

Tackling the Challenges of Nigerian Politics and Governance as a Measure of Sustainable Development: Religious approach

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Abstract

Politics in Nigeria is faced with a number of challenges at all levels of administration. These challenges emanate not only from the rulers but also the ruled and are the core reasons why the nation is backward in her development. The most significant among these are corruption, egocentrism, vandalism, religious-bigotry, ethnicity, nepotism and economic recession. These challenges have caused a lot of damage to the country's growth and development economically, socially and politically and also hindered her attainment of sustainable development. The situation has been aggravated to the extent that corruption, which is a major cause of the challenges has become a cankerworm in the nation. This paper therefore examines the nature of the challenges of Nigerian politics and governance since the attainment of independence till the present political era and proffers solutions to them via religious polity as a mechanism for growth, development and advancement of the country in all facets of life. The paper adopts an analytical, historical and expository method. Secondary data

were employed for effective analysis. The paper recommends that government should provide for the needs of the citizens with justice. Academicians should also intensify their efforts in sensitising government on the need to cater for the needs of the nation in totality.

Keywords: Governance, Nigerian politics, Religion, Sustainable development, Challenges

Background

The system of governance in Nigeria is confronted with a myriad of challenges which constitute hindrances to the nation's efforts towards development. These hindrances are multifarious and centre on corruption, political crises, ethnicity, economic recession, social vices, terrorism, kidnapping and religious bigotry. The worst of them is corruption. Mechanisms put in place to curb corruption and other factors that are hindrances to the development of the nation have proved ineffective.

In the search to overcome her problems and achieve development, Nigeria has practiced different types of government: presidential, military, diarchic and democratic, yet her problems persist due to the corrupt practices of her leaders. This study therefore examines the use of the mechanisms of religion (Christianity and Islam) to tackle the challenges that threaten sustainable development. If a nation is peaceful and free from corruption, as well as political and economic challenges, it can develop and sustain her development. Hence, the mechanisms proffered by the two religions to attain political, social and economic development in a society form the background of this study.

Historical Survey of the Nigerian Polity

It is essential to summarily explore the history of the Nigerian polity. This is necessary to detect the nature of the nation's polity from colonial times till the present and what brought about problems in the system of governance, especially in the present political dispensation. The system of governance in Nigerian polity can be broadly divided into colonial and post-colonial polity. After the years of governance by the British, three main political parties ran in the preparatory elections in 1959 (Egbosa, 2016 and Michael, 2012). These were: National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons

(NCNC), which had control of the Eastern Region (Igbo), led by Nnamdi Azikiwe; the Northern People's Congress (NPC), which had control of the Northern Region (Hausa-Fulani), led by Ahmadu Bello; and the Action Group (AG), which had control of the Western Region (Yoruba), led by Obafemi Awolowo. When no party won a majority during the 1959 elections, the NPC merged with the NCNC to form a government. Abubakar Balewa was made the Prime Minister in 1960 when Nigeria got independence and Nnamdi Azikiwe was appointed Governor General (Michael, 2012 and Oluleye, 1985). Nigeria became a republic in 1963 and Nnamdi Azikiwe was elected President.

In January of 1966, a coup d'état was staged to overthrow the government. The prime minister, Tafawa Balewa, and the regional heads of the Northern and Western regions, Ahmadu Bello and Ladoke Akintola respectively, and some senior army officers were killed. Nnamdi Azikiwe, the President was outside the country at the time. Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi was placed in charge of the new military government (Boragadus, 1985; Egbosa, 2016). The new government promised a progressive programme, a return to civilian rule determined by elections, vowed to stamp out corruption and stop violence. This was because corruption had been identified as the core challenge of sustainable development. He was succeeded by General Yakubu Gowon, another army officer. However, when Gowon moved to split the four existing regions into twelve states in 1967, Chukwuemeka Ojukwu, the leader of the Eastern Region refused to accept this and declared that the Eastern Region would become its own independent republic named Biafra. In June 1967, a civil war broke out which lasted until Biafra surrendered in January 1970 (Boragadus, 1985; Egbosa, 2016). In July of 1975, there was another military coup. Gowon was replaced by General Murtala Muhammed. Murtala was also killed in February 1976 in another coup, led by Lieutenant Colonel Bukar Dimka (Achebe, 1983; Dimka, 2013). He was survived by his deputy, General Olusegun Obasanjo. However, in 1978, a new constitution was written that would return the country to civilian rule, and elections were held in 1979 (Egbosa, 2016).

