

## Good Governance, Wellbeing of Nigerians During Covid-19

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### ABSTRACT

The study x-rays the nexus between good governance and citizens wellbeing. The multi-dimensional elements of good governance and wellbeing were interwoven. In the same vein, the study related those elements to the actions of Nigerian government during and after lockdown on Covid-19 Pandemic. The researcher adopted content analysis as was analyzed in journals, articles, newspapers, TV and online material were used, all as a secondary data. The study concluded that the type of governance in Nigeria is bad. The study recommends that the only practice that will enthrone wellbeing of the people must stem from rule of law, transparency, safety of life and protesters, equality, support for health reform among others, that the government should put proactive measure that will enable them to detect, contain, and treat citizens in time of epidemic or pandemic.

Keywords: Good Governance, wellbeing and Covid-19

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### INTRODUCTION

The word "Governance" from the etymological point of view was believed to have originated from the ancient Greek [1,2,3]. Semantically, it is used as a verb *kybernein* or *kybernao* which literally means "starring", "guiding", or manoeuvring a ship or a land-based vehicle. Plato was reputed also to have used the word "governance" for the first time ever. Plato had used the word metaphorically to depict the governing of men or the governing of people [4]. Accordingly, the concept of governance in relation with government or governs has long been around in political and academic discourse, depicting the task of carrying on governmental activities or assignment [5]. Governance according to [6] is a system through which power is exercised in the management of a country's political, economic and social resources for development. In the same vein, [7] posited that governance is all aspects of the way a country is governed, its economic policies and regulatory framework. [8] asserted that the formal United Nations Secretary-general Kofi Annan see good governance as the

single important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development. While [9] see good governance as striving for the rule of law, transparency, equity, effectiveness, efficiency, accountability, and strategic vision in the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority. However, good governance is about the interaction between government and other social organizations, the relationship with citizens, decision making, and accountability [10]. Good governance is epitomized by predictable, open and enlightened decision making, that is transparent processes, a bureaucracy imbued with a professional ethos; an executive arm of government accountable for its actions, and a strong civil society participating in public affairs, all behaving under the rule of law. It maximizes the capacity of states to develop and implement policies for the public's benefits, to manage resources in a prudent manner, and to provide services efficiently and effectively [11]. Good governance assume center stage in the global discourse. Had it been that the

economy and resources of democratic nations were managed effectively and efficiently, rapid development would have been achieved in the areas of social services delivery, improvement in peoples standard of living and reduction in poverty level. Beside, peace and political stability would not have been a herculean task in the third world countries. It is when peoples expectation from the practice of democracy becomes elusive and that there has not been acceptable alternative system of government to democracy that the issue of good governance gained current among the academics, donor agencies and institutional bodies among other groups in the world affair [12]. The United Nations Development Program UNDP identified nine principles of good governance:

**Participation:** All men and women should have a voice in decision-making, either directly or through legitimate intermediate institutions representing their interests.

**Rule of Law:** Legal frameworks should be fair and enforced impartially.

**Transparency:** This is built on the free flow of information, processes, institutions and information must be directly accessible to concerned users, and enough information should be provided allowing for effective understanding and monitoring.

**Responsiveness:** Institutions and processes must aim at serving all the stakeholders.

**Consensus Orientation:** Good governance must be able to mediate conflicting interests in order to reach a broad consensus on what is in the best interests of the group.

**Equity:** All men and women must have opportunities to improve or maintain their quality of life [13].

**Effectiveness and Efficiency:** Processes and institutions should produce results that satisfy needs, making the best possible use of resources.

**Accountability:** Decision-makers in government, the private sector and civil society organisations must be held accountable to the public, as well as to institutional stakeholders [14].

**Strategic Vision:** Leaders and the public must have a broad and long-term perspective on good governance and

human developments along with a sense of what is need from such development. These principles according to UNDP interact with each other in complex ways, suffix to say that they are systematic, reinforcing each other and cannot be developed in isolation. For instance, better access to information foster transparency, but also civic engagement and effective decision-making. Civil engagement feeds the flow of information and increases legitimacy in decision -making. Legitimacy, in turn encourages participation, and in order to be equitable, institutions must be transparent and follow the rule of law. Moreover, [15] opined that, to maximize the success and legitimacy of the public health law reform process, countries should integrate the following six principles of good governance into the law reform process:

**Stewardship:** This refers to the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to ones care. The leaders, minister of health, health workers should exercise stewardship, putting aside personal desire and work to maximize the health interest of the people they serve. The task of law reform must gear towards public's benefits and the right to health for all members of the population.

