

RENAISSANCE OF ISLAMIC POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS: A RECIPE FOR NATIONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

By

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Abstract

The intricacies of the diverse nature of Nigeria as a country in terms of religious conscience, cultural backgrounds and tenacious attachment to her former imperialist's political legacies have been anticipated by some scholars as responsible for the perennial political distrust and weak governance. Representative and responsible governance is the nucleus of steady growth and developments in an ideal society. The paper explored discourse methodology to examine the constraints to growth and development in governance in Nigeria with particular emphasis on Islamic recipe. The setbacks in the Nigerian polity include traumatic economic crises, insecurity albatross, etc. These have been the major challenges of the successive political authorities in Nigeria through the implementations of the various strategic socio-political policies to redress the contending challenges. However, these were met with stiffer challenges. In spite of the contending diversities in Nigeria, the study identifies the roles of religion in nation building as indispensable unifying factor. The findings of the research revealed that the impacts of religion have daunting effects on sustainable governance in Nigeria. Therefore, religious institution has been intriguingly challenged to provide the desirable art of governance. The paper suggested participatory roles of Islamic scholars in politics with focus on giving expert opinion that could restore sanity into governance in Nigeria.

Keywords: Islamic Political Institution, governance, , National growth, development.

Introduction

The Western political theorists, philosophers and scholars in religion raise interdisciplinary approaches to the concept of ideal governance. However, the generic interpretation of good governance is premised on welfares and other associated fundamental human rights. The socio-economic depressions and recessions witnessed in the successive governance in Nigeria have continued to agitate the minds of the citizens in the bid to unravel the problems.

Several economic and political policies have been advanced by the successive democratic governments to solve the menace of corruption, unemployment, bad governance, insecurity abattoir, etc. However, the problems continue unabated. These have been the fundamental challenges to the roles of Islamic political institutions. Oyewole (2022), while citing the Board of Independent Advocacy Project (IAP) defines good governance as: "A political and institutional environment based on respect for democratic principles, the rule of law, human rights and the participation of civil society".

Every ideal government possesses some attributes of a truly representative and responsible governance. These according to Oyewole (2022) included effective and efficient participatory impacts of the citizens in the decision of the affairs of their country, ideal judicial system and rule of law. Other vital qualities are transparent policies, responsiveness to the social rights of the citizen, principle of accountability, existence of functional institutions to implement various strategic decisions made by government (Oyewole, 2022). In an ideal polity, it is the responsibility of the constituted authority to govern with the aim of achieving steady growth and development for the country the improving

dispensation of both human and material resources for justifiable distribution of welfare facilities in the state (Independent Advocacy Programme, 2024).

A functional and ideal political authority is also alive to the responsibility of protecting the territorial integrity and the people against internal and external aggressions. The primacy of the security of lives of the citizens are guaranteed for practical realisation of good governance. It is no doubt that most African states, especially, Nigeria is vigorously confronted with myriads of political problems. Ideologically, governance in Nigeria is a product of the Western political philosophy. Nigerian political dispensation in relation to citizenry participation in governance and welfarism can be likened to the political theory of a Greek philosopher; Nicolo Machiavelli. His postulations on political thought and efficient governance centers on “the end justifies the means”. The Machiavellian conception of state and locus of power believes in the use of any political strategy, force, available resources to secure political power and ensure compliance of the citizen to the order of state. According to Machiavelly, this is in the best interest of state (Oyewole, 2022).

The ascendance of political authority in Nigeria is characterized by the use of force, strategic gerrymandering of political constituencies to win election and implementation of undemocratic socio-political policies. The resultant effects of the successive bad governance are the barometer for measuring the excruciating circumstances threatening the political survival and security of Nigeria. These include election rigging to secure political mandate, unemployment syndrome, irrelevant and harsh financial policies on the down-trodding economy of Nigeria. Other phenomenal contending problems are high rate of criminalities and judicial distrust (Independent Advocacy Programme, 2024).

This paper in its unequivocal advocacy for the resuscitation of decency in the political governance in Nigeria emphasizes the expected participatory impacts of Islamic scholars to resurrecting the roles of politicians in the art of governance in Nigeria to reflect the contributory Islamic heritage of political trust and equity in nation building.

