

Research Article

ELECTIONS AND CRISIS OF ACCOUNTABILITY IN NIGERIA GOVERNANCE: A CAUSAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Nigeria is a troubled nation-state grappling with myriad challenges of national development. Accordingly, this paper argued that these daunting challenges stem from failure of accountability in governance exacerbated by flawed process of election. In reference to secondary source of data collection and, non-observational method, the researchers explored issues underlying irregularities that fraught Nigerian election process and its effects in the process of state governance. Theory of structural-functionalism was applied to illuminate the vicious cycle of failed elections and crises of accountable governance from the perspective of dysfunctionality of structures and roles in Nigerian political system. The discourse further revealed that election chaos in Nigeria is historic (despite intermittent efforts to strengthen its process) with multifarious effects on governance structures and process. From these findings, the discourse recommends plausible measures for new attitudinal orientation among other fundamentals to strengthen state institutions for credible elections and accountability in governance.

Keywords: Elections, governance, accountability, structures.

INTRODUCTION

Elections and accountable governance are interfaced variables fundamental to liberal democracy. Hence, the two concepts are key indicators to measure the resonance of democracy as value and process in neo-capitalist states in African continent. Hence, Nigeria as a western African country represents a lab bench to assess the functionality of election and governance in third world democracies. It is often emphasized that credible election is imperative to ensure responsible governance and reverse of it portends adverse effects on the "will of the state". In other words, the process to entrench accountability in governance undoubtedly begins with credible elections where the preference of the electorate is upheld in deference to popular sovereignty and equality. In credence, Asaka (2010) opines that without free and fair election the right to demand and obtain accountability in the most significant and important manner is denied the true holders of a state sovereignty. Even in advanced democracies, periodic election remains the most portent way to obtain accountability with people and power to kick out non-performers. Arguably, credibility in the choice-driven process (elections) serve as a bedrock for the emergence of a democratic government readily disposed to take responsibility and protect interests and civil liberty of the masses. On this premise, this discourse sought to examine the factuality of this assertion in reference to Nigerian elections and governance. In Nigeria, the historical event of election is traced to the era of British colonialization. Precisely in 1922, the British imperial government in Nigeria under Sir Hugh Clifford promulgated a constitution which remarkably introduced the "Elective Principle". Thus, the Elective Principle marked the beginning of elections as the bedrock for accountable governance first ever in the history of British West Africa countries.

Emphatically, the first election in 1923, (though undermined by gender and income suffrage) set the pace for accountability in governmental process seen in the presence of four elected Nigerians in the colonial legislative council at Lagos. At the exit of British imperialism in 1960, the crisis that trailed the process and outcome of first national election in 1964 established an ugly precedent in Nigerian electoral democracy. In this sense, Kirk-Green (1971), Ojiako (1981) and Nnadozie (2007) opined that 1964 national election was marred with irregularities and violence which undermined the country's national unity and political development. Hence, the chaos of 1964 national election is indeed a chronicle of turmoil and upheavals that have marred subsequent elections in the country which invariably constituted the bane of crisis of accountability in governance. Similarly, the history of elections has not shown that the masses can look forward to them as a significant force in changing the material condition of their existence. During these elections the moral values of the country were also corrupted by the blatant disregard of cherished rules, norms and regulations by politicians obsessed with winning power at all costs. Under conditions in which the politicians regard election as warfare in which all is fair that brings victory, pervasive indiscipline is inescapable and the clarion call for ethical revolution can only fall on deaf ears (Nnoli, 2003:222). Indicatively, the preceding analysis revealed that Nigeria is grappling with challenges of electoral democracy. This discourse therefore attempts to establish a correlation between irregularities of elections and crises of governance in Nigeria. The paper is therefore streamlined into six sections; introduction, conceptual discourse, theoretical discourse, crises of elections and effects on governance and conclusion and recommendation.