**Transparency:** Transparency is built on the free flow of information. The process of developing, implementing and enforcing the law should be open and visible to the public.

**Participation:** In case where the law is intended to influence and alter behaviourism, it is important those who are directly affected by the law should be aware of it, understand it and also appreciate the goals that the law is seeking to achieve. To achieve public support for a public health law, law makers should consult affected communities, civil society groups, public health organizations and other stakeholders.

**Fairness:** The principle of fairness makes a significant contribution to good governance because it encompasses the related human rights of equality and non-discrimination. Discrimination entrenches health inequalities and undermines the capacity of government to pursue the right to health for all members of the population.

Governments have an obligation to take immediate action to eliminate discrimination, doing so will help to ensure equality of access to health services, and to the resources needed to lead a healthy life [16].

**Accountability:** Means taking responsibility for the success and failure of laws and policies, and putting processes in place to ensure that changes are made to improve decision-making and the performance of public health functions in the future. The government should ensure through legislation that the responsibilities and functions of public health officials are clearly spelt out.

**Rule of Law:** Good governance is based on the rule of law. The principle of the rule of law means that all persons, officials and institutions, including the state itself, are accountable under laws that are publicly disseminated, equally enforced, independently adjudicated, and consistent with international human rights standards. The rule of law ensures that the law reform be it on health, in itself clear, fair and that it remains on the public interest. In summary, each of the principles of good governance creates an enabling environment for the effective management of the law reform process so that it can best achieve its goal of realizing the right to health for all members of the population [17].

Furthermore, good governance should be accompanied by the achievement of high levels of social, economic and environmental welfare of the people [18]. The health wellbeing of the people was clearly explained in our national constitution, directly or indirectly [17]. Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity [19]. While wellbeing is defined as the state of being comfortable, healthy or happy [20].

[21] opined that well being is about people and creating the condition for us all to thrive. It is quality of life and prosperity positive physical and mental health, sustainable thriving communities. [22] asserted that the concept of wellbeing is a multi-dimensional construct, it implies compiling information about material living conditions, health, education,

environment, economic and physical safety, social interaction, and personal activities.

However, Tom and Jim (2010) identified five elements of wellbeing:

- **Career wellbeing:** This first element is about how occupy your time or simply liking what you do everyday.
- **Social wellbeing:** This second element is about having strong relationships and love in your life.
- **Financial wellbeing:** This third element is about effectively managing your economic life.
- **Physical wellbeing:** This fourth element is about having good health and enough energy to get things done on a daily basis.
- **Community wellbeing:** This fifth element is about the sense of engagement you have with the area where you live.

In the same vein, nicoleking-wellbeing com identified ten elements of wellbeing, she posited that “no two humans in this world are the same. We are unique beings and our beautiful bodies, hormones, ailments, values and stressor are all different. Nutrition, relationships and environmental influences can significantly affect our overall mental, physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing.” That the ten elements of wellbeing do not stand independently of each other, but rather powerfully impact one another. The ten elements are:

- **Physical wellbeing:** The number one value in life. Being physically well means that you care for your body through nutrition, physical activities, appropriate hygiene and the ever important sleep.
- **Nutritional wellbeing:** Technologically, this element could come under physical wellbeing. However, I placed such value on importance of nutrition and good health. So what you eat literally controls almost every functions of your body and mind. Nutrition means eating a healthy, balanced and nutrient dense diet. Food provides our body with energy, fat, protein, vitamins, minerals

and nutrient which provides nourishment essential to live grow and function well.