Critique of the Political System and Governance in Nigeria

Most African countries are referred to as underdeveloped or the third world countries due to retrogressive developmental indices. Some countries on the African continent are beset with historical accounts of maladministration in the art of governance. Nigeria in particular is facing critical and unabated political and economic challenges since the independence of the country. The socio-political tumor in Nigeria is in sharp contrast to the acclaimed representation and responsible governance as the dividends of Democracy in the western political philosophy. The contending political albatross in Nigeria is characterised by deceptive religious bigotry, successive military coups, power rivalry and bastardization of democratic rules (Ibrahim 2022).

Many attempts had been made through concerted economic and political theories to rescue the country from the brink of collapse. Such laudable strategies by the past regimes to establish good governance in Nigeria include the establishments of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) to investigate corrupt practices and arrest culprits involved in economic jeopardy (Vanguard News, 2024). The intercessory roles of the African Unity (AU) to resuscitate good governance and facilitate ideal democratic transition programmes are also on the records of transnational diplomatic relationship (Vanguard News, 2024). However, the unyielding results of the various strategic attempts mentioned above have brought the country into traumatic scenario in the political and economic struggles. The trends in indiscriminate corruptions, unemployment syndrome, denial of fundamental human rights to the citizenry and upsurge in criminalities are manifestation of bad governance in Nigeria. The disequilibrium wide gap of social welfares between the upper class people and the masses in Nigeria is a strong indication that an average Nigerian with low per capital income lives in abject poverty (Trading Economics, 2024).

The democratic governance in Nigeria has featured unprecedented strategic gerrymandering of political constituencies, violence, election rigging and thuggery. Electioneering campaigns are turbulent political activities and periods which deepen animosity and segregation among the people

of the same cultural background and regional consanguinity. Other episodes witnessed during and after elections are arson, annihilation of the political opponents etc (Nigeria Tribune, 2003).

The ugly political upheavals witnessed by the citizens was corroborated by Stella Obasanjo's lamentation in the following statement: "The disturbing reports of political thuggery and assassination did not indicate the way forward." (Abdulganiy, 2006)

The Nigerian politicians often make rough struggles to forcefully secure political mandate while the top government functionaries in political authorities promote heinous crimes with flagrant abuse of power under the shield of constitutional immunity. Tafa Balogun; the former Inspector- General of Police remarked as follows in respect of unbridled legal immunity as it affected the former Deputy Governor of Ogun State (Adeleke Adewoyin) in the violation of electoral law: "Chief Adewoyin could not be prosecuted for violating electoral laws due to section 308 which gives governors and their Deputies immunity from prosecution" (AbdulGaniy, 2006).

Tafa Balogun further explicates the negative impacts of aggressive political authority and influence exerted by the politicians in the capacity of political authorities:

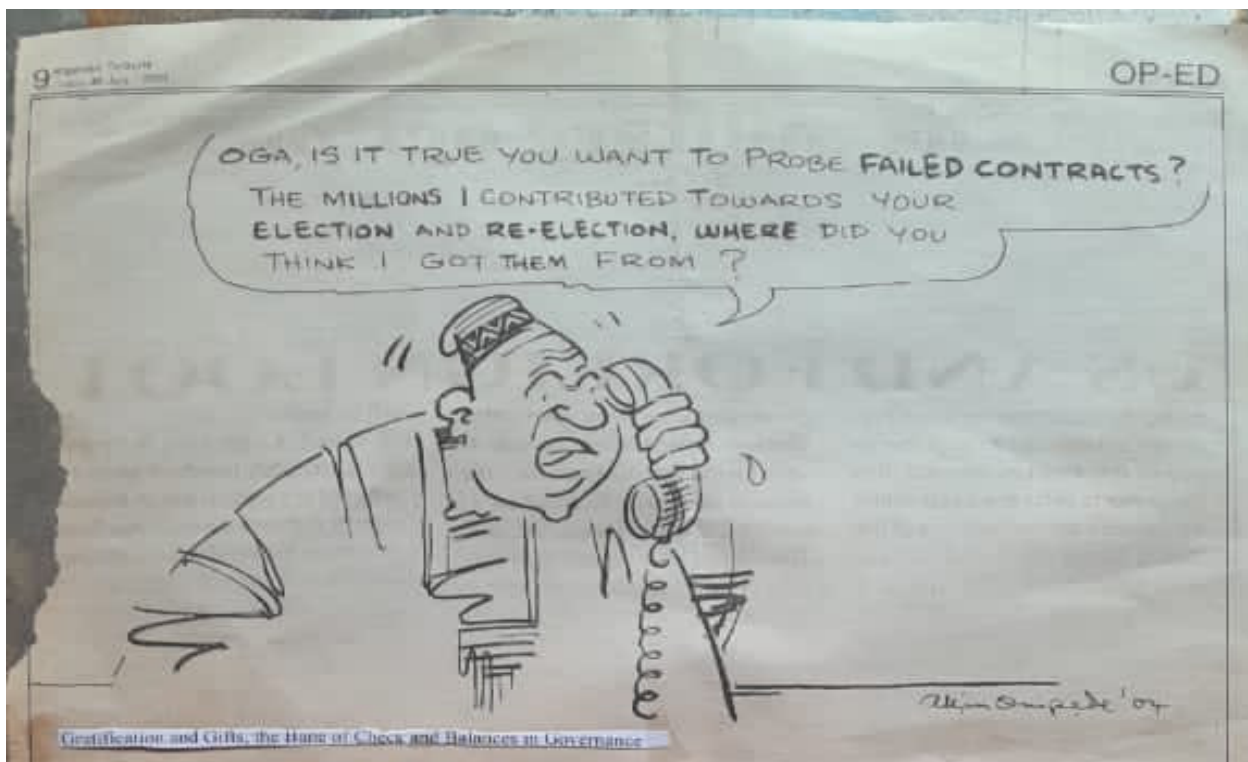
It has been observed with utmost dismay that when some persons who engage in thuggery and political violence are charged to court, some state governments enter nolle prosequi because such accused persons are their political agents The case is so bother (sic) some as over 850 suspects have been arrested between March last year (2002) and Friday, March 14, 2003, in connection with political motivated violence in the country (AbdulGaniy, 2006).

