

Nexus Between Good Governance and Social Security: Focus on Nigeria

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Abstract

Good governance and social security are two critical components of development in any society. Good governance involves the effective management of resources, transparency, accountability, and the rule of law while social security is a critical aspect of social protection that ensures that all citizens have access to basic services and a minimum standard of living. Nigeria has been experiencing significant challenges in terms of governance and social security, despite being a rich country with vast natural resources. The paper, thus, seeks to examine the nexus between good governance and social security in respect to Nigeria. The methodology relied on data from secondary sources. The theoretical framework is hinged on theory of social contract. The findings of the study reveals that the integration and adequate implementation of policies regarding social security is evidence of good governance. The study concludes by emphasizing the necessity of good governance in Nigeria, as this will transform the social security of the citizens. It recommends by that Nigerian government should prioritize transparency and accountability in the design and implementation of social security policies and programs to ensure that these initiatives are effective in reducing poverty and promoting social welfare.

Keywords: good governance, government, social security, development, Nigeria

Introduction

Good governance and social security are two critical components of development in any society. Good governance, which involves the effective

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management of resources, transparency, accountability, and the rule of law, is essential for economic growth and stability. Social security, on the other hand, is a system that provides protection and support to individuals and families against risks such as poverty, illness, disability, and unemployment. It is a critical aspect of social protection that ensures that all citizens have access to basic services and a minimum standard of living. The relationship between good governance and social security has been the subject of much debate and research. Some scholars argue that good governance is a prerequisite for effective social security, while others suggest that social security can be an important tool for promoting good governance. In Nigeria, the nexus between good governance and social security has become an important topic of discussion, given the country's economic and social challenges.

Nigeria is one of the most populous countries in Africa, with a population of over 206 million people. Despite its abundant natural resources, the country has faced numerous economic and social challenges, including poverty, unemployment, and inequality. These challenges have been exacerbated by poor governance, corruption, and a weak social security system (Adedeji, Akinwunmi & Oke, 2020). Several studies have examined the relationship between good governance and social security in Nigeria. For instance, Adebayo and Akinlo (2019) conducted a study that investigated the impact of good governance on social security in Nigeria. The study found that good governance, as measured by the rule of law, control of corruption, and political stability, had a positive effect on social security outcomes in Nigeria. Similarly, Adepoju and Oyewumi (2019) examined the relationship between social security and good governance in Nigeria. The study found that social security policies and programs were more effective in countries with good governance, as they were better able to target the most vulnerable populations and ensure that resources were used efficiently and effectively. Other studies have focused on specific aspects of the nexus between good governance and social security in Nigeria. For instance, Okolie and Omotoso (2018) examined the impact of corruption on social security in Nigeria, while

Adedeji *et al.* (2020) investigated the role of community participation in the implementation of social security policies.

Nigeria has been experiencing significant challenges in terms of governance and social security, despite being a rich country with vast natural resources. According to the World Bank (2021), Nigeria's poverty rate increased from 35.0% in 2019 to 40.1% in 2020, while unemployment rose to 33.3% in the fourth quarter of 2020. These challenges have been attributed to a range of factors, including corruption, weak governance systems, and ineffective social security policies and programs. The Nigerian government has the primary responsibility for providing social security services to its citizens. However, the country's social security system is fragmented and lacks coherence, making it difficult for many citizens to access basic services. The system is also plagued by corruption and mismanagement, further exacerbating poverty and inequality.

In recent years, there have been efforts to reform Nigeria's social security system, with a focus on improving governance and increasing access to services. The National Social Protection Policy was launched in 2017 to provide a framework for social protection programs in the country, while the National Social Investment Program (NSIP) was launched in 2016 to provide financial and social support to vulnerable populations. Despite these efforts, challenges remain in ensuring effective governance and social security in Nigeria. For instance, there are concerns about the transparency and accountability of social security programs, as well as their effectiveness in targeting the most vulnerable populations. There are also challenges related to funding and capacity building, with many social security programs struggling to secure adequate resources and skilled personnel.

Given the challenges facing Nigeria's governance and social security systems, there is a need for further research to explore the nexus between the two and identify ways to improve outcomes. Studies have suggested that improving governance can lead to better social security outcomes, but there is a need to explore this relationship in more detail, taking into account the specific challenges and opportunities in the Nigerian

context. In as much as these studies suggest that good governance and social security are closely interlinked, and that improving governance can lead to better social security outcomes, more research is needed to fully understand the nature of this relationship, particularly in the Nigerian context. The paper is therefore segmented into five sections, beginning with the introduction. The second section clarifies the relevant concepts, while the third section explains the methodology used. The fourth section discussed the subject matter, while the fifth section concludes the paper.

