

## Traditional Institutions and Good Governance in Nigeria

Saka-Olokungboye N<sup>1</sup>; Ilugbami J. O. <sup>2</sup>, Olateru-Olagbegi O.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Social Sciences, <sup>2</sup> Department of Social Development,

<sup>3</sup>Department of Public Administration.

<sup>1,2,3</sup> Rufus Giwa Polytechnic, P.M.B 1019, Owo, Ondo State, Nigeria  
sakaolokungboye2014@gmail.com

doi: <https://doi.org/10.37745/bjmas.2022.0252>

Published July 23, 2023

**Citation:** Saka-Olokungboye N., Ilugbami J. O., Olateru-Olagbegi O. (2023) Traditional Institutions and Good Governance in Nigeria, *British Journal of Multidisciplinary and Advanced Studies: Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences* 4 (4),27-39

---

**ABSTRACT:** *Traditional institutions as custodian of cultures and traditions have continued to play a very significant role before and during colonial independence of many African societies. In Nigeria they provide a system of administration with an utmost aim of maintaining a stable governance through tradition, customs, and law and order. But with the advent of democracy, the role of traditional institutions became less recognized in the democratic system of government. The paper examined the role and relevance of indigenous traditional institutions to good governance. The paper was a quantitative research. Data was obtained from secondary sources including journals, articles and publications. The paper revealed that traditional institutions play a very significant role of sustaining culture and traditions, informally managing of conflict, maintaining peace, custodian of oral traditional history of the people etc. before and during colonial era. But with the advent of democracy, their power and duties became less recognized in the democratic system of government because traditional institutions were negated to the back door and politicized. Functionalism theory of Emile Durkheim (1858 – 1917) was employed to explain how society is an integrated whole, where all parts are interconnected and traditional institutions as part of the society, play a vital function of maintaining stability and contributing to the wellbeing of its members in terms of law, order and governance. The paper concluded that if the goal of government at all levels is to provide good governance to the people, rapid in social wealth and economic development, traditional institutions need to be integrated and assigned greater responsibilities in Nigerian's contemporary democratic system of government because they have the ability to promote grassroots governance and facilitate access of rural communities to public services.*

**KEYWORDS:** Traditional Institutions, Democracy, Good governance, Nigeria.

---

## INTRODUCTION

Traditional institutions for centuries have been the bedrock of administrative organizations in traditional Africa societies. They played a very significant role in the administrative process of their respective territories before and during the advent of colonial administration. The influence of traditional institutions in the grassroots provided a stable system of governance rooted in the history, cultures and the tradition of several ethnic groups and cultural background (Isaac, 2018 cited in Mustapha & Bukar, 2019, p. 6). Traditional African societies prior to colonial administration had a well-organized and established system of administration where public order was not only provided and maintained; native laws were made and implemented, but intercommunal and tribal conflicts were settled (Osakede & Ijimakinwa, 2015, p. 33). These were attributed to traditional institutions because they commanded a large degree of loyalty and respect among their subjects. Pre-colonial era traditional institutions had shaped appropriate policies of their respective territories, order priorities and generate revenue to meet the needs of their respective communities in the exercise of the traditional administrative functions (Tonwe & Osemwota, 2013 p. 31).