Conceptual Discourse

Election is a basic concept in political science. It is a concept replete with varied definitions and conceptualizations. In a specific sense, International Encyclopedia of Social Science Vol 5, defined election as a procedure and preference of a kind. Thus, election is a process

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regulated by law and precedents for the expression of choice or alternatives in a context. In a broad perspective, Nnoli (2003), conceived election as a process of choice agreed upon by a group of people. It enables them to select one or few people out of many to occupy one or a number of authority positions. From Nnoli's view, an election facilitates expression of civil liberty to legitimize political authority of the state. In a similar perspective to illuminate the essence of elections as a regulated process, Dowse and Hughes (1983) noted that election is a procedure recognized by the rule of an organisation be it a state or a club, a voluntary organisation on whatever, where all or some of the members choose a similar number of persons to hold an office or offices of authority within that organisation. In ideological sense to underline the essence of civility and tranquility in the process of transition to political power, Yayi (2005) conceived election as the medium by which different interest groups within the bourgeoisie nation-state can state and resolve their claims through peaceful means. Succinctly, Madubuegwu (2010:111), illustrated elections in the context of state and non-state institution to underscore the imperatives of liberty and accountability in governance;

Basically, an election is an inclusive process where every adult citizen is at liberty to decide or express their choice for persons aspiring for public offices. Invariably, election is a modern form of political recruitment and accountability. It provides a process of choice expression and makes elected persons or public officials to work towards the public expectation of their office. Subsequently, an election is not exclusively limited to politics of the state but extend to politics of the informal groups in the state. Therefore, an election is a process for electing leaders in church, social clubs, professional bodies etc. In the internal process of these social institutions, it is fundamental for leadership change and deciding on vital issues of organizational objective.

To this extent, election constituted one of the tents of liberal democracy as Abbas (2008) argued that it is one of the fundamental aspects of democratic values in a representative democracy. It is therefore crucial to note that democratic system and government can only be meaningful and entrenched through electoral process. In other words, without elections there cannot be democracy and legitimacy in governance and all institutions. It is therefore instructive to note that the nexus between elections and representative government accentuate the importance of accountable governance as seen below:

- The electorate elects persons to serve in government in anticipation of responsive governance.
- The elected persons in government are expected to respond to the plights and expectations of the people through governance.

Furthermore, accountability as a hybrid concept elicits plethora of definitions among scholars of Political Science and Public Administration. Akindele and Adeyemi (2011:56) identified the terms and further explicate:

Accountability as a concept has been variously defined and classified; it has been conceptualized as a way of being answerable and liable for one's actions and/or in actions and conduct in office or position. It has equally been defined as the process of making elected officials and other office holders accountable and responsible to the people who elected or appointed them for their action while in office. Thus, accountability connotes the state or quality of being liable and required by a specified person or group of people to report

and justify their actions in relation to specific matters or assigned duties.

Akindele and Adeyemi's expository conceptualization implied that accountability is a norm of responsibility and answerability which is pervasive in every organizational context. In apt sense, it is argued that accountability involves two critical stages—answerability and enforceability. Answerability refers to the obligation of the government, its agencies and public officials to provide information about their decisions and actions and to justify them to public and those institutions of accountability tasked with providing oversight. Enforcement on the other hand, suggests that the public or institution responsible for accountability can sanction the offending party or remedy the contravening behavior. As such different institutions of accountability might be responsible for either or both of these stages. A review of the definition of accountability also implied that it is contractual obligation between government and masses. In illustrative sense, the relevant structures of governance are expected to take responsibility and be answerable to the prompts of the masses. Conversely, the masses are expected to make legitimate demands on the actions and decisions of the government. In a broad sense, accountability is also viewed as process of institutionalizing a system of checks and balances in order to check excesses or abuse. Public service has to do with the business of government at all levels including all that preoccupies the politicians elected and appointed, the elite leadership, the intelligentsia, the armed forces and other laws enforcement agencies and not just the civil service in the Parastatal. Accountability is an encompassing concept, which has to do with the full and faithful discharge of assignment, responsibility, covenant or trust. This is considered central in all social relation whether between individuals or between servants of the state and government or between public servants and people they are meant to serve (Osakwe, 2018:56). It further implied that accountability is beyond norm and expectations, but represents a system designed to check against excesses or abuses and cutting across institutions of public sector service. Hence, Adeyemi et al., (2017) identified and classified various forms of accountability as seen in social accountability, financial accountability, ethical accountability, political accountability and administrative accountability. In other words, accountability is a norm and practice which demands responsibility from elected persons in government and administrative personnel of the state. And, the responsiveness of the government to public stream of pressure is assessed from the nature and propensity of governance. In exclusive sense, governance is the responsibility of government. Thus, governance serves as process and channel of articulating and realizing the will of the state. As a concept, governance is replete with ambiguities and definitional perspectives among scholars and research institutions. Kaumann et al., (2012) conceptualize governance as the process and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised. Specifically, governance is:

- The process by which government are selected, held accountable, monitored and replaced.
- The capacity of government to manage resources efficiently and to formulate, implement and enforce sound policies and regulations.
- The respect for the institutions that govern economic and social institutions among them.

