



## Role of Local Governance on Peace Building in Post Conflict State

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### Abstract

*Governance through transparency and accountability is crucial in post-conflict settings like the local government of Borno State. In the aftermath of conflict, establishing transparent and accountable governance mechanisms is essential for rebuilding trust among the population and promoting peace and stability. Transparency involves making information widely available to the public, ensuring that decisions are made in an open manner, and holding officials accountable for their actions. In a post-conflict local government, transparency can help to prevent corruption, promote good governance, and foster public participation in decision-making processes. Accountability, on the other hand, refers to the responsibility of government officials to justify their actions and decisions to the public. In the context of Borno State, post-conflict accountability mechanisms are necessary to address past wrongdoings, provide redress to victims, and prevent future abuses of power. The strengthening governance through transparency and accountability, the local government of Borno State can rebuild public trust, promote inclusive decision-making, and pave the way for sustainable peace and development in the post-conflict period.*

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### 1. Introduction

Nigeria is facing the problems associated with underdevelopment, such as poor infrastructure, inefficient and ineffective service delivery, corruption, high level poverty and misery. The continued existence of these problems in Nigeria is due largely to bad governance. Achebe (1983) asserts that the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. Good governance centres on the nature of

leadership. Good leadership is a prerequisite for good governance. Achebe further stated that there was nothing wrong with the Nigerian character, land, climate, air or anything else, including money.

Good governance involves far more than the power of the state or the strength of political will. The rule of law, transparency, and accountability are not merely technical questions of administrative procedure or institutional design. They are outcomes of

democratizing processes driven not only by committed leadership, but also by the participation of, and contention among, groups and interests in society—processes that are most effective when sustained and restrained by legitimate, effective institutions.

Good governance can be better appreciated at the grassroots level where the people are in most need of dividends of good governance. It comprises three major interrelated elements, transparency, accountability and citizen participation. While transparency is the expected outcome of accountability. Carsten (2005) asserts that *“without good governance, trust will be lacking between a government and those whom it governs. The result will be social (and political) instability and an environment that is less than conducive to economic growth and development”*. There are also measures and institutions at local government level that are meant to ensure and enhance good governance. The interest in good governance arose from the need for those in government to be answerable to persons who invest in them. Day and Klein (1987) state that the Modern Welfare State is also a service state whose development has compounded the problems of making those who deliver service answerable both to those who finance the services and those who use them.

#### *Statement of the research problem*

The post-conflict local government of Borno State faces challenges in implementing governance through transparency and accountability practices. The lack of transparency in government activities and decision-making processes hinders public trust and confidence in the government, leading to a lack of legitimacy and support for post-conflict recovery efforts.

Corruption and mismanagement of resources are prevalent issues in the local government, which undermines the effectiveness of service delivery and development initiatives. Without proper accountability mechanisms in place, government officials are able to avoid

participate in corrupt practices with impunity, further exacerbating the challenges faced by the post-conflict region. Moreover, the limited capacity and resources of the local government pose barriers to implementing transparency and accountability measures effectively. Without adequate training and support, government officials may struggle to comply with transparency requirements and engage with the public in a meaningful way.

The lack of transparency and accountability in the post-conflict local government of Borno State presents a significant obstacle to rebuilding trust, promoting good governance, and achieving sustainable peace and development in the Borno State.

#### *Objective of the study*

- i. To assess the current level of the post-conflict local government of Borno State.
- ii. To identify the challenges and barriers faced by the local government in implementing.
- iii. examine the impact post-conflict recovery efforts and peacebuilding initiatives in Borno State.
- iv. To make recommendations for improving the local government of Borno State to enhance governance effectiveness and rebuild trust with the community.

## **2. Literature review**

### *Theoretical framework*

Good governance is a way of measuring how public institutions conduct public affairs and manage public resources in a preferred way. It is legitimate, accountable, and effective ways of obtaining and using public power and resources in the pursuit of widely-accepted social goals. Good governance is a way of measuring how public institutions conduct public affairs and manage public resources in a preferred way. Good Governance is an approach to government that is committed to creating a system founded in justice and peace that protects individual's human rights and civil liberties. According to the United Nations, Good Governance is measured by the

eight factors of Participation, Rule of Law, Transparency, Responsiveness, Consensus Oriented, Equity and Inclusiveness, Effectiveness and Efficiency, and Accountability.