During the advent of colonial era, the colonial administrators' problems of limited personnel and finances to effectively manage the country were solved through the securing of the allegiance of the people by using traditional rulers to govern them with close guidance of the British Administrators (Tonwe & Osemwota, 2013, p. 131). They became the main instrument used in discharging numerous activities of the British colonial administration such as the administrative process of indirect rule, promoting the colonial economy through collection of taxes (Mustapha & Bukar, 2019, p. 7). They also sustained cultures and traditions of their subjects, managing of conflict, maintaining peace and harmony and act as custodian of oral traditional history of their people. The significance and relevance of traditional institutions started declining immediately after the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates by Lord Fredrick Lugard in 1914 (Mustapha & Bukar, 2019, p. 7). The hitherto power enjoyed by traditional institutions were further curtailed by the Clifford constitution of 1922 which downgraded the status of traditional rulers to local administrators through numerous native authority rules declarations. The 1976 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria did not only insulate traditional rulers from partisan politics but made them a mere adviser in area of customary law, chieftaincy matters, religious issues, maintenance of law and order at the local level and other matters as the government may deem fits (Mustapha & Bukar, 2019, p. 7; Isaac, 2018; Emordi & Osiki, 2008, p. 32). From a position where traditional institutions played a significant role in the administrative process of their respective territories to being a mere adviser in the contemporary democratic system of government, had ignited a controversial discourse in Nigeria whether the institution of traditional rule has any role to play in the modern contemporary democratic governance. The

paper, therefore sets out to examine the contributions of traditional institutions to good governance in Nigeria.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This paper is based on quantitative method of social research. It is theoretical in nature and extracts its arguments and information from secondary data including journals, textbooks, newspapers and publications. The paper is structured into the following sections. The first section examines traditional institutions in Nigeria. The second section discusses the role of traditional institutions before independence. The third section examines factors mitigating against traditional institutions. The fourth section examines the role of traditional institutions in accomplishing good governance in Nigeria. The final section draw conclusion from the analysis.

### **Theoretical Framework: Functionalism Theory**

In explaining the role of traditional institutions in good governance, the study adopted functionalism theory to support the argument. Functionalism theory has a long history in sociology and it is prominent in the work of Auguste Comte (1798 – 1857) and Herbert Spencer (1820 – 1903). The theory was developed by Emile Durkheim (1858 – 1917) and posited that society is a system of interrelated parts which together form a whole. No one part can function without the other and if one-part changes, it has an impact on society as a whole. According to the theory, society was likened to that of a living organism, in which each organ plays a necessary role in keeping the being alive. If something happens to disrupt the order and the flow of the system, society must adjust to achieve a stable state. Therefore, society according to Durkheim should be analyzed and described in terms of functions. The concept of function in functionalism analysis of the society refers to the contribution of the part of the whole (Haralambos & Holborn, 2013, p. 955). The function of any part of society is the contribution it makes to meet the functional prerequisites of the social system. Thus, parts of a society are functional in so far, they maintain the system and contribute to its survival.

Applied to the purpose of the study, traditional institutions as part of the society, play a vital function of maintaining stability and contributing to the survival of the society. Thus, a function of the traditional institutions is to ensure stability of the society by sustaining cultures and traditions of the people, custodian of the oral history of the people, maintaining peace and harmony in their respective domains and informally managing of conflict. When traditional institutions are unable to effectively carry out its functions, it has an impact on the society as a whole. This theory, thus, is of the view that traditional institutions being an interrelated part of the society should be assigned a greater responsibility in the contemporary democratic system of government so as to effectively contribute to stability and good governance in Nigeria.

## **Conceptual Clarification of Traditional Institutions and Good Governance**

### **Traditional Institutions**

Traditional institutions are common features which characterized most states in traditional societies in Africa. It is difficult to provide a universally accepted definition for them due to the diversity in its political and administrative component in different parts of African societies (Tonwe & Osemavota, 2013, p. 130). In Nigeria, it is a kingship system with highly organized centralized administration (Emordi & Osiki, 2008, p. 77). According to (Orji & Olali, 2010) cited in Mustapha and Bukar (2019, p. 8) refer to traditional institutions as the native political provisions whereby leaders with confirmed track records are chosen and coronated in line with the necessary requirements of their traditional customs and laws. Traditional institutions are the custodian of their people's norm, cultures and practices (Mustapha & Bukar, 2019, p. 8). They are hereditary in nature in most communities and it is difficult from someone not from royal lineage to ascend the throne in most African societies. The mode of selection of traditional institutions is not the same in all Africa societies and in Nigeria, it differs from one ethnic group to another in all the communities that made up the country. For instance, while in the Benin Kingdom, Edo State, it is only the first male child of a reigning king that can succeed him, but in other communities every male child of both the reigning and past kings are eligible to be selected as King. Traditional institutions are the symbol of the native people's rights, privilege, laws, customs and traditional (Mustapha & Bukar, 2019, p. 8). According to Orji and Olali, (2010) traditional institutions encompass chief-in-council, elders-in-council and traditional title holders who were given traditional chieftaincy title because of their contributions to the growth and development of such communities with or little no executive, legislative or judicial powers.

