun and Ansar was also alluded to by Allah in the Glorious Qur'an. See Qur'an 48 (SuratulFathi) v 29. See also Leila A. and Aisha G, *The Life of the Prophet Muhammad*, p. 45.

community was solidly established and relations with those left behind in Makkah were resumed, the rights of blood-relations in Makkah, and the helper – brethren in Medina were both safe guarded.

Youth Empowerment

The prophet of Allah (SAW) directed his attention to the young people of his time. He brought them from the corrupt society where they constituted nuisance to the society. They embraced Islam, memorised the Qur'an, and undertook the call to the new religion. The youths were well trained and drilled by the prophet. He gave them education, transformed their lives and engaged them positively. The knowledge and skill they acquired helped determine their degree of patriotism and contribution to societal integration and progress. The prophet appointed them in high positions of leadership in the army, the judiciary and government, and assigned important tasks to them²⁹.

Stable Economic System

The policies that open up the economy will become people-oriented only if the government is able to direct proper resources towards the youth and provide them access to jobs that are created due to liberalization of the economy. It is in recognition of this that the holy prophet (SAW) formed and implemented policies that would benefit the rich and poor so that there is fair and even competition. The prophet established Zakat institution on the commandment of his Lord³⁰, where obligatory charity is paid by the rich to the poor at a fixed rate. Zakat, called poor-rate or poor-tax, is really a welfare tax. Zakat is the back bone of the economic system in Islam. The prophet ameliorated the condition of the poor masses

²⁹The prophet sent Mu'az bin Jabal to Yemen as judge, and appointed some of the companions as scribes. The four rightly-guided caliphs, Abu bakr, Umar, Usman and Ali, as well as Zaid bin Thabit, Abu Sufyan, Mu'awiyah and Khalid bin Waleed, are among the scribes. The prophet chose Ali to sleep in his bed on the eve of his migration, and to engage in a sword duel with Amir bin Wud Al Amiri in the battle of Badr, and sent him as judge in Yemen. He assigned a weighty task to the daughter of Abu bakr during the prophetic migration, sent Mus'ab bin Umair to Medina as a reciter of the Qur'an before the hijra, and appointed Usama bin Zaid as commander of the army that fought against the Romans in the Syrian region. All of these people were in the prime of their youth.

³⁰ See Qur'an 9 (Suratut-Tawbah) v 60.

and gave them economic security, and prevented the accumulation of wealth in a few hands³¹. With the introduction of Zakat, captives of war were redeemed, slaves were helped to freedom, those who were held in grip of debt were helped to economic freedom, strangers were helped and employers earned their living. The resultant effect of this was promotion of economic freedom, poverty alleviation, and effective governance.

Mutual Consultations (Shura)

Most of the companions of the prophet (SAW) were from the youth. He consulted his companions on all matters. The prophet recognised the youth as a strategic resource and vital decision-making agents. He allowed them participate in decision-making processes on issues that affect their lives. He also gave them a voice to articulate the kind of required assistance and the opportunity to participate in the delivery of assistance policies, whether in private domestic affairs, as between husband and wife, or other responsible members of the household; in affairs of business, as between partners or parties interested; and in State affairs, as between rulers and ruled, or as between departments of administration to preserve the unity of administration³². This method helped people to express their thoughts and feelings, clarify problems and consider alternative ways of coping or adapting to their situation. Such sharing promoted social cohesion, and prevented social unrest. The ideal way a good man should conduct his affairs is consultation, so that, on the one hand, he may not be too egotistical, and, on the other, he may not highly abandon the

³¹It should be noted that before the advent of Islam, slavery was an economic institution of the Arabs. Male and female slaves were sold and bought like animals, and they formed the most depressed class of the Arabian society. The most powerful class of the Arabs was made up by the capitalists and money-lenders. The rates of interest which they charged on loans were exorbitant, and were especially designed to make them richer and richer, and the borrowers poorer and poorer.

³² The importance of consultation in the public sphere is made evident in two Qur'anic verses. The verses speak of those "whose rule [in all matters of common concern] is consultation among themselves", and Allah's command to the Messenger of God to "take counsel with them in all matters of public concern". See Qur'an 42 (Al-Shura) v 38 and Qur'an 3 (Ali Imran) v 159.

responsibility which devolves on him. This principle was applied to its fullest extent by the holy prophet (SAW)³³ in his private and public life, and was fully acted upon by the early rulers of Islam.