On October 1, 1979, Shehu Shagari became the civilian president. Another military coup took place on December 31, 1983, although this one was quite welcome at the time because many Nigerians felt that the nation had deteriorated into shameless corruption and economic mismanagement

(Joseph, 1985). Shagari was placed under house arrest, and General Muhammadu Buhari was named the new head of state. Buhari set out to revive the economy, giving this priority over returning the country to civilian rule. His regime was overthrown by General Ibrahim Babangida on August 27, 1985.

Babangida began his rule claiming to be a human rights activist. A new constitution was set up in 1990, and the country was to return to civilian rule in 1992. As the date approached, there were suspicions that this promise was not going to be kept. Pressure started mounting, and finally, in 1992, the Federal Council allowed an election to take place. However, the Babangida government annulled the results of that election, claiming fraud, and postponed the elections for a year. Another election was held in June of 1993 believed to be the first, free, fair and credible election held in the history of the country. The winner was believed to be Moshood Abiola. Babangida claimed that the election was still characterised by fraud and the results were annulled.

The annulment of the election results led to massive protests and Abiola declared himself president. Hundreds of protesters were killed in the demonstrations, human rights and pro-democracy activists were arrested, and opposition newspapers were shut down. Internal and external pressure mounted; Babangida stepped aside on August 27, 1993 and appointed Ernest Shonekan, a civilian, as the first interim President in the history of Nigerian polity (Oluleye, 1985; Egbose, 2016). He ruled for the shortest period, lasting less than three months. He was overthrown by General Sani Abacha on November 17, 1993. Abacha promised to return the government to civilian rule within two years. In the meantime, he dismantled all elected institutions, terminated all national and state assemblies, closed independent publications, banned all political activities, and suspended the constitution. On March 1, 1995 there was another attempted coup by Lawan Gwadabe. Also suspected as part of this coup were Olusegun Obasanjo and Shehu Musa Yar'Adua. They were sentenced to twenty-five (25) years imprisonment for this. Yar'Adua died while in prison and Obasanjo remained there for the rest of Abacha's life (Achebe, 2016; Boragadus, 1985). On December 21, 1997, there was another attempted coup against the Abacha government by Oladipo Diya, the vice president to General Sani Abacha. Diya was imprisoned and in April of 1998, was sentenced to death with four other officers, while many others were sentenced to prison terms

of varying lengths. They were later freed due to the death of Abacha. General Abdulsalam Abubakar took over and set up a transition programme that would lead the country back to democracy by May 29, 1999. He fulfilled his promise and Nigeria was returned to civilian rule in the second phase which has lasted till now.

Nigerian Governance and Sustainable Development: Challenges and causes

A number of factors constitute challenges to Nigeria in her efforts to attain sustainable development. These problems have persisted since independence till date. These challenges can be broadly categorised into internal and external political challenges. While the internal ones are caused by leaders at the helm of affairs (both civilian and military), the external factors were caused by the British colonial masters. They exploited Nigeria's mineral resources and used them in the development of their own region.

Nigeria is plagued by the crisis of perverted religion, sectional and political upheavals. The consequences of these have constituted major challenges that hinder the growth and development of the country. Nigeria, a multi-religious and multi-ethnic society, has experienced massive ethnic, sectional, religious and political violence that has had grievous socio-economic and political consequences for the nation. The nation is blessed with natural resources, but since she got her independence in 1960 from the colonial masters, her major problem has been bad governance. This was deliberately caused by her leaders at all levels of government viz, federal, state and local. The causes of the Nigeria's political problems include: corruption, greed, bad governance, religious bigotry, electoral malpractices and Boko Haram insurgency. Other factors are kidnapping, robbery, incessant terrorism, vandalism, oil theft and many other issues (Egbosa, 2016).