- i) Participation requires that all groups, particularly those most vulnerable, have direct or representative access to the systems of government. This manifests as a strong civil society and citizens with the freedom of association and expression.
- ii) Rule of Law is exemplified by impartial legal systems that protect the human rights and civil liberties of all citizens, particularly minorities. This is indicated by an independent judicial branch and a police force free from corruption.
- iii) Transparency means that citizens understand and have access to the means and manner in which decisions are made, especially if they are directly affected by such decisions. This information must be provided in an understandable and accessible format, typically translated through the media.
- iv) Responsiveness simply involves that institutions respond to their stakeholders within a reasonable time frame.
- v) Consensus Oriented is demonstrated by an agenda that seeks to mediate between the many different needs, perspectives, and expectations of a diverse citizenry. Decisions needs to be made in a manner that reflects a deep understanding of the historical, cultural, and social context of the community.
- vi) Equity and Inclusiveness depends on ensuring that all the members of a community feel included and empowered to improve or maintain their well being, especially those individuals and groups that are the most vulnerable.
- vii) Effectiveness and Efficiency is developed through the sustainable use of resources to meet the needs of a society. Sustainability refers to both ensuring social investments carry through and natural resources are maintained for future generations.

- viii) Accountability refers to institutions being ultimately accountable to the people and one another. This includes government agencies, civil society, and the private sector all being accountable to one another as well.

#### *Transparency and Accountability*

According to Abubakar (2010), transparency is openness, and adherence to due process. He further state that transparency ensures that information is readily available that can be used to measure the authorities performance, and guide against any possible misuse of power. It entails official business conducted in such a way that substantive and procedural information is available to and broadly understandable by, people and groups in society, subject to reasonable limits protecting security and privacy.

Accountability involves procedures requiring officials and those who seek to influence them to follow established rules defining acceptable processes and outcomes, and to demonstrate that they have followed those procedures. Accountability is the responsibility to account for stewardship to an authority or the people (Abubakar, 2010). Accountability has two major meanings which overlap. Firstly, there is the standard meaning common in democracies that those who exercise power, whether as government, as elected representatives or as appointed officials, are in a sense stewards and must be able to show that they exercised their powers and discharged their duties properly. Secondly, accountability may refer to conformity between the values of delegating body and the person or persons to whom powers and responsibilities are delegated.

#### *Good Governance and Local Government Service Delivery*

Good governance in local government aims to increase civil engagement with more members of the community in order to get the best options that serves the people.

Delivering good governance in local government is based upon the following six core principles of good governance:

- i) Focusing on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area.
- ii) Members and Officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined function and roles.
- iii) Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour.
- iv) Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risks.
- v) Developing the capacity and capability of Members and Officers to be effective.
- vi) Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability. Local government having relative autonomy can display high levels of performance in its administration and service delivery. This can be sustained through stable environment open to local party politics, substantial flow of fiscal and personnel resources to commitment from the central government to maintain an ideal local government. In this vein, democracy must be rooted in functioning local, participatory self- governance institutions. Therefore, good governance in local government cannot be ignored if the wishes and aspirations of the people are to be attained. Good governance is also viewed as a relationship between the central government and the other tiers of government in the sharing of administrative authority to manage a country's affairs.

The transfer of responsibilities by the central government to local governments places the local government to open judgment of its activities by the people; thus requiring their integrity in the exercise of authority. The lesson of good governance requires supporting and consistent institutional arrangements within the polity. Fakunda Parr

and Parizio (2002), quoting the United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan's statement at the millennium declaration (2000), stated that good governance is perhaps the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development.

#### *Good Governance in the Post Conflict*

In countries where violence has ended or a formal peace settlement has been concluded, the population faces the massive task of rebuilding their nations. In this post-conflict phase, the state's authority has often collapsed completely. What remains of the government has often lost its legitimacy because it has failed to provide its citizens with security or prosperity. In an overwhelming number of cases, post-conflict phases are thus periods of precarious and chaotic transition rather than the more ordered progress previously envisioned at the conference tables. Good governance plays a key role in rebuilding post-conflict countries. Since the human and institutional resources needed in that rebuilding, we believe that countries in this transition phase require the co-operation of their citizens. The task is thus to build transparent, efficient and participative governance structures that can help to stabilise the volatile transformation of post- conflict societies. A political and administrative system that satisfies the principles of good governance can prevent outbreaks of new violence by providing more peaceful societies. Governance describes the application of rules and processes through which authority and control are exercised in a society, political decisions are made, the rules for the scope of action of state and society are structured, and resources for economic and social development are administered. To operationalise this term for post-conflict situations, a distinction is made between three dimensions of governance, which are intimately connected, namely security governance, political- administrative governance and socio-economic governance.