Kaumann's view of governance underlines the imperative of election and accountability. As an institution, it lends credence to the viability of the authority structures of the political system (legislature and executive arms of government) on legislations and administration of policies. Subsequently, the definition also takes cognizance of obligatory responsibility in deference to the institutions of the government. Thus, governance reflects in institutions, process and

obligation in realizing the general will of the state. To this end, the UNDP Report on Governance for Sustainable Human Development (1997) defined governance as the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It comprises mechanism, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences. In the same vein, Nnoli (2003) conceptualized governance as social engagement between the rulers and the ruled in a society. It is based on that understanding that government cannot carry out its functions without using or depending on the ruled in one form or another. Hence, UNDP and Nnoli's views therefore underscore the fact that governance is a process of synergized responsibilities where authority is exercised and obligations elicited in the process of realization of socio-political and economic ideals. In this regard, European Commission Report (2009) highlights the pivotal indices of governance as seen below:

- In essence, governance is about rules, interest, resources and power.
- In principles, governance is about participation, inclusion, transparency and accountability.
- Governance encompasses several themes or governmental cluster:
 - Support to democratization
 - Promotion and protection of human rights
 - Reinforcement of the rule of law and administration of justice
 - Enhancement of the role of the civil society.
 - Public administration reform, management of public finances and civil service reform.
 - Decentralization and local government.

In a specific sense, rule of law, accountability and transparency represents the hallmark of governance. Thus, the reverse of these principles leads to dysfunctionality in the political administration of the state. From this indication, Land Mills and Seregeldin (1992) argued that governance depends on the extent to which a government is perceived and accepted as legitimately committed to improving the public welfare and responsive to the needs of the citizens, competent to ensure law and order and deliver public service, create enabling environment for productive activities and equitable in its conduct. From this indication, it is pertinent to establish the theoretical relevance of election process and accountability in the analysis of structures and roles.

Theoretical Discourse

Structural-functionalism is the appropriate framework to scientifically dissect the nexus between elections, governance, and accountability. Thus, the framework establishes empirical analysis of functionality of structures and process in the survival and development of the political system. In reference to history, the theory was first popularized in the literature of social anthropology. In this vein, Gauba (2003) noted that the theory originated in the sphere of social anthropology in the writings of Redcliff-Brown and B, Malinowski. It was later developed in the field of sociology by Talcott Parsons, Robert Merton, and Marion Levy. Gabriel Almond and his Associates developed it into a tool of political analysis. Almond therefore introduced structural-functionalism to further demystify input-output analysis of the political system. Again, Gauba (2003:36) further explicate the motive of Gabriel Almond on structural functionalism,

This approach was developed by Gabriel Almond and G.B. Powell in comparative politics. A Developmental Approach (1966). Almond and his associates argued that all political systems regardless of their type must perform a specific set of task if they are to remain in existence a system in a working or

in equilibrium i.e. as ongoing system. These are the functional requirement of the system. With this assumption, they sought to modify David Easton's model of the political system, suggesting that "input" and "output" recognized by Easton can best understood as functions or functional requisites of political system. They sought to redefine these inputs and outputs with a deeper understanding of the political process and precedent to identify various structures corresponding to these functions in order to evolve a structural-functional framework.

As such, structural functionalism becomes a requisite analysis in a framework that specifies a set of functions as necessary and sufficient for the persistence of a system. Descriptively, structural functionalism empirically explains that there are fundamental roles performed by structures in the dynamics and development of the political system. Invariably, Almond proceeds to define political system as that system of interaction to be found in all independent societies which perform the functions of integration and adaptation (both internally and vis-a-vis other societies) by means of employment of more or less legitimate physical compulsion (Verma, 1974:205). Impliedly, what define the character of the political system are the functions performed by its structures. Hence, political scientist sought to understand the development, nature, dynamics and process of these structures through the roles they perform in the political system. Hence, the efficiency and effectiveness of these structures can be evaluated through task they perform in the overall socio-political and economic development of the political system. To highlight the structures and functions of the political system, Verma (1975:213) writes that Almond has used a seven-variable list of functional categories. Four of these are input functions

- Political socialization and recruitment
- Interest articulation
- Interest aggregation
- Political communication; and the remaining three are output functions
- Rule-making
- Rule-application and
- Rule-adjudication.