Corruption: Nigeria's biggest problem that has led to other challenges is corruption (Yusuf, 2016). Corruption refers to any form of dishonest or unethical conduct by a person entrusted with a position of authority, often to acquire personal benefit. Hence, it leads to abusing his or her office. It includes activities such as bribery and embezzlement, often referred to as kickback or baksheesh (Yusuf, 2016). It takes many forms and infiltrates all political institutions and economic sectors. Since the dawn of polity in the country, there has been mismanagement of public funds. The regional

government that was first practised in the nation after independence was also subject to corrupt practices of different kinds. This trend continued when the nation became a republic in 1963. Many of Nigerian government properties were looted and diverted to personal assets by the politicians. As a measure to put an end to this challenge, the military intervened in the governance. Instead of putting an end to the corruption, they too followed the act. It was the same set of military officers who had ruled the nation that still continued to rule the nation as civilians. Among them was Olusegun Obasanjo and the present president of the country, Muhammadu Buhari. A number of them are governors of their different states. This is termed in this work as 'the polity by dictatorship among a group of men'. In this era, Nigerian leaders, instead of using the nation's natural resources for the development of the country and her citizens, are enriching themselves. This continually retards the development of the country and keeps her citizens in abject poverty. Many leaders have helped boost the economies of other nations by depositing embezzled money in foreign banks (Yusuf, 2016; Temitayo, 2017). Thus, while other countries are advancing, Nigeria as a nation continues to wallow in the state of underdevelopment.

Besides the corruption on the part of the political leaders, there are other forms of corruption in the country, among which are petty-corruption among the civil servants and members of communities. The blame is not only on the government but also on the entire citizenry. It has practically become a culture in the nation. There have been cases of many Nigerians, including politicians, retired civil servants, judges, and even generals in the army, being involved in corrupt practices. Corruption has bedevilled Nigeria's political scene and encompasses abuses by government officials, such as embezzlement and nepotism, as well as abuses in the public and private sectors through corrupt practices such as bribery, extortion, influence peddling, and fraud. Yusuf (2016) stated that:

Corruption in Nigeria has attained a level that the question that Nigerians should be asking is not 'who is corrupt?' but rather, 'who is not corrupt'? That this must be so is evident from the way many Nigerians today seem to live above their visible legitimate income.

Poor youth empowerment is another contributory factor to corruption. Internet fraud, sexual harassment by men and other criminal acts are

committed because Nigerians lack understanding of the importance of youth empowerment. When parents and governments empower youths, both financially and morally, the level of corruption among them will diminish. Unemployment is a significant challenge in Nigeria. People are pushed into corrupt practices because of the high level of unemployment. An unemployed citizen can be tempted to indulge in corruption to make money and live a better life (Onuba, 2015). The consequences of corruption are many; they include poor investment, rise in poverty, poor national development and incessant national crises. Furthermore, its effect has resulted in insecurity. Unfortunately, no investor will invest his resources in a country like Nigeria that is devoid of security. Any country with high corruption like Nigeria is likely to experience developmental bankruptcy. In addition, when our commonwealth is siphoned illegally to foreign countries, it will be so difficult for the country to attain sustainable development.

Bad leadership is a major hindrance to development in Nigeria. Initially, at independence, every Nigerian was happy that the country was finally free from the bondage of colonialism after many years. This joy was shortlived because of the type of leaders that held the mantle of leadership in the nation's governance. Most of the political office holders put self interest before the interest of the nation. By and large, the nation's concept of democracy was antithetical to that of other countries of the world. Rather than enjoy the dividends of democracy, the people were oppressed by the leaders. While the politicians enjoyed the fruits of democracy, the people who voted them into power were living in abject poverty. How can a nation with this type of governance survive and develop? The growth and sustainability of a nation depends on the ruled and the rulers (Michael, 2012).