- Intellectual wellbeing: This is the ability to open our minds to new ideas and experiences, identifying creative abilities and finding ways to expand knowledge and continually challenge your mind. It is having a desire to stay curious and an inner passion flourish to reveal the true you.
  - Meditation: The transformative potential of mediation should not be underestimated. Regular practice can improve our sense of self, connectedness, boost focus and productivity, calmness, sleep, energy, and immune system. Whilst reducing feelings of anxiety, stress and depression.
  - Emotional wellbeing: Being emotionally well means that you have high self esteem, a strong sense of self, a healthy body image and a positive attitude where you are able to manage stress and cope effectively with the every day events of your life.
  - Spiritual wellbeing: It is the feeling of being connected to a higher reality. It is a deeply personal process of understanding and living a life that reflects your beliefs, ethics, morals, and values.
  - Social wellbeing: Finding love and belonging is critical to a long and healthy life. As a human, we all want to feel as though someone has "our back" that we have a sense of belonging, security and a strong support system. Social wellbeing is balancing romantic, social and personal time. It is setting healthy boundaries (learning to say no and asking for help) and treating others including ourselves with respect. Being connected to
- others in community, is as necessary just like food, water, oxygen, sleep, or movement.
  - Environmental wellbeing: Our physical environment plays a huge role in our health. You want to find your surroundings to be enjoyable, peaceful. Your happy home, you are able to create home, work and play environments that make you feel creative, safe, and inspired. This also includes environmental toxins, pesticides, perfumes, cosmetics, shampoos, deodorant, and toys which can interfere with the body's endocrine hormones and cells signalling system and produce adverse developmental reproductive, neurological and immune effects. It is also the ability to recognize and respond to the impact of our personal and environmental decisions, and recognize our own responsibility of taking care of the quality of our environment, surroundings and the entire planet for ourselves and future generation.
  - Occupational wellbeing: The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away. For example, many working mother feel guilt of motherhood. The idea of work life balance is completely myth. We want to find meaningful work that we excel at but we must take a more realistic approach to life that provides flexibility, opposed to putting pressure on ourselves.
  - Financial wellbeing: Being financially well means that you are satisfied with your current financial situation and are not living beyond your means [7].

#### The Nexus between Governance and Wellbeing

Unarguably, a strong correlation exist among governance and wellbeing. The well being measures complement and encompass more established indicators of economic and social progress. The encompassing capacity is based on its

focus on life as a whole, thereby permitting economics, health, trust, freedom and social relations. The new findings were able to show not just that people are more satisfied with their lives in countries have better

governance quality but also shows that a change in government will also bring about changes in quality of life [12].

Consequently, measuring the wellbeing of the citizens is far from being easy task. Therefore, using aggregated macroeconomic variables would over simplify the problem. The flaws of conventional measure such as the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), are well known to economists and social scientists [13]. The reason is that human and not economic development should be the ultimate goal of society. However, human development has a positive impact on economic growth. While the opposite is not necessarily true [18].

[19] posited that good government improve wellbeing. When considering educational qualification, people are being paid based on their contributions to the organization they are working for. It is expected that government should play a very big role in ensuring quality education so that citizen will get satisfaction which they will drive from academic achievements.

John (2014) outlined relationships between governance and wellbeing, they are:

- Inclusive institutions and inclusive law making and policy making processes. Providing the public with a voice in policy making and the governance of institutions could impact wellbeing in several ways. Assuming that people are the best judges of their needs and preferences, allowing the public to have a bigger say in the direction of government should create a government that better suits their needs. However, the benefits of inclusive in policy making could extend beyond just improved government policies. In addition to better outcomes, wellbeing can be improved if people feel that the procedures that led to the policy were fair and inclusive. Such procedure could deliver enhanced wellbeing through an improved feeling of self determination. In contrast, policies made through procedures that exclude the public could alienate the public and reduce wellbeing. There is a

sharp negative connection between corruption and wellbeing and a strong positive connection between trust and wellbeing. It is possible that improving the inclusiveness of government decreases corruption if citizens who are directly involved are better able to discover and stop improper behaviours.

- Voting and political participation: The right to vote have a positive wellbeing effect on the people. The linkage between good governance and improvement of wellbeing manifest when people perform their obligation of voting during an election, they feel happy.
- Fair playing field: Philosopher over the millennia, with Aristotle and Buddha as notable examples, have argued that true happiness involves a middle path where the needs and desires of the self are meshed with the interests of others for the benefit of all. If these philosophers are accurate in their perceptions of human nature, then we should expect to find that people often act against their own selfish interests to achieve fairness, and that they are happier when they can live within a fair system.
- Trust and the rule of law: Fairness and the rule of law are closely related. However, with respect to trust, there is less ambiguity, people are happier living where trust levels are high. There is an important decision to be made between trust, which is the belief that others will behave appropriately and trustworthy behaviour, which is behaviour that justifies the trust of others. Also, evidence shows that people are happier living in countries with more complete social insurance and income support system. This may in part be based on the increased assurance this gives to individual citizens. Across communities and countries, trust and trustworthiness go hand in hand, as shown by the finding that

people are happier living in a country the government demonstrate high level of prudent.