General Amnesty

When the pagans of Makkah saw that the holy prophet's efforts at preaching Islam were meeting with success, they gave up their initial attitude of contemptuous indifference and mere jeering and ridiculing and began actively to harass and persecute him³⁴. When the level of persecution reached its peak, Allah commanded the prophet to emigrate to Medina. After some years in Medina, the prophet conquered Makkah and left Medina with an army which, by the time he reached Makkah, numbered ten thousand. Before entering Makkah, the holy prophet announced a general amnesty³⁵. With his magnanimity, the prophet demonstrated that amnesty can be used by the government or people in authority to pardon a group or class of persons who are subject to trial. Amnesty promotes national integration.

CONCLUSION

Good governance has been at the lowest ebb in most parts of the world especially African countries including Nigeria. The citizens are to reap what is popularly referred to as the dividend of democracy. The failure of government in various places for instance, to impact on the people welfare positively has been associated with the unwholesome corruption pervading the entire global political climate. The

³³ These roles required the Prophet to be gentle, kind, and compassionate toward others, tolerant of their failings and forgiving when they sinned; similarly, they required him to seek out others' counsel and show consideration for others' opinions. See Ahmad A., *Al-Shura The Qur'anic Principle Of Consultation*, (International Institute of Islamic Thought, Herndon, USA, 2012), p. 4.

³⁴ The pagans do not only insulted and abused the Prophet, but they also planted thorns in his way, threw dirt and rubbish over his head when he passed through the streets, placed a camel's entrails on his back while he was prostrating before Allah in the sacred mosque; physically assaulted him on occasions and tried to strangle him. The pagans also persecuted and tortured the holy prophet's followers and converts, and some of them died of the effects of torture. The pagans also held a secret meeting at the Dar-un-Nadwa where they plotted to confine the holy prophet, to expel him or to kill him. See Altaf A. K., *Islam A comprehensive guide-book*, p. 94.

³⁵ A herald preceded the holy prophet asking the people to have no fear as no one would be killed or injured; and announcing that anyone who laid down his arms would be safe; anyone who took refuge in the house of Abu Sufyan (who was till then one of the holy prophet's bitterest enemies) would be safe; and that anyone who closed the door of his house would be safe. The Prophet's heart of kindness and compassion was exemplary and of no equal. See Leila A. and Aisha G, *The Life of the Prophet Muhammad*, p. 68.

material inducement of the legislature by the executive has gradually become a living culture in Nigeria especially. The implication of this cankerworm on the political systems cannot be over emphasised. Where the best practise of democracy is upheld, they would certainly grow up good governance. This is because the inevitable outcome will be economic growth and development. But where corruption is well-entrenched and regarded as routine, general social welfare becomes the first causality as resources meant to improve on social well-being are stashed away in foreign and local accounts. Where this deviant behaviour is pervasive, political conflict arising from mass poverty in the midst of affluence cannot be far-fetched. Corruption and good governance are therefore strange bedfellows.

Islam reflects the common interest of the world, of the nation, of the community and of the family. It is not a self-serving faith; but rather, a consort of fellow brethren that transcends racial, ethnic, gender, and socio-economic status. Islam is the path that provides a sound foundation for civil and political stability, and economic growth. Islam does not separate the secular from the spiritual. It is a trio of state, mosque and citizenship.³⁶

Nigeria can draw from the wealth of historical treasure left behind by the Prophet of Islam as a lesson for the Nigerian state. Indeed, most of that may be required for good governance in Nigeria such as accountability and probity, transparency and equity, management of pluralism and resolution of conflicts, social security and welfare, and development oriented programs are abound in the life of the Prophet under the ambit of the Shari'a.³⁷

Besides, in a pluralistic society like Nigeria, it is incumbent on Muslims to show good examples by emulating the prophet in all their dealings, so as to encourage people of other faiths to see the beauty of Islam. They should sever relations with the enemies of the society, and stand up to foreign intellectual and

³⁶S. M. Al-Qazwini, Shariah and Good Governance, p. 3. Available online at <http://iecoc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Shariah-and-Good-Governance.pdf>. Accessed on 20/09/2015.

³⁷M. U. Bunza, 'The Application of Islamic Law and the Legacies of Good Governance in the Sokoto Caliphate, Nigeria (1804-1903): Lessons for the Contemporary Period', Electronic Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Law, (University of Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland Vol. 1, 2013), p. 100.

cultural invasion while making use of modern means and the tools of civilization and scientific advancement in order to attain the lofty goals and convey the Divine message.

In this democratic dispensation, the total gamut of the essence of governance need to be equipped with wings to fly all nooks and corners of the country and beyond to help revitalise leadership at various levels in the focusing and pursuit of their goals, policies and programmes so that our people can enjoy the more abundant as they were promised at independence, but which became an illusion till the present day.