Therefore, the operational experiences of Democracy in some African countries print a picture of gloomy governance and economic recession. The constitutional immunity granted by the provision of Laws, in Nigeria repels legal suits or probe against top government functionaries in the political offices during their incumbency notwithstanding the degree of financial misappropriation conducts or any other offences committed. The limitation of the constitutional immunity has been contested and radically challenged in Nigeria but without positive achievement. For instance, late Chief Gani Fawehinmi, SAN challenged the legality of an incumbent executive president to enjoy patronage in terms of gifts from the contractors engaged by Federal Government in contract awards. He cited section 15 (5) of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to redress the anomaly. The section states:

The state will abolish all corrupt practices and abuse of power A public officer shall not put himself in a position where his personal interest conflicts with his duties and responsibilities. (The constitution, 1999).

Gani Fawehinmi thereafter alleged Olusegun Obasanjo, the former president of Nigeria for flagrant disrespect for the code of conduct for the occupant of public office as appears in Item 6 (1) (2) of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. He stressed emphatically, while citing the relevant section of the constitution that prevents public officers to receive largesse from the beneficiaries of government policies. On the ground of this allegation, he therefore made a legal demand for the interventions of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (ICPC) for prompt legal scrutiny of the contracts awarded by the alleged Obasanjo's government (Vanguard New, 2024).

Democracy was thus bedeviled by corrupt practices such as gratifications and gifts given to political office holders in Nigeria. Consequently, capital projects are influenced under shoddy supervision and execution. The resultant effect is weak institution of checks and balances in governance. These are some of the challenges that necessitated Islamic scholarly approach to good governance and this is the main objective of this work.



Gratification and Gifts, the Bane of Checks and Balances in Governance

Educate Nigerians politically

The Rt. Hon Andrew Smith, Member of Parliament for Oxford East in the British House of Commons, gave me an example of qualitative constituent representation. I had judged an application with the Home Office, an application whose outcome appeared to be his side in coming to support Mr. Smith's office and spoke with his secretary who promised to write to the Home Office to find out what was happening. She did write to them on the very day I printed and sent a copy of the letter to my address. A few weeks later the Home Office wrote back to the House regarding his enquiry. The Rt Hon. Mr. Smith immediately contacted me, attaching a copy of the letter he had received. I sent him a 'thank you' card in appreciation of his efforts—which was all he got from me!

I reflected on the experience and got from Mr. Smith and concluded the performance of his duty to a member of the constituency with a conversation I had with a member of the Nigerian House of Representatives some time in 2001. I had sought to know why the Nigerian representatives were conducting an 'audit' of their constituents' activities. He told me that such an audit was not the case in Nigeria. He said the people expected him to be for them. He went on to summarize the stated purpose of a representative as 'to be good with their constituents' and to 'represent the interests of their constituents'.

