

Nature and Essence of Governance: An Insight

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Abstract

Governance as a concept is pliant in response to dynamics within and beyond formal structures of government. This paper therefore re-examined governance interpretations in credence to evolving realities in modern state and spotlight the relevance of governance epistemology in humanity disciplines of Africa most populous country, Nigeria. From qualitative desk review and textual analytical technique, the discourse evinced etymological and conceptual trends of governance idea to increasing interest in governance practice. However, the paper revealed disciplinary deficit in governance studies in curriculum of Political Science and Public Administration disciplines as indicators of assessment remain instructive in the analysis of governance performance and impact. From these findings, the discourse recommend for governance studies to be mainstreamed in the curriculum of Political Science and Public Administration disciplines, creating enabling environment for research and innovation in governance process in deference to priorities of national development among other measures to bolster value of governance practice in Nigeria.

Keywords: *Governance, Government, Governance Studies, Governance Indicators*

Introduction

Governance as concept and social reality has advanced rapidly in meaning and essence over the decades. This development was informed by evolving realities in the operation of the state craft to corporate mandate of institutions and civil society-public engagement. As implied, governance as a social-engineering structure and process continue to elicit more attention in scholarship and practice stimulating significant changes in the interpretation of its nature and essence in modern state.

Emphatically, the current challenges of neo-capitalist and democratizing states of Africa find relevance in governance process as a mechanism of public affairs. In a specific sense, the resurgence of garrison states in Sahel region to Islamic extremism and terrorism in Lake Chad Basin occasioned by recessive economies and wane scale of government responses obviously revealed the intractable crisis of governance in West Africa states. Across the globe, public disillusionment and discontent are loud and torrential against governments. These adverse realities continue to inform reforms in government approach to grapple with enormous expectations and challenges. To this

end, emerged new orientations and trends occasioned by the current adverse scenarios in its dynamics and severity inextricably underlines the need to reexamine conceptualization and interpretation of governance process in response to public anxieties.

The task is significantly visible and pertinent in disciplinary epistemology and perspective beyond the practitioners' exchanges. The global awareness in governance process began over two decades ago in the west. The development re-conceptualized purpose and process of government in the state as evinced in New Public Management model championed by western scholars. After this development, new innovations and practices continue to evolve in redefining bureaucracy of governance responses to rapidity and varieties of public concerns and demand. Today, government and governance studies find more relevance in political science and management disciplines. However, the imperatives of governance studies in developing economies like Nigeria is yet to be fully explored in spite of the considerable attention it has gained among scholars as certain fundamentals are yet to reflect more expediently in experiential teaching and learning.

Acknowledging these embellished issues, this discourse therefore intends to re-examine nature and essence of governance from conceptual to empirical lens. From this indication, the discourse will illuminate disciplinary deficit in governance epistemology in Africa most populous country. Most importantly, the discourse intend also to accentuate the relevance of governance studies beyond theorizing to further provoke depth-critical reflections on models, processes and outcomes of government drive from disciplinary approach. In this regard, this paper is subtitled in this introduction, conceptualization and growth, disciplinary deficit in governance studies, indicators of assessment and appraisal of governance challenges in Nigeria, conclusion and recommendations.

Conceptualization and Growth

In an etymological sense, Hufty (2009) opined that the concept of 'governance' has a long history. In Greek, *kubernân* referred to the steering of a ship or cart, but Plato already used it in a metaphorical way to refer to the steering of human beings (De Oliveira Barata, 2002). In addition, the Latin verb *gubernare* also has the same meaning as the Greek word. In medieval French, it was used as a synonym of 'government', and later referred to a territorial subdivision. In the 17th century, a *gouverneur* was a legal representative of the French King, assigned, in the context of a general endeavour on the part of the central state to establish its control over feudal lords. More recently, it is embellished that 21st century witnesses aggressively the use of "governance terminology" in an increasing number of countries worldwide. It is argued that times have changed, technologies have advanced and alongside them human thought and behavior and so has government (Al-Habil, 2011). In credence, Jensen & Kennedy(2005) documents that "during the past century, American governance has been transformed fundamentally. The scope of government action has increased at all levels of the federal system. Moreover, the means through which government addresses public problems have changed radically" . *What are we really dealing with?*