The leadership of a nation determines the style of governance. By and large, a nation cannot grow unless her leaders are dynamic, patriotic and merciful to the masses (Michael, 2012).

Kidnapping: Kidnapping is another challenge. The rate of kidnapping in the country has been on the increase. In many cases, ransom money has to be paid before the kidnapped is released. A notable case is that of the Chibok girls abducted by Boko Haram. In spite of government's efforts to deal with this menace, cases of kidnapping still occur.

Electoral Malpractices: Political corruption is a persistent phenomenon in Nigeria. Most elections in the country since her independence have not been considered to be free and fair. The 1964 electoral crisis marked a watershed in the nation's political history (Joseph, 1985). The political and electoral manipulation in the old Western region escalated to other parts of Nigeria and led to a national crisis, which eventually precipitated the problems that culminated in the first military coup. It finally led to the Nigerian Civil War. However, the election of June 12, 1983, that was claimed to be free and fair, was annulled by the then government of the federation.

Greed and ostentatious lifestyles: These are also challenges to governance and development in Nigeria. Nigerian leaders, irrespective of the high salaries and incentives they receive, have been known to embezzle public funds. This had been in the history of the nation since her inception. It was one of the major causes of military intervention into Nigerian politics. However, it is regrettable that even the military are not immune. In some cases, they have been found to be worse than the civilians. This has affected the polity and retarded the development of the country.

Boko Haram Insurgency: Nigeria is has experienced many political and ethno-religious crises in her geo-political zones. The worst of these is the Boko Haram, whose genesis is multi-dimensional. Statistics show that bombings by Boko Haram have resulted in the death of many Nigerians. The Boko Haram insurgency emerged in Nigeria in the year 2007. In spite of efforts by government to put a stop to their activities have proved ineffective. The group's activities are a great security and affect economic investment in the country.

Incessant religious crisis: Religion, especially Islam and Christianity, plays an important role in politics of the country. It is hard for any aspiring president or governor in Nigeria to do without alliance to the two principal religions. The reason is because the large numbers of citizens of the country are either in Islam or Christianity. As religion can make or mar a governance, most of the political crises especially in the Northern Nigeria are connected to religion and ethnicity. Many lives and property had equally been claimed due to this type of crisis. Southwest Nigeria is not an exception. There are also religious conflicts virtually in all administrations among the adherents of the two principal religions. Religious leaders are

also among the causative agents of this conflict via the claim of superiority of religion over another and provocative sermons in mosques and churches.

Unemployment is another major problem in Nigeria. Many graduates of the higher institutions graduate and do not have jobs. They therefore depend on the little resources of those that work either as government officials or on entrepreneurship. According to official statistics (Onuba, 2015), 24% of Nigerians are unemployed. This number is worse for young people. Official Nigerian statistics indicate 38% of those under 24 years are unemployed, but the World Bank estimates this number to be closer to 80%. It is unfortunate that government is unable to provide jobs for the teeming number of youths in the country (Onuba, 2015).

Concept of Religion, Islam and Christianity: An Overview

Religion has polysemous definitions. It is defined by many scholars from different perspectives. It is referred to as a "belief in, or the worship of, a god or gods" or the "service and worship of God or the supernatural". The sociologist, Durkheim (2015) defines religion as a "unified system of beliefs and practices related to sacred things". The origin of religion is based on an idea of reality. It goes back to the beginning of mankind which provides an explanation for the existence of itself as well as the world surrounding it (Bolaji, 1995).