The relationship between the

MP, constituent and the way the MP should be elected. What about the local interests who could not be represented by the MP? The MP should be elected to represent the interests of the people of the constituency. The MP should be elected to represent the interests of the people of the constituency. The MP should be elected to represent the interests of the people of the constituency.

In an ideal democratic environment, the elected politician is a messenger, the political agent of the people. There should always be an open channel between the messenger and the constituents. In

order to manage a country of the House of Representatives elected for two years. One of the reasons for this short tenure is that a member should not be re-elected if he is not elected by the people. For a politician to be elected, he or she must have the support of the people. It is an elected and efficient representative of the people.

The report in the Nigerian Tribune that Chief Anthony Enahoro and Professor Wale Soyinka intended to organize a non-political, political interest group that would keep elected politicians in the spotlight is a welcome move which must be pursued to its logical conclusion. The Nigerian people, by electing the incumbent, need a substantial measure of political education. They need to be

educated at a different level. They can be educated by the publication of political and political education. This is a political education and it will be a political education. It will be a political education. It will be a political education.

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Who is Adedibu fooling?

As far as I am concerned, there should be no constituency over which distinguished Senator's status. The relationship of Chief Adedibu and his own is a very serious matter to his effect.

On 19th July 2004, I received a copy of the letter from Chief Adedibu. He invited me to be a member of his campaign staff and to be a member of his campaign staff. I am a member of his campaign staff and I am a member of his campaign staff.

I am a member of his campaign staff and I am a member of his campaign staff. I am a member of his campaign staff and I am a member of his campaign staff.

Without an Adedibu, there was no Chief Adedibu's letter that in the campaign he invited me to be a member of his campaign staff. I am a member of his campaign staff and I am a member of his campaign staff.

The Adedibu is a member of his campaign staff and I am a member of his campaign staff. I am a member of his campaign staff and I am a member of his campaign staff.

personnel. I have not seen any of the problems that made Senator Lado be determined to allow Adedibu to raise his government. Adedibu wanted to create an impression that there was no government in the state.

One thing I praise Adedibu for is his ability to talk to the people and to let people talk to him. I hope people can see that he is not being fooled by such a man.

We must find that those people Adedibu used are all alive and have started talking. I hope they will talk. Anyone who calls himself Adedibu may not have been fooling the people.

Adedibu's letter and proposal for a political party and the way he was using it to get a score. That is what Adedibu stands for and can mean to Adedibu's own or have Adedibu's own set.

I salute the courage of Adedibu, the man who came out openly to talk to the people. If it were to be Senator Hassan Lado, I will not be so happy to pick up the man and to let him be.

Adedibu's letter and proposal for a political party and the way he was using it to get a score. That is what Adedibu stands for and can mean to Adedibu's own or have Adedibu's own set.

Memo to INEC boss

Some grade level is today. The strategy of INEC to INEC for an election because they have not been able to do that. They have not been able to do that. They have not been able to do that.

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They have not been able to do that. They have not been able to do that. They have not been able to do that. They have not been able to do that.

Adedibu Geter Awe, For and behalf of INEC, 107, Abiodun street, Ikota, Lagos State.

Source: Nigerian Tribune: Friday 30 July, 2004 P.9

Principles of Ideal Democratic Governance

Gratification and gifts, the bane of checks and balances in governance

Islamic perspective of ideal Governance

The fundamental precepts guiding Islamic ideals of governance are rooted in the Qur'an while it was pragmatically demonstrated by Prophet Muhammad in the Islamic states of Makkah and Madinah. The practical demonstration of the ideal Islamic governance is an apt illustration of the fact that Islam is dedicated to ideal delivery capacity in governance rather than instituting several systems of government. Islamic government is ideologically oriented in the Quran. The ideological values are to be imbibed and practiced to uplift the society.

Sovereignty of Allah, implies establishment of Allah's unlimited dominion over the spiritual and temporal world. All political activities are in consonance with the Divine specifications for the fulfillment of welfarism for humanity (Ibrahim, 2022).

The political community of Islam presents leaders and the citizens of the state as vicegerents (Khalifah) of Allah on earth. The political administration of the state is purely carried out on behalf of Allah. The modus operandi in Islamic governance involves participation of people at the grassroot level for functional participatory impacts of the citizenry. Some of the Islamic institutions put in place the governance that maintains regular checks and balances to forestall autocracy and despotic leadership (Ibrahim, 2022). These include *Shurah* (Consultation Committee) and *Mas'uliyah* (accountability).