This question undoubtedly revealed the polemics underlying governance definition and interpretation. To this end, the term, governance is used in various ways

which begins as phenomena (Jessop, 1998; Stoker, 1998; Pierre and Peters, 2000), policy networks (Rhodes, 1997), public-private partnerships (Wettenhall, 2003), corporate governance (Williamson, 1998), multilevel governance (Hooghe & Marks, 2001), and societal governance (Kooiman, 2000 cited in Hanberger, 2006). These scholarly views showed governance classifications in corporate governance, multilevel governance (decentralized governance) and social-engineering process of engagement and mobilization otherwise known as societal governance but failed to define what governance represents.

Rhodes (1996) defined governance as a change in the meaning of government, a new process of governing, a changed condition of the ordered rule or a new method by which society is governed. However, Rhodes's description of what governance implied is vague to new process, changed condition and new method informing the process. In attempt to elaborate, Bingham, *et al* (2005) contend that the new watchword in public affairs of the new millennium is *governance*. Identified by horizontal networks or public, private, and nonprofit organizations as the new structures opposed to the hierarchical organizational decision making structures of old. "Government occurs when those with legally and formally derived authority and policing power execute and implement activities". On the other hand, governance refers to the creation, execution and implementation of activities backed by the shared goals of citizens and organizations, who may or may not have formal authority and policing power". The understanding of Bingham *et al*'s views conceived governance beyond the formal structures of state government to be seen as process that enables creation, execution and implementation of activities for citizens and organizations. It further implied that governance is purposeful process but its activities are not defined and differentiated between the government and non-governmental formal structures as seen in the definition of Bingham & Co.

In a broad sense, governance refers to "development" of governing styles in which boundaries between and within public and private sectors have become blurred. The essence of governance is its focus on governing mechanisms which do not rest on recourse to the authority and sanctions of government...it's an interaction of a multiplicity of governing and each other influencing actors" (Stoker, 1998 cited in Al-Habil, 2011). Stoker's conception conceived governance beyond state authoritative institution, *government* underlying the features of styles (pattern or method) multiplicity of layers (levels) and activeness of actors (governmental and non-governmental). What is limited in Stoker's conception which appear in vague expression is boundaries between public and private sectors that have been blurred? Instructive in Stoker's and Bingham, *et al*'s interpretation of what governance represent is the indication that government and governance appeared to differ.

Succinctly in most dictionaries "government" and "governance" are interchangeably used, both denoting the exercise of authority in an organization, institution or state. Government is the name given to the entity exercising that authority. However, governance broadens our notion of the government transferring the economy in particular from the private to the public realm. Again, the conception of politics and government move beyond the narrow realm of government to what is thought as "public life" or "public affairs." Since the government doesn't only decide

for all and the civil society and the private sectors play vital role in the community, thus, the conception of the word “governance”. Governance is a broader term than government. In its widest sense, it refers to the various ways in which social life is coordinated. Government can therefore be seen as one of the institutions in governance; it is possible to have governance without government (Office of the Ombudsman, 2012; Heywood, 1997). Agreeably, government is one of the institutions in governance but arguably government and governance coordinate social life.

In a subtle sense, governance is the interactions among structures, processes and traditions that determine how power and responsibilities are exercised, how decisions are taken, and how citizens or other stakeholders have their say. Fundamentally, it is about power, relationships and accountability: who has influence, who decides, and how decision-makers are held accountable (Institute on Governance, 2006). In other words, IOG’s definition underscore the importance of decisions, public engagement and sense of responsibility in governance process. However, this assertive remarks did not differentiate governance from government which initiate public policies, engage with the public and account or take responsibility.