The input functions are performed by governmental sub-systems by the society and the general environment while the output functions are governmental ones. This further illustrated in the figure below;

Figure 1. Model of Structural – Functional Analysis

Environment			Environment		
	Function	Structure	Function	Structure	
I N P U T S	Political socialization and Recruitment	Family, Peer group School Church etc	POLITIC AL	Rule-Making	legislature
	Interest Articulation	Interest groups		Rule-Application	Executive
	Interest Aggregation	Political parties	SYSTEM	Rule-Adjudication	Judiciary
	Political Communication	Mass Media			

Source: Gauba (2003:97)

Essentially the basic thrust of structural functionalism includes:

- That every political system irrespective of style of governance, ideological orientation and socio-economic formation is made up of structures.
- That these structures are entrusted with defined and specified roles within the political system.
- That from the analysis of task or functions performed, political scientists can classify these structures as governmental and non-governmental structures.
- Established network of relation and interaction expressed through input and output matrix.

To further underscore the methodological essence of the framework, David Apter (cited in Hara Das and Choudhury, 1997) noted that;

- It delineates change in systematic terms and forces the observer to examine the meaning on the basis of function.
- It points out the core problems facing the systems.
- It provides orderly way of examining large number of cases in order to develop comparative theories.
- It is quite attractive for comparative analysis of the political system
- It deals for the most part with a manageable collection of variables and it provides a set of standardized categories that can be applied successfully to various political system.
- Almond's analysis provides conflict resolution mechanism along with continuous reaction of the system as a whole to demands made on it.
- The approach is therefore has been accepted as one of the important techniques of empirical investigation in modern political science.
- Finally, like systems analysis, structural functionalism is a wide-ranging analysis which knit together insight into interest, socialization and group analysis into a relatively coherent body of ideas.

Variably, the inadequacies of structural-functional framework are aptly identified by Johari (2005:108);

- The structural-functional analysis tends to focus primarily on static relationship rather than one dynamics. The approach is concerned above all with problems of systematic survival, the requirements of the stable adaptation and the operation of various functions and structures system maintenance. Therefore, the approach is accused of being anti-change.
- The functionalists defeat the very purpose of their approach by misapplying their tools of empirical investigation while studying the political system of the third world, one may easily ask a question as to how the principles of empirical investigation devised in the sophisticated study rooms of Chicago or Harvard University's can be rigorously applied to the study of poor and backward countries of the Afro-Asian world and that too for the state of commanding social and political reality.
- This approach suffers from what is termed by Marion Levy, "the fallacy of functional technologies" it suffers from tendency to explain the organisation of a condition or pattern or action in terms of its being a functional necessary for the survival of the system.

Also, structural-functional framework fails to examine the essence of behavior of political elite and masses on the assumption that political process is a function of attitudinal orientation and behavioral