Islam is derived from an Arabic word literally means "to be peaceful or to make peace", "to submit to the Lord, Allah", "to surrender to the will of God". Thus, it literally means the religion of peace and submission to the mission and will of Allah, God. Contextually, it means complete submission to the will of God (Abdullah, 2001). Mohammedanism is thus a misnomer because it suggests that Muslims worship Muhammad rather than God. Allah is the Arabic name for God, which is used by Muslims. The religion of Islam is not named after a person as in the case of Buddhism which was named after Gotham Buddha, Confucianism after Confucius and Marxism after Karl Max, and Christianity after Jesus Christ. It was not named after a tribe like Judaism after the clan of Judah or Hinduism after the Hindus. It is also not like Yazidi which was named by the Yazidi tribe in Iraq. The name Islam was given by Almighty Allah and revealed to the Prophet Muhammad and connotes the central principle of God.

Islam is not a new religion, but the same truth that God revealed through all His prophets to every people. It is both a religion and a complete way of life. The message of Islam expresses the nature of God, who in Arabic is called Allah and it addresses itself to humanity's most profound nature. Islam shares with the other Abrahamic religions their sacred history, the basic ethical teachings contained in the Ten Commandments and above all, belief in one God. It renews and repeats the true beliefs of Jews and Christians, whose scriptures are mentioned as divinely revealed books in Islam's own sacred book, the Qur'an (Muhammad, 1990; Abdullah, 2001). It is a religion with articles of faith based on the Islamic monotheism. Islam possesses a religious law called the *Shari'ah* in Arabic, which governs the life of Muslims and is the embodiment of the Will of God. *Shari'ah* caters for the needs of a society and its laws are essentially preventive and are not based on harsh punishment.

Christianity is a divine religion. It is derived from the Ancient Greek word *Khristos* (United Missionary Church, 2007). "Christ", literally means "anointed one". It is a monotheistic religion based on the life and teachings of Jesus. Adherents of the Christian faith are known as Christians. The religion teaches that Jesus is the Son of God. God, the father having become human and the saviour of humanity. Christians commonly refer to Jesus as Christ or Messiah. The three largest groups in the world of Christianity are the Roman Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox churches, and the various denominations of Protestantism (Briggs, 2003). The ministry, crucifixion, and resurrection are often referred to as the gospel, meaning "Good News". It also refers to written accounts of Jesus' life and teachings, four of which – the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John – are considered canonical.

The doctrines of the religion are a set of biblical principles relating to ethics and worship in Christianity. They include instructions to worship only God and prohibitions against idolatry, blasphemy, murder, theft, and adultery. Others are the death and resurrection of Jesus, salvation, trinity, scriptures, eschaton, death and afterlife, worship, sacraments, liturgical calendar, symbols, baptism.

Curbing the Challenges of Sustainable Development in Nigeria via Religious Approaches: An overview

Islam and Christianity proffer sustainable development as a measure towards the progress and advancement of a nation. The two faiths postulate

man as an agent of development that is endowed with abilities to reform the community and strive for its advancement. This is a core reason why man was put in charge of control of other creatures of God. The first and most important economic principle in Islam is that all wealth belongs to Allah for He is the absolute owner, while man uses it in his capacity as His vicegerent. In the first premise, Islam condemns all forms of corrupt practices to attain a sustainable economy. Its economy is centred on non-interest. This is so, because, the religion views interest as a factor that aggravates poverty in the society. A society cannot grow if her people are living in poverty. By and large, it advocates an economic system based on *Musharakah* (partnership contract) or *Mudarabah* (co-partnership). It is an arrangement or agreement between the client as a capital provider and the entrepreneur, whereby the entrepreneur can mobilize the funds of the former for his/her business activity. The entrepreneur provides expertise, labour and management. Profits that are made are shared between the two according to a predetermined ratio. The profit-sharing continues until the arrangement is terminated, *Murabahah* (cost plus markup sale) and *Ijarah* (lease-based transactions).