Conceptual Clarification

Good governance

Good governance is a concept that refers to the way in which power is exercised in the management of a country's social, economic, and political resources. It encompasses principles such as transparency, accountability, participation, and rule of law, which are essential for promoting sustainable development, reducing poverty, and ensuring social justice. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2016), good governance "implies efficient, effective, and equitable management of resources, including public finances, and administration of public institutions, with a view to achieving social and economic goals."

Transparency is a key element of good governance, as it enables citizens to access information about government decisions, policies, and actions. Accountability, on the other hand, ensures that public officials are held responsible for their actions and decisions, and that they are answerable to the public for their performance. Participation is also important, as it ensures that citizens have a voice in decision-making processes and that their views and concerns are taken into account. Finally, the rule of law ensures that government actions are guided by legal principles, and that citizens' rights and freedoms are protected (World Bank, 2012).

Good governance in Nigeria

In Nigeria, the concept of good governance has been a topic of discussion for several decades, particularly since the country's return to democratic rule in 1999. Good governance in Nigeria is characterized by transparency, accountability, participation, and the rule of law, all of which are aimed at promoting development and reducing poverty.

Despite the efforts made by successive Nigerian governments to promote good governance, there are still significant challenges that need to be addressed. These include corruption, weak institutions, inadequate infrastructure, and poor service delivery (Aworinde, 2018). According to Ojukwu (2014), the Nigerian government has recognized the need to address these challenges and has taken steps to strengthen its governance systems, including through the establishment of anti-corruption agencies such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC).

Social security in Nigeria

The concept of social security in Nigeria is a relatively new concept that has gained increasing recognition in recent years. Social security refers to the protection of individuals and families against economic and social risks such as poverty, unemployment, and disability, among others. The Nigerian government has made several efforts towards implementing social security programs to improve the well-being of its citizens (Oyinlola & Adetula, 2020).

In Nigeria, social security programs are categorized into formal and informal programs. Formal social security programs are organized by the government, while informal programs are organized by individuals, communities, and organizations such as religious groups and NGOs (Oyinlola & Adetula, 2020). Formal social security programs in Nigeria include the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), National Pension Commission (PENCOM), National Social Insurance Trust Fund (NSITF),

and the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) among others (Federal Ministry of Labour & Employment, 2020).

The NHIS is a program designed to provide affordable healthcare services to Nigerians. The PENCOM is responsible for the regulation and supervision of the pension industry in Nigeria, while the NSITF provides social security protection to employees in the formal sector against employment injuries, death, and disability. The NYSC, on the other hand, provides opportunities for Nigerian youths to engage in national service and contribute to national development (Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment, 2020). The informal sector, which constitutes a significant proportion of the Nigerian population, is not adequately covered by formal social security programs (Oyinlola & Adetula, 2020). The concept of social security in Nigeria is still evolving, and there is a need for the government to expand coverage and ensure that all citizens have access to social security protection. This will help to reduce poverty, inequality, and promote economic stability and growth.

Methodology

The methodology employed for this study is content analysis. It combines conceptual evaluation, theme analysis, and theoretical presentation. The approach of this study placed a strong emphasis on qualitative information acquired from secondary sources, such as journals, government websites, and written works. Each and every bit of data acquired for this study is relevant to it.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is anchored on the theory of social contract. The theory of social contract proposes that the state and citizens enter into an agreement whereby the state provides social security and other essential services in exchange for the citizens' obedience and loyalty (Hobbes, 1651; Rousseau, 1762). According to this theory, the state has a responsibility to protect the welfare of its citizens, including providing social security measures, such as health care, education, and

social welfare programs. The social contract theory is a political and moral theory that explains the relationship between the state and its citizens. The theory asserts that individuals in a society voluntarily surrender some of their rights and freedoms to the state, in exchange for protection and security (Rousseau, 1762).

One of the main strengths of the social contract theory is that it provides a moral justification for the existence of the state and the government's authority. According to Hobbes (1651), the social contract theory is the only way to establish a legitimate authority that can maintain peace and security in society. The theory recognizes the importance of government in maintaining law and order, and providing public goods and services such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure.