disposition of persons who perform roles within its framework of structures. The application of theory of structural-functionalism in the analysis of election and crises of accountability in Nigeria governance is useful. In relation to elections and governance, the structural functionalism with emphasis on input and output variables lent credence to the fact that the trends and dynamics of political process are determined by the roles performed by the structures of the political system. To this extent, election as a process is a synergized responsibility of structures of Nigerian political system. The Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, Nigeria political parties (APC, PDP, APGA), the Media and social orientation institutions, etc perform crucial roles in engineering the election process to realize its lofty ideals. Hence, the fundamental task of these structures or institutions is to entrench credibility and transparency in the process of transition to power. However, when this fundamental responsibility is compromised to satisfy ordinate interests then the credibility of the election is undermined which adversely leads to emergence of unpopular persons in output structures of government (Executive and Legislature) occasioned with dysfunctional outputs (crisis of governance) which are detrimental to the stability and development of the political system. In Nigeria today, there is a glare loss of public confidence in the functional responsibilities of the National Assembly, and the Presidency inclusive of other sub national tiers of government. To this extent, the failure of governance in Nigeria is the failure of structures of Nigeria political system. And, this ugly trend is largely attributed to elections fraught with irregularities. Furthermore, the failure of governance is also underlined in the failure of our value-system which is within the functional responsibility of the social structures of the political system such as the family, peer group, school and church. In Nigeria ethno-diverse society, the family values has been eroded, educational system is sinking and widespread immoralities in religious institutions which would have serve as check against the excesses of the governmental structures of the political system. Inclusive is the mass media which perform the task of political communication immersed in deviances that contributes to the crises of governance. Subsequently, the function of accountability is also expressed by interest articulation. The interest group serves as a link between the government and expectations of the masses. Hence, the redundancy or alertness of these groups may mar or improve governance. In Nigeria today, the Nigeria Labour Congress, NLC has over the decades remained resilient to challenge arbitrary actions and excesses of this present government. In a nutshell, structural-functionalism in this discourse serve as scientific and empirical tool to examine and analyze trends and challenges of elections, governance and accountability in Nigeria from the perspectives of structures and functions of the political system. Therefore, the matrix of input and output functions as expressed in the structures serve as a framework of causal analysis of Nigeria political system.

Crises of Elections and Effects on Governance in Nigeria

As earlier indicated, Nigeria's electoral democracy is fraught with irregularities and chaos. The unpleasant development has over the decades undermined genuine process towards the country's democratic consolidation. In credence to this factuality, Madubuegwu (2015) argued that Nigeria as an emerging democracy is bedeviled with myriad of challenges especially irregularities which have tendered to undermine her efforts towards democratization. However, an election in Nigeria since her political independence has had a chequered history of irregularities and violence. Before the advent of the current dispensation in 1999, state-wide elections held in 1964, 1979 and 1983 were warfare influenced by murky interparty politicking, political thuggery and centrifugal tendencies of ethnic politics and regionalism. Moreover, the past elections under the

present democratic dispensation with reference to 2003 and 2007 elections illuminates the abuse of power of the incumbent and structural deficiencies of the electoral management body with adverse effects on governance and political stability in a fragile democratizing federation.

Reflecting on the uncertainties of the 2003 general elections, Iyayi (2005:11) assert,

...twenty-nine of the registered political parties that either contested or did not contest the elections have variously rejected the results as announced by the INEC declaring the results as fraudulent. Both Domestic and International Election observers documented massive irregularities that characterized the elections and refused to endorse the elections as free and fair. Some political parties and their candidates decided to challenge some of the results before the various Election Petition Tribunals and have gone ahead to do so while others declared "mass action" to pressurize a government without popular mandate to abdicate power.

Invariably, the uncivil political culture of desperation and egocentric quest for power among Nigeria political elites grossly marred the 2007 elections as revealed by Adele (2012:211)

The 2007 elections when it actually came were most deadly and frightening in nature. Thus in Rivers State, a police station was attacked and burnt by unknown assailant a night before the election day. In Anambra and Rivers States, voters were faced with violence and intimidations. The INEC offices in Onitsha North, Onitsha South, Nnewi South and Local Government Office in Awka North, Anambra were burnt in protest. In the same vein, violence marred election in other parts of the Nation. Ekiti State, there was a confrontation between the PDP and Action Congress supporters and election results were blatantly falsified in many areas. Violence was equally reported in the Northern State of Kastina where opposition supporters burnt down government buildings in protest as the announcement that the PDP had swept the state's gubernatorial polls, soldiers clashed with angry voters in Nasarawa State. In Oyo State, PDP thugs beat up opposition party officials and hijacked ballot boxes. The 2007 election therefore was generally perceived as the worst in the history of election administration in Nigeria.