- Decentralization: Evidenced has shown that local circumstance matter most in this regard, it is assumed that decentralization would be associated with higher levels of happiness. People tend to be happier to take part in issues that concerned them most. For instance, people take part in voting due to closeness of polling centres.
- Reliability, responsiveness and effectiveness: The bulk of evidence gathered from other studies clearly shows that people are happier when they have government that efficiently, effectively and reliably deliver what is needed, when it is needed.
- Freedom: People are happier when they are free to make key life decisions, and that impact is above the effects of the better health and higher incomes. That greater freedom like freedom to vote, freedom of the press, economic freedom, and civil liberty makes people happy. Furthermore, Ana (2018)

#### Good Governance, and Wellbeing of Nigerians during Covid-19.

Good governance and wellbeing have a multi-dimensional variables that are inter-related. Before, the global pandemic corona-virus "Covid-19" outbreak, good governance and wellbeing of Nigeria and its citizens were at the lowest ebb [1]. However, many health experts believed that the new strain of Corona-virus originated from bat or pangolins, but the first transition to humans was in Wuhan, China. Although eighty percent (80%) of the people with Covid-19 recover without specialist treatment. The people may experience Mild-flu like symptoms. One out of six people may experience severe symptoms such as rouble in breathing [2]. On January 23, 2020, the World Health Organization's International Health Regulations (IHR) emergence committee advised that all countries should be prepared for containment, including active surveillance, early detection, isolation

stated that better governance should improve physical safety, for which it is necessary to reduce crime. While [8] summarized the linkage between good governance and wellbeing as follows:

- To care and to be cared for.
- To be healthy and to live in a healthy community.
- To share time and much more with family and friends.
- To feel a sense of freedom when making key life choices, among others with similar freedom.
- To be free of hunger and material needs, in a community, and a world where the needs of others are also met.
- To trust and be trusted and live in trustworthy communities.
- To have a life of purpose, working and playing with others with compatible purposes.
- To have a sense of belonging, ideally in several overlapping communities.

That the government should enable or provide enabling environment to actualize this type of situation.

and case management, contact tracing and prevention of onward spread of Covid-19 infection, and to share full data with WHO. On January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization declare Covic-19 to be a public health emergence of International Concern [4]. Consequently, in 2017, during the WHO's Joint External Evaluation (JEE) of IHR Core Capacity (an independent, collaborative multi-sectional effort to assess countries capacity to prevent, detect, and respond on public health risks). Nigeria scored poorly both on prevention and response. Nigeria average score of 1-9 across the 15 JEE indicators in the prevention category suggested that overall, there was limited capacity to prevent biological, chemical or radiation health risk. The country was better prepared in the detection category with average score of 2.6 across the thirteen indicators. The country also performed badly in the

response category with an average score of just 1-5 across the 20 indicators. This implies that Nigeria was not prepared to respond to the Covid-19 Pandemic. This is most obviously evident from low testing rate of Covid - 19. The country had just (350) ventilators and (350) (CU beds for its entire population before the outbreak in 2020. In April 2020, the country acquired (100) more ventilators but given the growing case load, this was not enough for estimated population of two hundred million (200,000,000) people [6].

On March 2020, Contact tracing commenced after identifying the index case of Covid-19 in Nigeria but has been faced with challenges such as inadequate equipment and shortage of funds, school closure was implemented barely three weeks after detecting the index case. The Nigerian government implemented restriction on gathering involving up to 11 people after three weeks following the detection of the index case Covid-19. The lack of enforcement and supervision of gathering and public events made many individual disregard the restriction measure. Lockdown on religious gathering and public events was put in place. Ban on International Flight was implemented [9].

Also [18] stated that the government took numerous health, social and economic measures to cushion the impact of Covid-19, but most of the policy responses have weaknesses. The cash transfer, on April, 2020 the government announced that it will make transfer of (20,000) naira to poor and vulnerable households registered in the National Social Registration (NSR). But the money reached only fraction of the poor, beside that Nigeria does not have a robust national informations, majority of the people that needed the money did not get it.