### **Concept of Good Governance**

Good governance has been defined by several scholars based on their understanding and perceptions of the concept. Some scholars defined good governance from the view point of economic and other shared their understanding of it from the political angle. Good governance is concerned with authority in the public sector as well as how the society organizes its affairs and manages its resource for the welfare of its people (Olurankinse & Oloruntoba, 2021; p. 21). According to Abdul Rahim (2019, p. 133) Good governance is obtained in term of Democratic Values for achieving global targets for the Human development, which is at the top priority by providing designed systematic facilitation. He further opined that it derives economic development with great policy and application plan democratically and moves with the justified manners for the common man. Similarly, Smith, B. C. (2007) posited that Good governance is an opening policy for establishing strong determination, where decision makers are to create point of view after consensus period in institution or decision making. Good governance produces Social and Economic resources for the Human Development (Abdul Rahim, 2019, p. 135). Good governance encompasses generating policy with the consensus orientation, accountability at all levels,

transparency beyond expectations, effectiveness and efficient progressing status, free from corruption practices and establishing mechanism of rule of law (Abdul Rahim, 2019, p. 136).

### **Traditional Institutions in Nigeria**

Nigeria being the most populous nation in Africa consists of more than 300 ethnic groups and over 250 spoken languages (Mustapha & Bukar, 2019, p. 6). The number of traditional rulers in multi-ethnic Nigeria seems to be unknown but each ethnic group have their own culture and traditional system of administration that differ from community to another (Mustapha & Bukar, 2019; Osifo, 2017; Isaac, 2018). From Northern to Southern and Eastern parts of the country, existed a system of indigenous traditional administration rooted in the history, cultures and traditions of several ethnic groups and cultural background (Isaac, 2018). Traditional institutions played a very significant role in the native administrative process of the people prior to colonization of Nigeria. Apart from being the custodian of oral traditional history of the people, they helped to sustain peace and harmony in their respective domains, perform spiritual functions, help in the development of their domains and informally management of conflicts (Nweke, 2012; Tonwe & Osemwota, 2013).

Traditional institutions in Nigeria is characterized by kingship system which was highly organized centralized administration (Emordi & Osiki, 2008; p. 77). In the Northern part of the country exists the Hausa/Fulani indigenous traditional institution that is highly centralized system of government where the Emir is not only the political head but also a spiritual leader (Osakade & Ijimakinwa, 2015, p. 35). The political function of the Emir includes making of law, enforcing them and maintaining peace and order among his subjects. The Emir performs a religious role of leading his subjects during important religious festivals such as Id-el-fitri and Id-el—kabar Muslim prayers and the implementation of Islamic Sharia laws to guide the conduct of his people and affairs of his domains. According to Erero (2005) cited in Osakade and Ijimakinwa (2015, p. 35) the Emir had a number of advisers who assisted him in the day-to-day administration of the emirate such as Sarkin Fada- The spokesman and organizer of palace workers; Waziri – The Prime Minister; Galadima – The Administrator of the capital city; Madawaki – The Commander and Head of the Army; Mogaji – Officer in-charge of the treasury; Sarkin Dan Doka – Inspector General of Police Force; Sarkin Ruwa-Minister in-charge of Water Resources and Alkali Judges who are mainly trained for the administration of justice strictly based on Islamic Sharia law.