In Islam, much emphasis is laid on the economy as the fundamental requirement to sustain other affairs of the state politically, socially and educationally. Thus, if the economy is stable, all other forms of hindrances to development will be removed. It therefore focuses on the standard economics of a nation as the bedrock for the smooth running of governance. The federal government is saddled with the responsibility to intervene in the economy in cases of misdistribution of wealth and to create the necessary environment where the basic needs of society can be met (Muhammad, 1990). Its principle of development includes development of human personality through education, sustained increase in national production, improvement of quality of life, provision of employment, and evaluation of indigenous technology (Muhammad Sanusi, 2015). If the economy of a nation is standard and devoid of injustice and corruption, other problems will be solved and the nation will grow and develop. The Qur'an lays emphasis on justice and piety as the principles of economic progress of a society. It also forbids usury, bribery, corruption and unlawful interest as elements of corruption and causes of economic instability or disintegration (Q2:275). They are believed to be obstacles to the national development.

Islam provides a complete and simple economic system which is the alternative to both capitalism and socialism. Its laws are divine and perfect in all aspects as opposed to man-made economic systems. The revenues generated in Islam are used for the welfare and defense of the state. In peroration, this economic system speaks about the common interest of the society like socialism without the rigid philosophy of common ownership. This is the primary duty of the Islamic state (Fakir, 2002; Ahmad, 2002).

In addition to the economic standard, it commands righteousness and forbids wrong and evil deeds. The most valued virtues of a man as portrayed in Islam include truthfulness, justice and helping the poor and the needy. Likewise, it prohibits blasphemy, murder, terrorism, oppression, injustice, enmity, misery, adultery, drug addiction, suicide and graft, which are harbingers of corruption (Mat and Ismail, 2015). These are perfect guides to mankind and society of all ages, generations, races, and social strata and full of solutions to any all types of challenges, including corruption of any kind such as the economic corruption, the root of other corrupt practices in Nigeria.

In the same vein, corruption of all kinds is condemned in Christianity. This is due to the havoc it wreaks in society. It is emphasized in the Bible that corruption and other forms of related practices are detrimental to the growth and advancement of the society. This is the reason why such practices are forbidden in Christianity. As a measure to solve the problem of corrupt practices and others illicit acts, impartiality is forbidden in Christianity. This is comprehensively expressed in the new and old testaments:

"God does not show favoritism" [Romans 2: 11]

James 2: 9 says,

"But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors."

This is a ratification of the Deuteronomy 1:17 command

"You shall not show partiality in judgement; you shall hear the small and great alike. You shall not fear man for the judgment is God's."

The above extracts from the Bible forbid injustice in society as the root cause of corruption and other vices, such as bribery. If the society is free from injustice there will be peace and no room for corruption. By and large, the scripture enjoins individuals and those in the helm of national affairs to imitate God: *Be imitators of God* (Eph. 5:1) and not be partial or show favoritism. The God we are to imitate is "*a judge ever vigilant, incorruptible, discriminating in no one's favour...*" [Noonan, 1984: 66]. The two statements establish the reason to condemn bribery, corruption and injustice. The distortion of justice is one of the three reasons set forth in the Old Testament why bribery is wrong. Another reason why corruption should be condemned is because it undermines impartiality and it is a form of dishonesty.

As part of the measures to address the myriad of challenges facing the nation, the both Islam and Christianity provide a moral framework for fighting corruption in a society. They maintain that leaders in authority should remain conscious of God, whether in private or public. They advocate that the most fundamental characteristic in an individual should be piety, humility, and fear of God, the Creator. Fear of God should be the bedrock of all leaders at all levels of administration (Yusuf, 2016; Muhammad, 2009). This will enable them to do justice to all aspects of the administration politically, socially and economically. If this is imbibed they would not steal or squander public resources entrusted to them.

“...And whoever fears God; He will make for him a way out.
And will provide for him from where he does not expect.
And whoever relies upon God- then He is sufficient for him.
Indeed, God will accomplish His purpose. God has already
set for everything a (decreed) extent.” (Qur’an 65:2-3)

The ruler and the ruled are thus enjoined to be morally healthy and also to contribute to the moral health of the society. This would establish a corrupt-free society.