The Islamic state advocates for mutual consultation with qualified counsels in the policies emanating from the state authority. Prophet Muhammad laid the foundation of consultation as an essential element of good governance. He would consult even the Jews on legal issues concerning their welfares: The basis of this is instructively derived from Qur'an: "If you (Prophet) have been too strict or too authoritative and fierce of heart, they (the companions) would have dispersed away from you. So, pardon them and consult them in the affairs" (Quran 3:159).

Islam lays emphasis on certain prerequisite qualities to be possessed by administrators to enhance good governance in terms of welfarism, equity and justice in an ideal society. These qualities are accountability, transparency, promotion of rule of law and sustainability of the judiciary for unbiased legal dispensation (Oyewole, 2022).

The poor performance of the public office holders in Nigeria as examined in the preceding submissions account for bad governance in the country. It is amazing to note that some public administrators are culpable of various criminal offences. Islamic political ethics thus provide for proper scrutiny of would be public administrator on the basis of integrity and divine piety.

Accountability is a vital Islamic institution held in high esteem in the jurisdiction of *Shariah*. The concept of accountability is however, a misconstrued concept in the western democracy. The general conception is that the political appointees are accountable to the electorates. However, in the Islamic perspective, it connotes mandate of political authority that trust emanates from Allah. Therefore, the public office holders are conscientiously accountable to Allah and not solely to the electorates (Shmid 2022). In the spirit of the aforementioned conscience, the extent of the utilization of the entrusted power and resources are clearly expounded in the *Shari'ah*. These are linked to the fundamental of faith in Islam that all deeds of men are shown to them on the day of judgement.

The concept of democracy in Islam connotes governance based on the principle and belief in *Shurah* as emanated from divine law *Khalifah*. He is representative of Allah on earth by men in different capacities. Thus, democracy in Islam is the art of governance by the citizens of a state not entirely on the basis of their wishes but based on the injunctions of Allah. The concept of democratic rule in Islam on the basis of Quranic precepts was clearly expounded by Khalif Abubakar in his inaugural speech: "You have elected me your Khalifah, although, I am not better than any of you ..." (Shmid, 2022).

In addition, Umar Ibn Kattab practically upheld the democratic structure built by Prophet Muhammad. These were two democratic approaches he embraced in his governance: The consultative body of the companions of the Prophet was considered a vital administrative counseling committee during Umar Ibn Khattab's rule. The second means of democratic governance by Umar Ibn Kattab was his briefing methodology during Friday sermons. He would discuss during the sermons (*Khutubah*),

the status of public affairs or projects under constructions by the Islamic government (Mahmud, 2024). He described the spirit of Islamic democracy during Umar Ibn Kattab as follows:

The caliph enjoyed no special privileges, kept no guards, no palace and no distinction in robes was maintained either by Hazrat Umar himself or by his subordinates, so that there should not be any differences between the ruler and the ruled, and they were accessible to the public any time.

The frontiers of the Islamic revolution on ideal governance were championed by some scholars in West Africa. Abdul-karim Al-Maghili was a tribesman of Berber from North Africa. He made a landmark of reforms on governance in the Islamic territories in the 19th century. Muhammad Rimfa requested him to provide treatise on how to enhance good governance by a Muslim ruler. Abdulkarim Al-maghili produced a compendium popularly known as “The Crown of Religion Concerning the Obligations of Princess” (Muhammed and Abdulfatai, 2024).

The political treatise written by Abdulkarim al-Maghili had influence on the Islamic political affairs of West Africa. The treatise has eight chapters. The chapters deal with overhauling of the ideal socio-political relationship between the rulers and citizens in a political state. He outlined the expected responsibilities of a Muslim ruler. He stated that public officials should be epitome of discipline and model. He advocated for punitive measures and punishments against the corrupt public officials. His instructive information to rulers also includes the following:

“.....the height of affliction is the isolation of the ruler from the subject” (Muhammed and Abdulfatai, 2024). The treatise is an antidote against the present political challenges in Nigeria.

Renaissance of Islamic Institution as Recipe for Governance in Nigeria

The need for the overhauling of the political institutions in Nigeria is undoubtedly a challenge to nation building. This section as a pragmatic attempt examined the relevance of some Islamic political institutions in relation to resuscitation of the vulnerable political dispensations in Nigeria.