The Yoruba people who occupied the western part of Nigeria practiced a highly effective monarchical administrative system of government under the leadership of an Oba. He is assisted by Baales (village's head/chief) in the administration of towns and villages and discharge of his duties, as the system of government was premised on check and balance as the Oba does not possess absolute power (Fatile & Adejuwon, 2010). In Old Oyo Kingdom which stretched from the modern-day Oyo state and covered most of the Southern Western states to Benin Republic, the Alaafin (The traditional King of Oyo) wielded much power but was still subject to the control of

the Oyomesi institution under the leadership of Bashorun, that was designed to check and prevent abuse of power (Osakede & Ijimakinde, 2015, p. 35). The Oyomesi who were traditionally the Kingmakers had the power to control and prevent an Alaaafin from being dictatorial by forcing an erring Alaaafin to abdicate his throne or outright committing of suicide in case of irreconcilable difference between him and the Oyomesi, or his subject (Fajonyomi, 1997). Also, the Ogboni confraternity, acting under the authority of religion can checkmated the excesses of the Oyomesi. Despite the checks and balance, the Alaaafin still held sway as the supreme judge of the Oyo Empire and his judgement cannot be appealed (Salami, 2006, pp, 71-72).

The Igbo and Ibibio people of the defunct eastern region practiced gerontocracy and had no chief in the conventional sense. Traditional institutions were practiced by the Igbos prior to the advent of colonialism, and executive, legislative, judicial and administrative decisions were based on consensus of opinions. The 'Ohaneze' which was an assembly of family heads and those who hold title takes decision for the entire community. The council of elders assisted by various Age-grade organizations perform general functions which includes; maintenance of law and order, construction and maintenance of roads, defence of the village against external attack (Osakede & Ijimakinwa, 2015; p. 36). In the loosely Republican system of government of the Igbos, the Ozo title holders, which consist of influential and respected men in the village are often consulted in the day to day running of their communities.

### **The Role of Traditional Institutions Before Independence**

Despite the fact that the British Colonial Administration in Nigeria restructured traditional institutions to serve the colonial government interest of exploiting the people and communities (Emordi & Osiki, 2008, P. 79), the various constitutional roles accorded them during this period allow them to contribute to development administration and serve as link between grassroots and the colonial administration (Mustapha & Ahmed, 2019, p. 56). Traditional institutions were incorporated into the indirect rule system or Native Authority by the British Colonial administrator where they played legislative, executive and judicial roles such as tax collection, helping to get able men enlisted into the armed forces, mediators between the people and the British officials (Emordi & Osiki, 2008; Mustapha & Ahmed, 2019). The indirect rule of the British colonial administration made traditional rulers to consolidate their roles as chief executives in their domains and extended such power to areas where traditional rulers had no such power before. This subsequently pitched them against the educated elite during that period (Tonwe & Osemwota, 2013; Osakede & Ijimakinwa, 2015).

The Richard Constitution of 1946 established House of Assembly in the Western and Eastern regions and House of Chief in the North. Through those House of Assemblies and Chief, traditional rulers regained their relevance in governance before independence (Osakede & Ijimakinwa, 2015, p. 36). The independence constitution of 1960 granted certain concessions to the traditional institutions. They were made unofficial majority of one in each of the House of Assembly and

through this, they supported the administrative of the British colonial administration and many supported the agitations for colonial independence from the British by the Nationalists (Emordi & Osiki, 2008 p. 80). The appointment of Oba Adesoji Aderemi, the Oni of Ife as the Governor of the Western region by the then ruling Action Group led credence to the relevance of traditional institution during the period. Some chiefs also played roles at the local council levels, where paramount rulers were made presidents of government council (Emordi & Osiki, 2008, p. 81). The advent of military rule in Nigeria from the January 15, 1966 military coup and the subsequent military constitutions of 1976 and 1983 insulated traditional rulers from partisan politics and reduce their power and influence. The current 1999 constitution did not provide any specific role for traditional institutions apart from assigning them merely advisory role in the local government level that is not even binding on the elected local government officials, thus reversing most of the gains the institution made over the years.