Notwithstanding the irregularities and trenchant views that trailed the history of elections in Nigeria, the 2011 general elections indeed represent a shift in paradigm. The election at initial stage experienced logistic difficulties in reference to unavailability of electoral materials. However, the April general elections of 2011 were conducted in atmosphere of peace and orderliness with isolated disruptions in some parts of the country. Hence, Nigeria electors voted for their choice candidates and political parties in isolation of usual intimidation and victimization. Also, there was no recorded killings and arson even in most restive parts of the country during the elections. This positive development therefore resonates the optimism to sustain and advance the electoral reform efforts as averred by the International Research Agency "Crisis Group" (2011:1);

...with the April 2011 General Elections, Nigerians may have taken steps towards reversing the degeneration of its previous elections but work is not finished. Despite some progress, early and intensive preparations for the 2015 elections need to start now. Voter registration need not be as chaotic and expensive as it was this year if done on continued basis. Far-reaching technical and administrative reforms of, and by, the

Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), notably internal restructuring and constituency delineation, should be undertaken and accompanied by broad political and economic reforms that make the state more relevant to citizens and help guarantee an electoral and democratic culture.

Sadly, the 2015 general election came with unprecedented logistic crises and arson that reversed the gains of 2011 election reform efforts. The PVCs crisis enormously undermined the credibility of the historic 2015 general election that for the first in the country's transition led to the defeat of incumbent President. In this vein, Eme (2015), stressed that INEC attempted to improve the integrity of voter registration and identification introducing biometric measures. INEC reports registering 68.8 million voters, an estimated 78% of the total voting age population with approximately 82% of registrants permanent voter cards, PVCs being collected. However in 11 states over 92% PVCs collection reported which is implausible given that the deceased have not been removed from the list since 2010. Regrettably, up to 100, 000 PVCs which are necessary for voting, remained unproduced a day before 28th March election day. In an explicit manner, Madubuegwu (2016: 149) revealed the statistics of millions of Nigerian voters disenfranchised by the inability of Independent National Electoral Commission to distribute PVCs. It was observed that 37,377,108 represent the total number of the registered voters of the three geo-political zones in the North. Furthermore, 32.1million prospective voters collected their PVCs and 5.2 million PVCs were not collected. Therefore, the North had 90% rate of PVCs collection before the 28th March Presidential and National Assembly elections. Subsequently, 31,539,941 represent the total number of the eligible voters in the three geo-political zones of the South. Hence, 24.2 million electors collected their PVCs and 7.2 million PVCs were not collected which indicated a 40% rate of PVCs collection. It is therefore instructive to note that over 12 million Nigeria voters were disenfranchised by the administrative and institutional lapses of INEC. Beyond Maubuegwu's revelation, the Smart Card Reader also failed to read, it was indeed a very frustrating period for millions of Nigerians voters. And, the recent national election in 2019 was immersed with infractions, arson and thuggery raising serious doubt on the credibility of future elections in Nigeria. Undoubtedly, Nigeria state is bedeviled with crises of governance and challenges of public sector accountability. Many Nigerians today are disillusioned with the abysmal failure of governance at the national, state and local levels. Daunting among the myriad crises of governance is the insecurity challenge which has in the recent time engulfed the nation-state. In a stretch of four years, 2017 to 2020, over two thousands Nigerians have lost their lives and properties worth over 500 million dollars destroyed in insurgency, Fulani Herdsmen killings and banditry across parts of the country. Currently, there is widespread and consistent abduction of school children in states of the North occasioned with proliferation of insurrectional movements and activities in Southern Nigeria. The heightened unpleasant security challenges today is an indication of failed institutional responsibilities in a system of collapsed network of checks and accountability and cynical attitude of persons in governance to do what is needful. All points to flawed election process where popular choice is swindled to satisfy ordinate interests. Inadequacy of social infrastructure and basic services essential to improve living standard of people is one of the visibility of governance deficit in Nigeria. Today, the poverty index is alarming and has consistently accelerated over the years as millions of Nigerians grapple in extreme penury and agony. It has been a recurring fact that over 50% of 200 million people in Nigeria today live below 1\$ while 70% of its population cannot have a good meal for nutrition, access quality medical service, cannot boast of portable drinking water and denied opportunity of good education in

a county where hundreds of trillions of dollars are yearly planned (as appropriation bill or budgets) and released at levels of national and other tiers of governments to meet the plights and expectations of the people. The fundamental question is what is the impact of all these monies in situation of infrastructural deficit, inadequacy of essential services, double digits of unemployment?, etc. And, the answer to this fundamental question is diversion and mismanagement of public fund by persons entrusted with governance mandate in a system where there is absence of culture and mechanism of checks, accountability and stewardship. And, this ugly precedent is attributed to elitist political recruitment process driven by patronage-client relationship that is in contrary to the ideals of competition and liberty which represents the hallmark of democratic process.