Another strength of the social contract theory is that it promotes the principle of equality among individuals. The theory proposes that individuals should be treated equally by the state, and that the government's authority should be derived from the people's consent (Locke, 1689). This principle of equality is important for the protection of individual rights and the prevention of discrimination.

Also, the theory emphasizes on individualism. It focuses on individual rights and freedoms, rather than the collective good of society. This individualistic approach may result in the neglect of the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups, such as the poor and minorities (Young, 1990).

The social contract theory provides a suitable theoretical framework for examining the nexus between good governance and social security in Nigeria. The theory emphasizes the relationship between the state and its citizens, where individuals surrender some of their rights and freedoms to the state in exchange for protection and security (Rousseau, 1762). In Nigeria, social security is a fundamental right of every citizen, and the government is responsible for ensuring its provision. Good governance is crucial in ensuring that the government effectively fulfils this responsibility. According to Rousseau (1762), a social contract exists between the government and the citizens, where the government has an

obligation to provide social security to its citizens, and citizens have a responsibility to support the government and obey its laws.

Providing social security to citizens has been a challenge due to various factors such as corruption, mismanagement, and lack of transparency in government. According to Nwankwo and Okeke (2015), good governance is critical in ensuring that social security is provided to citizens. Good governance practices such as accountability, transparency, and the rule of law can strengthen the social contract between the government and its citizens and ensure that social security programs are accessible to all citizens.

The Need for Good Governance in Nigeria

Nigeria is a country that is blessed with vast resources, both human and natural. However, the country has been plagued by numerous challenges, including corruption, insecurity, and poverty, among others. These challenges can be attributed to poor governance, which has been a persistent problem in the country. In order for the country to experience a turn-around, there is a need for governance, which is discussed in this section.

- *Economic Development:* Good governance is essential for economic development in Nigeria. According to the World Bank, good governance is critical for sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction (World Bank, 2019). The absence of good governance in Nigeria has led to a decline in economic growth and development. The country's ranking on the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index dropped from 131 in 2019 to 146 in 2020, indicating a decline in the ease of doing business in the country (World Bank, 2020). This decline is partly due to poor governance, including corruption, inadequate infrastructure, and ineffective legal systems. Good governance is a necessary condition for economic growth and development. A study by Abubakar (2017) found that good governance is positively related to economic development in Nigeria. Good governance practices such as transparency, accountability, and the rule of law can

improve investor confidence, attract foreign investment, and foster economic growth.

Year	Ranking on Ease of Doing Business Index	Distance to Frontier Score
2018	145	52.89
2019	131	56.92
2020	146	56.90
2021	169	53.5

Source: World Bank

- Social Development:* Good governance is necessary for social development in Nigeria. The lack of good governance in Nigeria has resulted in poor provision of basic amenities such as healthcare, education, and housing. For instance, Nigeria has one of the highest infant mortality rates in the world, with 29.3 deaths per 1,000 live births (World Bank, 2021). Similarly, the literacy rate in Nigeria is low, with only 59.6% of the population aged 15 years and above able to read and write (World Bank, 2020). These statistics can be attributed to poor governance, including inadequate investment in social infrastructure and the diversion of funds meant for social development.

Top 10 countries with the highest mortality rates

Rank	Country	Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)
1	Afghanistan	48.6
2	Somalia	38.8
3	Central African Republic	34.4
4	Mali	30.6
5	Niger	30.2

Rank	Country	Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)
6	South Sudan	29.8
7	Chad	29.7
8	Nigeria	29.3
9	Sierra Leone	28.9
10	Democratic Republic of Congo	27.6

Source: World Bank. (2021).

- Peace and Security:* Good governance is crucial for peace and security in Nigeria. The country has been plagued by numerous security challenges, including terrorism, banditry, and communal clashes, among others. These challenges can be attributed to poor governance, including corruption and ineffective law enforcement. According to Transparency International, Nigeria ranked 149th out of 180 countries on the Corruption Perception Index in 2020 (Transparency International, 2021). Corruption has been identified as a significant factor fuelling insecurity in the country, as it undermines law enforcement and weakens institutions responsible for maintaining peace and security. Good governance practices such as rule of law, accountability, and citizen participation are necessary to address security challenges in Nigeria. A study by Onapajo and Fagbadebo (2019) found that good governance practices such as rule of law and accountability can improve security in Nigeria.
- Corruption:* Nigeria has a high level of corruption, which has had a negative impact on the country's development. Good governance practices such as transparency, accountability, and anti-corruption measures are necessary to reduce corruption in Nigeria. A study by Lawal and Ahmad (2018) found that good governance practices such as transparency and accountability are negatively related to corruption in Nigeria.