Moreso, [15] posit that the Covic-19 impact was transmitted via three major impact channels, with potential significant adverse effect on household, incomes, demand for goods and services and the economic output in 2020. The Pandemic Corona-virus brought about deaths apart from the Pandemic itself. B.B.C. News reported that the Security Forces enforcing the lock-down in parts

of Nigeria have killed more people than Corona-virus itself in April. The law enforcement had killed (18) people in Nigeria since lock-down began. During the lock-down, in Nkpor Anambra State Southeast Nigeria, the body of Chukwuemeka lay on the street under the scorching sun. Twenty years old Chukwuemeka was playing football in the street with his friends on April 15, when he was shot dead by the police who were enforcing lock-down order.

In the same vein, Amnesty International Captured the true picture of Nigeria during lockdown. Both the armed group Boko-Haram and Nigerian Security Forces continued to commit serious crimes in the Northeast, including War Crime. Boko-Haram killed hundreds of people and carried out abductions which targeted women and girl child during the period. Government forces carried out indiscriminate attacks against villagers and continued to detain thousands in inhuman condition, over 1500 people died in Inter-communal violence and bandits attack villages during the Pandemic.

Meanwhile, impunity for such crime persisted. The right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly/association were routinely violated during the Covid-19 Pandemic. With the lockdown in place, gender based violence increased and right to health was undermine. Government hospitals refused to attend to sick people in different variation. Thousands of people were evicted from their home. In the state of Adamawa, Boko-haram members beheaded Rev. Lawan Andimi eighteen days after abducting him in Michika. In June, around eighty-one civilians were killed in Boronu State. Also, more than one thousand five hundred and thirty one people died, and thousands were displaced in inter-communal violence mostly between herdsmen and farmers, as well as bandit attack. The security forces committed grave human rights violations, including torture and other ill-treatment, the use of excessive force which resulted on some occasions, in unlawful killings during the period of Pandemic. In Ebonyi State, police arrested the sun newspaper Journalist Chijoke Agwu after he published articles on Lassa-Fever. Also, Peter Okutu of

Vanguard was arrested for his report about a military attack on the Umuogodoakpu-Ngbo Community in the Ohaukwu Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

What of right to health? Prisons in Nigeria remained chronically overcrowded and around seventy percent of inmates were in pre-trial detention, some over five years still in prison, six inmates were killed on protest over fear of Covid-19 by prison guards. Health workers were not adequately protected from Covid-19 infection. Their working conditions were hazardous as a result of PPE shortage, dilapidated and over stretched health facilities, low wages, and harassment by security forces. These were among other things the reasons for the strike by the National Association of Resident Doctors in June, 2020 [20]. Furthermore, over 3,600 rapes were recorded during Covid-19 lockdown. Gay men, lesbians, and bisexual people continued to be arrested by security agents on the basis of their sexuality, and gay men were subjected to blackmail and extortion by mobs and individuals. In the same vein, schools were closed. During reopening and lockdown, private schools, teachers in private schools faced robust challenges in terms of wages. Schools were unable to conduct class due to social distancing and prohibited public gathering. Virtual

#### Conclusion and Recommendations

The type of governance so far in Nigeria is too bad. This manifest itself in the manner the Nigerian government handled issues of health, security, education, rule of law, security forces brutality among others during and after lockdown on Covid-19 Pandemic, and this affected citizens wellbeing. The study recommends the only practice that will enthrone wellbeing of the

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class was only available to elite schools with challenges from network providers [21]. In August, 2020, Yahaya Sharif Aminu, a musician was sentenced to death by hanging for blasphemy by the upper Sharia Court in Kano. Most alcohol shops were destroyed in Kano and Kaduna States by sharia militia [8]. The popular EndSars protest broke out in Nigeria during the Covid-19 Pandemic. The Nigerian Youth demanded for end to police brutality and police reform. Many people were arrested while hundreds lost their lives. The highlight of the EndSars protest was the famous Lekki shooting. Channel TV brought the scene live. The Nigerian Security Forces shot at unarmed civilians while singing national anthem and holding Nigerian Flag. The next day witness a peaceful protest hijacked by the hoodlums, many government properties, banks, shops street lights among others were looted or destroyed [8]. On October, 2020, Nigerians took to warehouses where palliative materials were stored, broke them and got away with items ranging from food stuffs, motor cycles, etc. Most of them accused the government of hijacking the items meant for the poor. Also, many police officers lost their lives and many police stations were burnt down. The life of average man was sham. The high increase of food items and cost of living becomes unbearable (B.B.C. News.com).

people is good governance which manifest in the areas of rule of law, transparency, safety of life and properties, equality, support for health reform among others; that the government should put proactive measures that will enable them to contain, detect and treat citizens in time of epidemic or pandemic.

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