In more exclusive perspective, governance is defined as the exercise of political, economic, and administrative authority to manage a country’s resources for development. It involves the institutionalization of a system through which citizens, institutions, organizations, and groups in a society articulate their interests, exercise their rights, and mediate their differences in pursuit of the collective good (Country Governance Assessment, 2005 cited in Okeke, 2010). The perspective narrowly conceived governance as responsibility of the government which create avenues and channels for authority-public exchanges (articulation of interests, expression, responses and feedback) for a purposeful process of common goal. However, the definition fail to acknowledge the pervasiveness of governance as a process beyond the formal structures of government as embellished by scholars and practitioners.

In a similar sense, governance is defined as the use of political authority and exercise of control over society and the management of its resources for social and economic development. It encompasses the nature of functioning of a state’s institutional and structural arrangements, decision making processes, policy formulation, implementation capacity, information flows, effectiveness of leadership and the nature of the relationship between rulers and the ruled. Governance can also be described as the use of authority and the exercise of control over society and the management of its resources for social and economic development. It is the manner in which power is exercised by governments in the distribution of a country’s social and economic resources. The nature and manner of distribution is what makes governance good or bad one (Doig, 1995; Lawal *e tal*, 2012). Thus, Doig’s and Lawal *e tal*’s submission identified and underlined the specific roles of governance within the purview of bureaucratic and political responsibilities of the government but limited in specificities of corporate context and other contexts of governance beyond the authoritative structures of the government.

Subsequently, Office of the Ombudsman (2012) provided the following varying definitions of governance as articulated below: (a) Governance refers to the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s social and economic

resources for development. It is referred to as the quality of the institutions to make, implement and enforce sound policies in an efficient, effective, equitable and inclusive manner (Asian Development Bank, ADB, 2000). (b) In broad terms, governance is about the institutional environment in which citizens interact among themselves and with government agencies/officials (ADB, 2005). (c) Governance is also seen as the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage the nation's affairs at all levels. Governance is not the sole domain of government but transcends government to encompass the business sector and the civil society (NEDA, 2006). (d) Governance can be used in several contexts such as corporate governance, international governance, national governance and local governance.

Furthermore, Madubuegwu and Madukwe (2022) conceived governance from the perspectives of context, structure and process. As related to 'context perspective', governance may be classified as state governance, rural governance, corporate governance and global governance defining its environmental significance in pursuit of its respective goals and targets. As related to 'structure perspective', governance varies in legal framework, cluster of institutional responsibilities and organizational context. For instance, there are disparities in structures between state governance, corporate governance and global governance. The third perspective is 'process of governance' which essentially showed peculiarities of decision-making processes as defined by laws and precedents across contexts and structures. From these reflective indications, governance is further conceptualized; (a) As context which defines the nature, peculiarity and significance of goals and targets at the level of state, corporate and global process of engagement. (b) As structures institutionalized to perform expedient roles in public and corporate interests. (c) As process initiated to facilitate formulation and implementation of decisions (in form of policies, legislation) in realization of public expectations for development and safety or corporate expectations for profits.

Pointedly, the foregoing definitions appeared to offer valid insights on what governance represents. However, the following five fundamentals are instructive in the conceptualization of governance: (a) Its context is broad and classified. (b) It is a process of impact. (c) It is purposeful and utilitarian. (d) It is a practice that function within structures, legal frameworks and networks of responsibilities. (e) Its drive ought to be guided by a model.

Governance irrespective of context, structure and models in public, corporate and global levels of engagements reflect relevantly in policy formulation, administration and feedback. These processes resonate imperatives of interactions and exchanges for functionality and impact. As earlier noted in the introduction, governance is a fascinating process which has over the years engaged interests of scholars in depth understanding of its dynamics and search for best models for impact and result.