#### **Factors Mitigating Against Traditional Institution in Modern Administration in Nigeria.**

The advent of military rule in contemporary Nigerian society brought a certain changes in the political future of the tradition institutions in Nigeria, and the charges were seen in the gradual decline in the power and influence hitherto enjoyed by the Royal fathers. Conscious efforts were taken by the military regime to insulate traditional rulers from partisan politics. The various constitutions under the military regime such as 1979, 1989 and 1999 constitution drafted to usher in new democratic dispersion in Nigeria did not provide or assign any specific role to traditional rulers other than mere advisory role in their respective local government where they have been confined. According to Amadi (2007) cited in Tonwe and Osemwota (2014, p. 135) prominent traditional ruler across the country have expressed their strong dissatisfaction on how traditional institutions and their rulers have been relegated to the background over the years. The Alaafin of Oyo and Oba of Benin have vehemently showed their frustrations over the exclusion of traditional rulers from participation in government and administration in all tiers of government (Emordi & Osiki, p. 81).

The need for a clearly defined constitutional roles for traditional rulers across the country was further stressed at the end of a One-day seminar for traditional rulers, stakeholders and institution in Asaba, Delta State. The traditional rulers at the conference did not only recommended that traditional rulers should be mainstreamed into the security architecture of the state and their localities but also call for increased synergy between traditional rulers and political leadership (Eniola, 2022).

The interference of political elites in the selection of traditional rulers in various communities across the country has reduced the authority attached to traditional institution and make them a puppet in the hands of political office holders. In the olden days, the selection of a traditional rulers was exclusively reserved for king makers who cannot be easily bought over. The kingmakers are highly versed in traditional oral history of each royal family and their divine consultation of Ifa

oracle as in the case of the Yoruba in the selection of a prospective king, makes the process credible and devoid of acrimony. The democratic dispensation in contemporary Nigerian society ushered in politically educated elites who have little or no respect for traditional rulers except when they need their supports and votes during elections. This was evident in face-off between traditional rulers in Ekiti State, South Western Nigeria and the Governor of the state over the appointment of a junior king to head the traditional council. Ojomoyela (2019) reported that when the group of 17 Pelupelu Oba (Kings) boycotted state function to express their displeasure with the interference of who should head the traditional council of Obas in the state, the State Government accused them of insubordination.

The lack of clearly defined role for traditional institutions in the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria has become an albatross for them in retaining their relevance and influence in the application of a modern republican constitution. This has put them at logger head with the politicians who have constitutional authority. The dethronement of the Emir of Kano, Muhammed Sanusi II by the Government of Kano State, through invoking the constitutional power of the State Governor to dispose any Emir over “Insubordination”, question the relevance of traditional rulers in modern democratic system of government, and highlighted some of the factors mitigating against them in modern administration in Nigeria. The colonial-style exiled of the Emir to nearby Nasarawa state, confirmed the long-suspected notion that traditional rulers are only symbolic head with no real power (Nduka, 2020). The publicly ridiculing of a King in South-Southern state of River by the Governor of the State, Nyesom Wike for shaking his head while he was speaking question the constitutional power bestowed on elected political public office holders. The Governor rippled into the king in a gathering of traditional rulers, provoking laughter’s from those in the gathering. The Governor reportedly said “*you just go and wear something that is bigger than you to breach protocol*” The Governor was mocking the monarch’s traditional robe and elaborate crown. The democratic political process is not in favour of traditional institutions in Nigeria. The once all-powerful tradition rulers who could summon any woman-young or married and pronounce her one of his wives as practiced by Yoruba Oba or the Kings in Eastern Nigeria that had to first taste the new yam before their subject could eat of their own harvests are now a mere glorified “authority” without responsibility for the development of their domains. The Land Use Decree of 1978 which reversed ownership of land to state government restricts traditional rulers to land tenure and sale which was a source of enormous wealth for them in the past (Osakede & Ijimakinwa, 2015, p. 38).