- *Poverty reduction:* Nigeria has a high level of poverty, with over 40% of the population living below the poverty line. Good governance practices such as citizen participation, responsiveness, and transparency are necessary to reduce poverty in Nigeria. A study by Oyewumi et al. (2018) found that good governance practices such as citizen participation and responsiveness are positively related to poverty reduction in Nigeria.

Impacts of Social Security in Nigeria

Social security refers to programs and policies designed to provide a basic level of economic security to individuals and families, particularly in times of need, such as old age, disability, unemployment, and poverty. In Nigeria, social security programs have played a critical role in reducing poverty, promoting social welfare, and enhancing the overall well-being of citizens. The following are some of the impacts that social welfare has had on Nigeria:

- *National Social Safety Nets Project:* The Nigerian government has established various social security programs to address the needs of different segments of the population. One of the most notable programs is the National Social Safety Nets Project (NASSP), which aims to provide cash transfers to the poorest households in the country (World Bank, 2020). A study by Olaniyan and Ogunlade (2019) found that the conditional cash transfer program has reduced the incidence of poverty among beneficiary households by 10.8%.
- *National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS):* The Nigerian government has established the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), which provides health insurance coverage to citizens (National Health Insurance Scheme, n.d.). The program is designed to provide affordable and accessible healthcare to the population, particularly those who may not have access to quality healthcare due to financial constraints. The National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) has improved access to healthcare services for Nigerians and reduced the burden of healthcare costs on households.

According to a study by Aremu and Adebowale (2018), the NHIS has contributed to the development of the healthcare sector in Nigeria, improved the quality of healthcare services, and increased healthcare expenditure in the country.

- *Social welfare:* Another impact of social security in Nigeria is the promotion of social welfare. Social security programs provide a safety net for vulnerable populations, such as the elderly, disabled, and unemployed. For example, the Pension Reform Act of 2014 introduced a contributory pension scheme for public and private sector workers, which has improved the welfare of retirees in the country (National Pension Commission, n.d.). A study by Ademola et al. (2020) found that the pension reform has improved the financial well-being of retirees, reduced poverty levels among the elderly, and enhanced their access to healthcare services.
- *Improved educational outcomes:* Social security programs such as the Home-Grown School Feeding Program (HGSFP) have improved school attendance and educational outcomes among children from vulnerable households. A study by Idris et al. (2021) found that the HGSFP has increased enrolment rates and reduced dropout rates among primary school children in Nigeria.
- *Enhanced agricultural productivity:* Social security programs such as the Growth Enhancement Support (GES) scheme have increased agricultural productivity among smallholder farmers in Nigeria. The GES provides subsidized inputs, such as fertilizer and seeds, to farmers to improve their yields. According to Adepoju and Adedoyin (2019) the GES has increased agricultural productivity and incomes among smallholder farmers, particularly women farmers.
- *Improved social cohesion:* Social security programs have promoted social cohesion and community development in Nigeria. For example, the Community-Based Targeting (CBT) model used in the CCT program involves community members in the identification and selection of beneficiary households, which has enhanced

social trust and cooperation among community members. A study by Omonona et al. (2020) found that the CBT model has improved social cohesion and community development in Nigeria.

- *Increased financial inclusion:* Social security programs have also contributed to increasing financial inclusion in Nigeria. For instance, the Bank Verification Number (BVN) system introduced by the Central Bank of Nigeria has made it easier for beneficiaries of social security programs to access financial services, such as banking and mobile money. Ezeanya et al. (2020) found that the BVN system has increased financial inclusion and reduced transaction costs for beneficiaries of social security programs.

Despite these efforts, social security coverage in Nigeria remains limited, with many citizens still lacking access to basic social protection. The government has acknowledged the need to expand and strengthen social security programs, and efforts are underway to improve coverage and increase the effectiveness of existing programs.

Nexus between Good Governance and Social Security in Nigeria

There is a clear link between good governance and social security in Nigeria. Good governance involves the effective and efficient management of public resources, the promotion of the rule of law, and the protection of human rights. Social security, on the other hand, refers to the protection that citizens receive from the state in terms of healthcare, education, housing, and social welfare. This protection is critical to reducing poverty and promoting social inclusion.