Security governance can be regarded as a prerequisite for the other dimensions of

governance. Without providing a minimum level of security to its citizens, the state is unable to perform its regulatory function. This is usually not a question of a lack of security forces, but rather of the ability to place these under effective democratic control in times of peace.

In post-conflict societies, the legitimacy of the government is frequently in doubt. After civil wars, some population groups often resent the government's right to regulate their lives. To strengthen a government's legitimacy, all population groups need to feel represented. This can be addressed through the horizontal separation of powers as much as through the vertical division between the central state and decentralized administrations. The relationship between all relevant social groups must also be taken into account when addressing the history of a given conflict. Specifically, an appropriate balance must be struck between reconciling the conflicting parties and dealing with collective traumatic experience (including torture, gender-based violence as means of ethnic cleansing). Due to the damage to administrative structure, the post-conflict state is often unable to provide its citizens with a minimum level of basic services. In addition to the sequential costs of the war, over-centralisation also tends to limit the capacity of the state apparatus.

#### *Theoretical Framework*

The theoretical framework that anchored the analysis of this study is the social conflict theory of Humanitarian Intervention Theory and liberal theory and these theories are in one way or the other related to the framework of this research. However, Humanitarian Intervention Theory is adopted to guide this study.

In the context of governance through transparency and accountability in the post-conflict local government of Borno State, social conflict theory can be applied to understand the underlying dynamics and power struggles that may exist within the government and society. Social conflict theory

posits that society is characterized by inequalities and power differentials, leading to conflict between different social groups.

In the post-conflict local government of Borno State, the lack of transparency and accountability can be seen as contributing to power imbalances and inequalities within the government. The absence of open, accountable processes may allow a select group of government officials or individuals to wield disproportionate influence and control over resources, leading to resentment and conflict among different social groups. Furthermore, social conflict theory highlights the role of competition for resources and power in perpetuating conflict and instability. In the absence of transparency and accountability, there may be disputes over the allocation of resources, leading to tensions and grievances among community members.

#### *Liberal theory*

The significance of the liberal peacebuilding theory to this research work is that it analysed the structural causes of conflict in liberal form and rebuilding the democratic institutions to liberate the resources and internal restructuring of state into the capitalist economy. Liberal peacebuilding theory concedes that liberal democratic polity and market –oriented economy reflects on war-torn societies would prevent relapse into conflict. Galtung (1976) argued that for peace to become sustainable, peace-building and post conflict reconstruction activities are essential to address the underlying causes of conflict to prevent escalation after the eruption of violence. He recommended that peacebuilding actors should acquire a basic understanding of the concepts, causes, both positive and negative impact, process and challenges of conflict, conflict resolution and peacebuilding at the local level. The relevance of peacebuilding is direct involvement in tackling the root cause of conflict, which are the structural and cultural conflict which lead to direct violence. One of the key assumptions of liberal debate is that it is globally hegemonic, in the sense that individuals strive

to promote liberal peace and domestic restructuring while local level is viewed as emerging conflict spaces and pockets of resistance backsliding from the liberal peace agenda (Mustapha & Tar, 2019:20). According to Michael Pugh, a liberal developmental expert has regarded liberal theory of peacebuilding as a condition that aids both political and social development in a given society. Michael Pugh's assumption is that liberal peacebuilding theory is a prerequisite for development. Pugh's assumption focuses on development to do with post – conflict recovery. How do we relate this to the Pugh's assumption on liberal theory of peacebuilding? Although there is a steady development and progress in a violent free society, but the liberal concept of Pugh does not highlight the nexus between peacebuilding and the developmental approaches.

Liberal theory focuses on the principles of transparency and accountability in governance. In the context of post-conflict local government in Borno State, applying these principles can help foster trust, rebuild institutions, and ensure effective service delivery to the people. Transparency involves making information accessible to the public, promoting open decision-making processes, and reducing the opportunity for corruption. Accountability, on the other hand, ensures that government officials are held responsible for their actions and decisions.

In order to implement governance through transparency and accountability in post-conflict scenarios, several measures can be taken:

1. *Establishing mechanisms for transparency:* Governments can set up systems to make information about decisions, budget allocations, and public services easily accessible to the citizens. This can include open data portals, public hearings, and regular reporting.
2. *Strengthening oversight institutions:* Independent bodies, such as audit offices, can be empowered to monitor government activities, investigate corruption, and

ensure compliance with laws and regulations.

3. *Engaging civil society:* Civil society organizations play a crucial role in advocating for transparency and holding government officials accountable. Encouraging their participation in decision-making processes can help promote good governance.
4. *Building capacity:* Providing training to government officials and civil servants on transparency, accountability, and anti-corruption measures can help improve the overall effectiveness of governance systems.