Also, actions of some traditional rulers have also put them in the spotlight. The public brawl between Oluwo of Iwo land, Oba Abdulrasheed Akanbi, a flamboyant and controversial Oba in the Southwest State of Osun and Agbowu of Ogbaa, Oba Dhikrulahi Akinropo over a land dispute question the relevance of traditional institutions in modern administration. The brawl over land led to Oba Akanbi of being suspended for a period of six months from the Osun State Council of traditional rulers (Nduka, 2020).



### **Role of Traditional Institutions in Accomplishing Good Governance in Nigeria**

In recent years, there have been controversy over the retention and relevance of traditional institutions in modern administration. It is argued in some quarters that traditional institutions are archaic that has outlived its usefulness and the influence its enjoyed in the grassroots was because it was retained. Ayeni (1985) posited that for citizenry of the country to adopt democratic and participatory culture needed to hasten the pace of modernization, traditional institutions must be jettisoned to enable the people develop the needed orientation in tune with the reality of modern time. Despite the avalanches of factors mitigating against traditional institutions and the fact that their influence is waning in modern governance, they still wield considerable influence at the grassroots that find them relevant in the discharge of certain administrative functions (Osakede & Ijimakinwa, 2015, p. 38).

In accomplishing good governance and steady democracy in Nigeria, traditional institutions should be integrated into the country's contemporary democratic system and be given full autonomy that would encourage them to contribute to the democratic developmental process. It is the general belief that Nigeria is besieged with series of conflicts, religion and ethnic violence that have made the country at the brink of being collapsed. The only peace in the country today is the peace emanating from the various communities across the country and the custodian of such communities are the traditional rulers. In this case, if the traditional institutions are given the deserved constitutional role and autonomous power to act in their communities, they can serve as a bridge between the government and the people and use their power to effectively manage conflict in their respective communities (Mustapha & Bukar, 2019, p. 10).

The legitimacy enjoys by the traditional institution in the eye of the people can be leveraged upon by government to support and contribute to good governance (Tonwe & Osemwota, 2013, p. 138). The need to mainstream traditional institutions into security architecture of the state and their communities across the country was recommended at a seminar for traditional rulers, stakeholders and institution held in Asaba, Delta State on January 29, 2022 (Eniola, 2022). This was further demonstrated by the Ooni of Ife, Oba Adeyeye Ogunwusi, when he imposed a night to dawn curfew in Ife in an effort to checkmate the activities of criminals in the town (Abubakar, 2022). Traditional institutions as well as Nigerian judicial process can be integrated to minimize conflict arising from religion, ethnic and cultural since they are seen as preserving people's cultures and traditions (Mustapha & Bukar, 2019, p. 10). The integration would help in improving peace that would lead to a stable democracy and good governance in the country.

Voter apathy is gradually becoming a norm in Nigeria democratic system as people are not willing and ready to take part in the political process. In the last general election held in the country in 2019, out of the registered voters of 84,004,084 in Nigeria's 36 states and Abuja the Nation's federal capital territory, only 28,614,190 representing 34.75% actually voted in the election (New

Agency of Nigeria, 2019). Many reasons have been attributed to voter apathy in the country such as lack of social infrastructures, poor government services, unfulfilled political promises amongst others. The considerable influence traditional institutions wield over local voters and their ability to mobilize people in their various communities can be effectively integrated by government to ensure that people get involved in politics so that during elections, people can choose right leaders. This was adduced to by the former President Jonathan when he said “This is the time for traditional rulers to speak to their subjects on the need to come out for the forthcoming voter’s registration, so that during election, the people can choose their leaders” (Osakede & Ijimakinwa, 2014, p. 39). Traditional institutions constitute crucial resources that have the potential to promote good governance and to facilitate access of rural communities to public services (Tonwe & Osemwota, 2013, p. 138).