Mazalim Mas'uliyah as an Islamic political institution was initiated by Prophet Muhammad for the purpose of checks and balances in the governance of Islamic State. The legal institution is referred to as *Nasri fil-Mazlim* (views of the wrongs). The *Shari'ah* (Islamic law) perspective of law is conceptualized as legal procedures and interpretations are meant for the welfares of people (Abbas, 2010). *Mazalim* is a special and separate legal institution empowered to seek redress on behalf of the victim of wrong adjudication or oppression by a group or individual. The exercise of legal redress is within the confine of the statutory rights and obligations. The legal recourse provided by *Mazalim* is to provide remedial intervention on just course to redress grievances (Oyewole, 2022).

Mazalim was an independent judicial body aside the functional courts for civil and criminal cases established by the sovereign Islamic State. Therefore, *Mazalim* as an extral-judicial body did not play overlapping judicial functions with the judiciary but its function is to enhance adjudication of justice and equality to all citizens. *Mazalim* stands as an appellate legal institution to review cases of misconducts in public administration, abuse of power or violation of rights by the constituted authority or law enforcement agency (*Mazalim*, 2024).

The legal regulatory functions of the *Mazalim* overwhelmingly checked the aggressiveness of the *Qadi* in adjudication system over taxation, usurpation of rights of ownership of property tendencies, unnecessary delay of workers salaries, etc. The legal principles of *Mazalim* were practically demonstrated by the orthodox caliphs. Umar Ibn Abdulazeez effected intercessory roles on correction of injustices perpetuated by his governors through the refund of the excess taxes levied on the people to the owner (*Mazalim*, 2024). This illustrated ethical disposition of the institution of *Mazalim* which is in consonance with the agitated political crusade to restore sanity into public administration in Nigeria.

Another viable Islamic political institution is *Hisbah*. *Hisbah* is a concept which implies practice of decency and abstinence from evil inclination. It covers ethical practices in commercial and other social endeavours. It is prevention of fraudulent activities ([https:// system of Islamc.com/..](https://systemofIslam.com/) 2024).

Hisbah has a relative functional concepts with *Muhatsib* (It refers to the occupant of the official institution). The concept was initiated during the reign of Al-Mahdi (775-785). Al-Mahdi enforced the title and its practicability to encourage the corrections of wrong doing. The *Muhtasib* was empowered to impose penalties such as fine, confiscation of property, imprisonments, deportation, whipping on offenders in a political community (Abdul, 1976). In an epistle titled *Ar-Risalah fil Qada wal Hisbah* written by Muhammad bn Ahmad (no date), some of the functions of *Muhtasib* are spelt out as follows:

- a. To ensure that men do not consult with opposite sex in public in order to keep high standard of morality in the society.
- b. To carry out supervision of personnel in charge of moral instructions at the mosque and ensure that the clerics perform moral instructions in consonance with the present challenges of their community.
- c. To guide against the consumption of alcoholism in public (Abdul, 1976).

The above socio-cultural overhauling and mechanism of checks and balances as contained in above Islamic institutions are obviously the defects in the contemporary polity in Nigeria. A dynamic application of the framework of the institutions are strategic approaches to achieving a civilized political culture and order based on Divine overhauling of the decadent socio-political system.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This work has diagnosed the various factors responsible for bad governance in Nigeria. The findings of the research reveal that the ethical principles of governance have been neglected and bastardized through corruption and violations of the rule of law. This is a fundamental challenge to the roles of religion in governance amidst divergent political philosophies and cultural backgrounds. However, the interaction of Islam with politics with a view to assessing the political system in Nigeria is a new horizon of political sophistication.

The researcher acknowledged the diversities inherent among the people of Nigeria. Hence, the ideological position of the paper has revealed contributions from Islamic perspective, the strategic socio-political framework to resolve challenges confronting nation building and governance. The confluence of ethical principles in Christianity and Islam on good governance are contained in both Bible and Qur'an. These include: equality, justice and good leadership. Thus, the ethical principles on good governance find parallels in both Islam and Christianity. Collaborative methods or mechanism are expected from scholars of the two major religions to end political miscarriage and mutual mistrust in the Nigerian art of governance.

There is need for ideal political orientation for the Muslim politicians and Islamic scholars on the basis of the rich political heritage of Islam. It is expedient to restore sanity into the art of governance in Nigeria. This can be achieved through the emulation of the resourcefulness of the Islamic political institutions and adoption of Islamic political epistles (Such as Al Maghili's work) by the Muslims in their political participations in Nigeria.

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