The implementing these measures, the post-conflict local government in Borno State can work towards rebuilding trust with its citizens, promoting good governance practices, and ultimately, contributing to sustainable peace and development in the region.

### 3. Methodology

For this purpose of this paper will be secondary sources of data collection.

The secondary source for this study involved relevant, related and useful published and unpublished journals, academic articles, periodicals, newspapers, magazines and online materials, of especially the local government, etc., while analysing the primary data obtained from the study locations. During the subsistence of this study, quantitative data collection method which dealt with mathematical calculation in various formats. quantitative method of data collection was used/ adopted for this research is to ensure greater level of in-depth understanding.

### Findings

Research on the roles of traditional leaders in modern governance and their potential in bridging the gap between traditional and formal governance structures has yielded several major findings. Across various contexts, studies have highlighted the following key points:

- i. *Cultural Relevance and Legitimacy:* Traditional leaders bring cultural relevance and legitimacy to governance processes by incorporating local customs, practices, and values. Their longstanding positions within communities afford them a level of trust and respect that can enhance the acceptance and implementation of government policies.
- ii. *Local Knowledge and Expertise:* Traditional leaders possess deep-rooted knowledge of community dynamics, historical contexts, and traditional practices. This local expertise can inform more effective governance strategies that are tailored to the specific needs and challenges of the community.
- iii. *Conflict Resolution and Mediation:* Traditional leaders often serve as mediators and conflict resolution mechanisms within communities. Their ability to manage disputes and maintain social cohesion can contribute to stability and peace-building efforts, which are essential components of effective governance.
- iv. *Community Engagement and Participation:* Traditional leaders play a vital role in facilitating community engagement and participation in governance processes. By acting as liaisons between the government and local populations, they can ensure that community voices are heard and represented in decision-making.
- v. *Development Initiatives and Resource Management:* Traditional leaders are well-positioned to oversee local development initiatives and manage natural resources sustainably. Their involvement in governance can enhance the effectiveness of development projects and promote environmental conservation efforts.
- vi. *Challenges and Tensions:* While traditional leaders offer valuable contributions to modern governance, challenges and tensions may arise. These can include issues related to gender

equality, accountability, and conflicting interests between traditional and formal governance systems.

- vii. *Policy Recommendations:* Based on these findings, researchers and policymakers may consider developing strategies to leverage the strengths of traditional leaders in governance processes. This could involve fostering partnerships, promoting capacity-building initiatives, and creating mechanisms for collaboration between traditional and formal governance structures.

The research suggests that traditional leaders have the potential to bridge the gap between traditional and modern governance systems by leveraging their cultural legitimacy, local knowledge, and community engagement skills. By recognizing and integrating these roles into governance frameworks, policymakers can promote more inclusive, responsive, and effective governance practices that benefit both traditional leaders and the communities they serve.

#### *Discussion of findings*

Findings suggest that transparency in government activities leads to increased public trust and confidence in the government. By making information readily available to the public, citizens can hold their leaders accountable for their actions and decisions, thereby reducing corruption and promoting good governance. Moreover, transparency can also increase the efficiency and effectiveness of government programs and services by allowing for public scrutiny and feedback. On the other hand, accountability mechanisms ensure that government officials are held responsible for their actions and decisions. By establishing clear procedures for oversight, reporting, and evaluation, accountability measures can help prevent misuse of power and resources.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Is crucial for rebuilding trust and ensuring effective service delivery to the residents. By promoting transparency and accountability,

local authorities can foster a culture of openness and trust among the community members, leading to a more efficient and responsive government. This will also help in addressing corruption and mismanagement of resources, ultimately contributing to the sustainable development and peace building efforts in the post-conflict region. It is important for the government to prioritize transparency and accountability in its governance strategies to ensure the success of local government in Borno State.

### Recommendations

- i. Implement a comprehensive transparency policy that includes regular reporting on government activities, budgets, and expenditures to the public.
- ii. Establish a system for citizens to easily access information about government decisions, policies, and projects.
- iii. Conduct regular audits and evaluations of government programs and services to ensure accountability and effectiveness.
- iv. Strengthen mechanisms for citizen engagement and participation in decision-making processes, such as public consultations and feedback mechanisms.
- v. Provide training and capacity-building for government officials on transparency and accountability practices.
- vi. Ensure that there are clear consequences for corruption and misconduct, including legal repercussions and disciplinary actions.
- vii. Collaborate with civil society organizations and international partners to support transparency and accountability initiatives in the local government.
- viii. Foster a culture of ethical conduct and integrity among government officials through leadership and mentorship programs.

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