Traditional institutions in Nigeria can be a feasible tool for good governance if well connected. The goodwill they enjoy among ordinary people and the influence they retained in the grassroots can meet with contemporary democratic standard and have the potential to balance the strategies of modern democracy by filling the gaps in the application of modern democratic strategies and good governance (Mustapha & Bukar, 2019, p. 10). In Mayalo, a small agricultural settlement in Maiyama LGA, Kebbi State, the traditional ruler of the town has aggressively led the UNICEF’s project “More out of School Children in School in Nigeria” in partnership with Educate A Child (EAC). The project aimed to enroll and retain 501,574 out-of-school children in four states – Kastina, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara (Akingbulu, 2018). Akingbulu (2018) reported that the efforts of the traditional ruler of Mayalo has not only led to the under privileged children to access education in Mayalo community but also influenced members of the community to bring back the children they enrolled in Quranic schools to primary school. Traditional institutions, especially those at the grassroots are nearer to the people and if they are well integrated into the country’s democratic system and given a visible and constitutional role to play, they can mobilize rural inhabitants for active engagement, not only in developmental activities but also in entrenching of good governance.

Traditional institutions play important role at the grassroots as a bridge between elected political leaders and the people. They complement the efforts of government on mobilization and sensitization of their people to government’s programmes on issues like immunization, HIV/AIDs campaign, voters registration and the need to participate during election (Osakade & Ijimakinwa, 2015, p. 38). This explain why they are courted by politicians for support during electioneering process as demonstrated by the Military administration of Late Sanni Abacha when he was planning to succeed himself as a civilian president and during the aborted third term ambition of former President Olusegun Obasanjo while trying to lobby traditional rulers to back his bids. The previous administration of President Goodluck Jonathan demonstrated the respect politicians attached to traditional institutions when he openly canvassed for their supports and endorsement of the South-west council of traditional rulers at the 30years anniversary on the throne of the Late

Ooni of Ife, Oba Okunade Sijuwade. Presently, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, a presidential aspirant under the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) had since started a tour of the traditional rulers in South-west geo-political zone of the country, seeking for their supports and endorsement for his presidential bid.

The above is an indication that elected political leaders attach great importance to traditional institutions and they can play a better role in the political process if they are well integrated and mainstreamed into democratic system. Traditional institutions have the power to advise elected leaders in different areas of government such as economic policies, security, distribution of social services, nomination and appointment of people to serve the people and community. As such, they could help to promote good governance and facilitate access of rural communities to political participation.

## CONCLUSION

Traditional institutions played a significant role in the traditional African societies before the advent of British Colonial administration. They played a very significant role in maintaining peace, settling disputes among people and a custodian of oral traditional history of people in their respective domains. However, with the advent of colonial administration, there was a gradual decline in the power and relevance of Kings and Chiefs, especially beginning from 1960. Their power virtually waned during military regimes. The constitution of the new democratic dispensation does not provide or assign any specific role to them, thereby disconnecting them from participating effectively in modern democratic system of government. The paper observed that in Nigeria, traditional institutions still record a high degree of relevance and legitimacy in the eyes of the people as such, there is need to integrate them into our political system to assist in reaching out to people especially at the grassroots. The paper noted that good governance could be achieved and would be more successful when rooted in widely shared institutions and cultural values which traditional institutions represent. Therefore, the National Assembly should amend the Section 153(2) Part I, Third schedule of the 1999 constitution to give traditional institutions some well-defined roles in governance, aside the merely advisory role assigned to them at the local government level. The paper concluded that if the goal of government at all levels are to generate a rapid increase in social wealth, economic development and good governance, traditional institutions must be integrated into Nigeria's contemporary democratic system because they constitute crucial resources that has the potential to promote good governance and facilitate access of people to public services.

## REFERENCES

Abdul Rahim (2019). Governance and Good Governance – A Conceptual Perspective. *Journal of Public Administration and Governance* 9 (3): 133. Doi:10.5296/jpg.v9i3.15417.