Other features of the religious approach which can be adopted to enable Nigeria overcome her challenges include magnanimity and social justice. These are the core reasons why Islam and Christianity recommend the establishment of the institutions of Zakat and sacrifice and proffer them as fundamental solutions for societal growth and the cornerstones of the socio-economic system. Zakat works to ensure equitable distribution of

wealth and establishes a safety net for needy members of the society. Both the sources and disbursement categories of zakat are specified in Islam (Qur'an 9: 60). One very positive economic effect of zakat is an increase in the money supply and a consequent increase in the demand for goods and services. It also provides debt relief and enhances price stability. Other significance of zakat fund is that it aids a society in times of depression or recession, such as is being experienced in Nigeria. Islam thus advocates fear of Allah and provision of basic needs and protection of the weak or less privileged from the state resources. Similarly, much emphasis is laid on the concept of sacrifice in Christianity. It serves as a means of catering for the needs of the less privileged in the community. The Bible analyses the significance of contributing to the welfare of another as an act of human development (see Genesis 31: 54 – 55). Those that are endowed with wealth are enjoined to share part of it with the needy. This is intended to alleviate poverty and establish moral justice which will promote development in the society.

Furthermore, religious leaders are servants of their followers (Muhammad, 2009). They are enjoined to seek for the welfare of their subjects and guide them towards what is good. The Prophet (SAW) was reported to have declared that: "A ruler who has been entrusted with the affairs of a country but makes no endeavour (for the material and moral upliftment) and is not sincerely concerned (for their welfare) will not enter paradise . . ." Therefore, the justice system demands transparent and honest leadership, refrainment from evil, illegal enrichment or any other form of corrupt practices. It also emphasizes that mankind is the vicegerent of Allah on earth and is therefore accountable to Allah for their deeds and choices (Q2:30). Such responsibilities and accountability provide the motivation not only to abide by Islamic moral and ethical codes but restrain mankind from any act of corrupt practices. This is expressed in a number of hadith. An example is as follows:

"Beware of bribery for verily it is a sheer infidelity, and the briber will not even smell the fragrance of paradise."
(Muhammad, 2009)

According to a former governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, Muhammad Sanusi Lamido (2015), establishment of Islamic banking is a crucial solution to Nigeria's economic backwardness and a means to achieve

sustainable development. He thereby urged the federal government to introduce Islamic banking across the country. This will be a saving mechanism for the economy, especially with the decline in oil prices. The ex-governor noted that some countries in Africa and overseas, such as South Africa, Côte d'Ivoire and Britain, have adopted this system of banking which has had a positive effect on their economic growth (Muhammad Sanusi, 2015). This banking system will solve the problem of accumulation of wealth by a few people who are affluent in the nation. It will also pave the way for economic growth and development due to its interest free characteristic. Hence, the Nigerian government needs to rapidly find solutions to rescue the nation from its current economic recession. At present, an arm of the Islamic bank, *Al-Jaiz* bank has been allowed to operate in the nation. Its establishment is also an effort towards sustainable development of the country.

Above all, it is imperative for the all citizens to be patriotic and loyal to the nation. Everyone needs to contribute their individual quota towards development. An example is by investing in one's individual community and patronizing its products. Youth empowerment is one of the ways with which Nigeria can also sustain her development. The youth must be given more opportunities to participate in the government, economy, and society. They (the youth) are the leaders of tomorrow; this is a reason why both Christianity and Islam lay emphasis on education of the youth as the primary assignment of parents. If these measures are honestly judiciously implemented by the government, Nigeria will realise the goal of sustainable development.

Recommendations

From the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made as measures to tackle the challenges of Nigerian politics and governance as a means to achieve sustainable development.

- Government should ensure that the rights of every citizen are fulfilled according to the constitution of the nation.
- Political office holders should truly serve the people and cater to the needs of the masses.

- Academics should intensify their efforts on sensitizing the government on the reason why the rights of every citizen should be catered for in their administration.

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