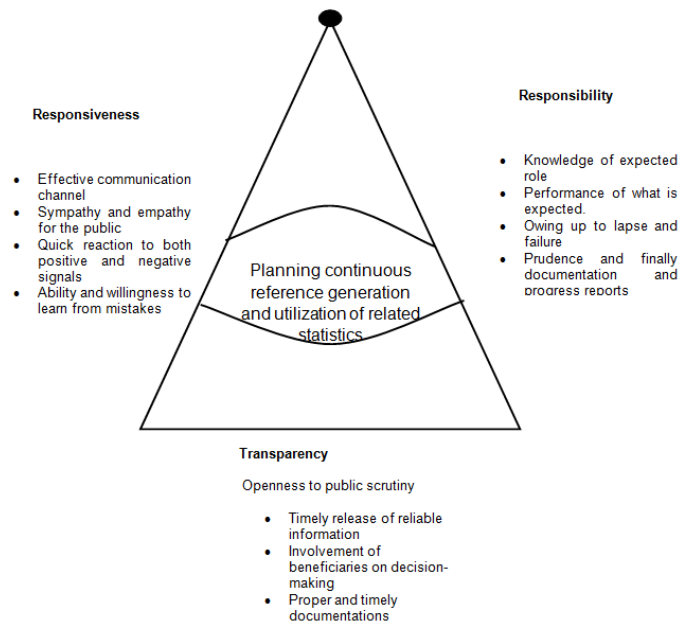
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The failure of Nigerian elections is the failure of state institutional roles. As Nigerian election is unabatedly immersed in infractions, it has persistently entrenched crises of accountability and stewardship in governance. This is on the premise that flawed elections adversely facilitate emergence of unpopular persons and interests in governance structures to the dysfunctionality of state institutions and misery of the people. In other words, sanity and responsiveness in governance begins when there is concerted genuine efforts to restore lost public confidence in the political recruitment process in deference to the ideals of electoral democracy. To this extent, there is need to develop positive orientation complemented by sincere and plausible actions to save a Nation at the verge of collapse. The first step begins with the consciousness of the political class to realize the fact that the country is in mess and sinking. Hence, there is exigent need for collective drive and synergized efforts which translate in public policies and legislations to strengthen relevant state institutions, Independent National Electoral Commission and other statutory agencies to improve on the transparency of the election process. The need for advocacy and consensus among the political parties and politicians from varied interests and opinions to decide on certain civil practices and refrain from politics of bitterness that often create upheavals in the political process. And, to educate their members on the essence of tolerance and civility during elections and restrain their youth supporters from disruptive behaviour that undermines the stability of the process. Most importantly, devise collective modalities to assist the enforcement agencies in ensuring a credible process in atmosphere of peace and order. The advocacy for national rebirth is also instructive. Hence, Federal Ministry of Information and National Orientation Agency, should provide robust blue print and framework for attitudinal reorientation and advocacy on national unity and development. Again, the Federal government should complement this efforts by initiating a process of national conservation among the ethnic nationalities in Nigeria to examine challenges of nationhood and chart a way forward towards mitigating against divisive interests. The need for the governing elite to realize the fact that there is widespread agony and anger among the Nigerian population because of failed governance. Nigerians desired and demand accountable governance process from the persons in the authority structures of the state. Failure to the realisation of this factuality, the public agony and anger may snowball into unprecedented chaos far than what was witnessed in ENDSARS protest in October, 2020. In other words, the government should explore efficiently the available resources to respond to public plights. Subsequently, Nigerians should show enthusiasm on issues of governance and demand more accountability from persons in governance authority structures. This effort should be sustained by the activism of civil society organisations to advocate for governance process which observes:

- strict adherence to the practices of checks and compliance to the provisions of the constitution.
- sense of responsibility and indulgence among persons in governance structures.
- sanction of erring persons and infractions.
- periodic public interaction between persons in governance and the public.

On the level of accountability, the culture and practice of responsibility, answerability and enforceability should be strengthened in governance process through relevant legislations and policies. Suffice to state Dlakawa Triangle Model of Accountability.

ACCOUNTABILITY TRIANGLE MODEL



Source: Dlakwa H.D.) cited Adefila and Adeoti(1992)

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