- Abubakar, S. (2022, January 30). Ooni Imposes Night to Dawn Curfew in Ife Over Criminal Activities – Vanguard. <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/01/ooni-imposes-night-to-dawn-curfew-in-ife-over-criminal-activities/>
- Akingbulu, O. (2018, January 30). Being the Role Model-Traditional Ruler Emerges as the Champion for Education. UNICEF for Every Child, Nigerian <http://www.Unicef.org/Nigeria/stories/being-role-model-traditionaln-ruler-emerges-champion-education>.
- Amadi, E. O. (2007). Traditional Rulers Bare their Minds on Increasing Strained Relations with Elected Local Government Functionaries, This Day Newspaper, October, 10.
- Ayeni, C. (1985). The Traditional Authority System in Nigeria: Issues, Perspective and Challenges, Lagos: Pinnacle Press.
- Emordi, E. C. & Osiki, O. M. (2008). Traditional Rule in Nigeria: The Crisis of Relevance in Contemporary Politics. *Ife Journal of History*, Vol. 4(3), 76-92.
- Eniola, D. (2022, January 3). Conference Seeks Defined Roles for Traditional Rulers. The Guardian. <https://www.guardian.ng/news/conference-seeks-defined-roles-for-traditional-rulers/>
- Erero, J. (2005). Traditional Structures in Local Governance for Local Development: A Study of Ife East Local Government Area, Osun State, Nigeria, Department of Public Administration, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria.
- Fajonyomi, S. B. (1997). Governing the Grassroots. An Analysis of Decision Making in Nigerian Local Governments; Ibadan:Olu-Akin Publishers.
- Fatile, J. O. & Adejumo, D. K. (2010). Conflict & Dispute Resolution in Trade Unionism in Nigeria. *A Journal of Public Policy and Administrative Studies*, 6(3): 40-52.
- Haralambos & Holborn (2013). Sociology Themes and Perspective (8th ed.). Collins
- Isaac, Y. O. (2018n). Role of Traditional Institutions in Nigeria Democratic Space: Contending Perspective, Issues and Potentials.
- Mustapha, A. A. & Hadiza, M. B. (2019). Traditional Institutions and Their Roles: Toward Achieving Stable Democracy in Nigeria. *Journal of Public Value and Administration Insights (JPVAI)* 2(3):6-11.
- Nduka, O. (2020, March 22). How Nigeria's Kings Lost Their Power. BBC News. [www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-51853564](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-51853564).
- News Agency of Nigeria (2019, February, 27). 2019 Election: Only 34.75% of Registered Voters Voted. Pulse.ng. <http://www.pulse.ng/news/politics/2019-election-only-3475-of-registered-voters-voted/yd149c6>.
- Nweke, K. (2012). The Role of Traditional Institutions of Governance in Managing Social Conflicts in Nigeria's Oil-Rich Niger Delta Communities: Imperatives of Peace-Building Process in the Post-Amnesty Era EEE. *British Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*, 5(2), 202-219.

- Ojomoyela, R. (2019, August 16). Fayemi Ignores aggrieved Obas, Swear in Alawe as New Council Chair. *The Vanguard*. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2019/08/fayemi-ignores-aggrieved-obas-swears-in-alawe-as-new-council-chair/>
- Olurankinse, F. & Oloruntoba, S. R. (2021). Good Governance and Personal Income Tax Compliance in Nigeria. *European Journal of Accounting, Auditing and Finance Research*. Vol. 9, No. 5, pp. 16-35.
- Osifo, V. (2017). 7 Roles of Traditional Rules in Achieving Stable Democracy in Nigeria. *Information Guide in Nigeria*.
- Smith, B. C. (2007). *Good Governance and Development*. Macmillan International Higher Education. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-137-06218-5>
- Tonwe, D. A. & Osemwota, O. (2013). Traditional Rulers and Local Government in Nigeria: A Pathway to Resolving the Challenge. *Commonwealth Journal or Local Governance, Issue 13/14*. <http://epress.li.uts.edu.au/ojc/index.php/cjlg>.