Good governance in Nigeria is critical for promoting social security in the country. Adeyemo (2016) notes that good governance is essential for ensuring the effective implementation of social security policies and programs in Nigeria. He further argues that good governance can help to reduce poverty, which is a critical determinant of social security in the country. Similarly, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2019) notes that good governance is critical for ensuring social security, as

it provides the necessary institutional and legal frameworks for promoting social protection and welfare. In addition, the Nigerian government has recognized the importance of good governance in promoting social security. The National Social Protection Policy Framework, which was adopted by the government in 2017, emphasizes the need for good governance and effective management of public resources in order to provide social security to citizens. The policy framework states that “the successful implementation of social protection programs is dependent on a conducive governance environment that ensures accountability, transparency, and participation” (Federal Ministry of Budget and National Planning, 2017).

The importance of good governance in social security provision has also been recognized by international organizations. For example, the World Bank has emphasized the need for good governance and sound public financial management in its support for social protection programs in Nigeria (World Bank, 2016). Another key aspect of the nexus between good governance and social security in Nigeria is the role of citizen participation. Citizen participation is critical for promoting social security in Nigeria, as it enables citizens to provide feedback on social security policies and programs, hold government officials accountable, and participate in decision-making processes related to social security (Ibrahim, 2018).

Furthermore, good governance can also help to promote economic growth and job creation, which are essential for promoting social security in Nigeria. According to the World Bank (2020), good governance can enhance economic growth and reduce poverty, leading to improvements in social security and welfare. In recent years, there have been efforts to address these challenges through the development of stronger institutions, improved accountability mechanisms, and increased citizen participation. For instance, the establishment of the National Social Investment Office (NSIO) in 2016 aimed to coordinate and monitor the implementation of social protection programs in Nigeria, including the NASSP (Ibrahim, 2018).

The evidence suggests a clear and positive relationship between good governance and social security provision in Nigeria. Improving governance practices, including transparency, accountability, and citizen participation, can contribute significantly to the effective provision of social security and the reduction of poverty and inequality in the country. However, despite the efforts made by the government to promote good governance and social security in Nigeria, there are still significant challenges that need to be addressed. These include corruption, weak institutions, inadequate infrastructure, and poor service delivery, which can undermine the effectiveness of social security policies and programs (Ojukwu, 2014).

Recommendations

The Nigerian government and citizens can work together to build a strong and effective social security system that promotes good governance, reduces poverty, and improves the well-being of all Nigerians. Below are some recommendations that can ultimately help to attain this goal:

1. The Nigerian government should prioritize transparency and accountability in the design and implementation of social security policies and programs to ensure that these initiatives are effective in reducing poverty and promoting social welfare.
2. Citizens should be encouraged to participate in the development and implementation of social security policies and programs through consultations, town hall meetings, and other forms of engagement to ensure that their needs and priorities are taken into account.
3. The Nigerian government should invest in the development of strong and capable institutions to oversee the implementation of social security policies and programs, and to ensure that corruption and other forms of malfeasance are minimized.

4. The Nigerian government should explore opportunities to expand social security coverage to marginalized and vulnerable populations, including women, children, and persons with disabilities, to ensure that these groups are not left behind in the drive for social welfare and development.
5. Government should also prioritize the development of the economy to promote job creation and economic growth, which are essential for building a strong social security system. Citizens can also support this effort by engaging in productive economic activities and contributing to the growth of the economy.
6. Researchers can contribute to the ongoing efforts to promote good governance and social security in Nigeria by investigating the experiences of other countries in promoting the nexus between good governance and social security, and identify best practices that can be adapted to the Nigerian context.

Conclusion

Good governance is necessary for Nigeria's economic, social, and political development. The country needs to promote good governance practices such as transparency, accountability, rule of law, citizen participation, and responsiveness to address the various challenges it faces. Social security in Nigeria is an important concept that seeks to provide economic and social support to the population. It has had significant impacts on poverty reduction, social welfare, economic development, income inequality, and social inclusion in Nigeria. However, there is still room for improvement in terms of the design and implementation of social security programs to ensure that they reach more vulnerable populations and have a greater impact on the overall well-being of Nigerians. While progress has been made in establishing various social security programs, there is still a need for further expansion

and improvement to ensure that all citizens have access to basic social protection. There is a clear link between good governance and social security in Nigeria. Good governance is essential for the effective provision of social security, and the Nigerian government has recognized this through the adoption of policies that emphasize the need for good governance in social security provision.

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