In reference to growth, the foregoing myriad conceptualizations indeed underlined scholarly and practitioners' interest in governance over the decades to the recent time as noted. Over three decades ago, Landell-Mills and Serageldin (1991) noted that the upsurge of interest in governance reflect five reinforcing perceptions. First, the success of market economies is being contrasted with the failure of centralized planning. Secondly in many countries, popular discontent at the buses of authoritarian regimes is spurring search for more democratic and responsive forms of government. Thirdly, the inefficiencies of state

enterprises and public agencies at a time of fiscal crisis have prompted a re-examination of the role of the state. Fourthly, there is heightened concern that widespread corruption is siphoning away both domestic and foreign aid resources. Fifthly, a resurgence of problems of ethnicity is greatly complicating the task of nation-building. These adverse conditions as observed by Landell-Mills and Serageldin apparently stemmed from domestic uncertainties in developing economies as Bretton Wood institutions (World Bank, International Monetary Fund) advocated for reforms in governance processes of these countries. However, the dynamics have changed today in significant scale and relevance.

The 1990's advocacy and euphoria for governance reform measures in less developed countries, LDCs beside domestic challenges and expectations was also informed by certain realities which evolved and gained relevance in state bureaucracy of United States with unprecedented changes in government-public engagements. Hence, New Public Management model was instructive in this regard. In a historic sense, Ezeani (2010) revealed that since the mid-1980s a new model of public sector management emerged in most advanced countries in Europe and posed a direct challenge to several principles of the traditional model of public administration. Furthermore, Al-Habil (2011) remarked that the new wave of "Reinventing Government" or "New Public Management model" stressed the need and benefits for government to function like a "business". Therefore, governance as opposed to government illustrate the changes that have taken place. The desire to take functions away from the government and contract out to private entities and non profit organizations, believing that these "players" would run things better and more efficiently.

This new development emerged from popular discontent against rigid, hierarchical and bureaucratic form of public administration which have predominated most of the twentieth century changing to a flexible and market-based form of public management. The model is an attempt to implement the "3E" of "economy, efficiency and effectiveness" (Hughes,1998 cited in Ezeani, 2010). Succinctly, Neo-managerialism otherwise known as New Public Management or "Reinventing Government", inspired by Osborne and Gaebler's book (1992) gained more prominence during the Clinton Administration. Hence, New Public Management model shifts citizen to customer and takes public out of administration replaced by free market principles. The principles of this new movement are: focus on efficiency, maximization of discretion, aggressive entrepreneurship, and focus on outcomes. NPM strives to apply private sector management practices to public sector, economic decision making, public choice etc (Dobel, 2001 cited in Al-Habil 2011).

On the contrary, Hughes (1998) argued that the New Public Management model is abysmally laden with limitations. Some critics regard it, "as simply an uncritical adaption of the worst features of the private management and ignoring the fundamental differences of the public sector environment". Others regard it as "somehow" against the traditions of the public service inimical to service delivery and somehow undemocratic even with dubious theoretical backing". Again, some critics, particularly from public administration, argue that new public management lacks some of the good aspects of the old model high ethical standards, service to the state (cited in Ezeani, 2010).

The legacies of New Public Management model in the study of governance is obvious under the following: (a) State governance practice advanced from the formal structures of government to corporate processes with considerable attention towards public interests. (b) New ideas and orientations in bureaucracy for improved productivity and impact. (c) Private sector participation to complement government's obligations for the state. (d) Policy administration were enhanced by new technique in policy analysis and feedback for efficient and effective response to growth and development of the economy. (e) Government sense of responsibility grow and acknowledge more importantly processes of feedback and impact.

At this stage, it becomes pertinent to examine epistemological relevance of "governance studies" to establish affinity or gap between literature and realities in developing economies like Nigeria.

Disciplinary Deficit in Governance Studies

Governance studies ought to find relevance in modern political science and public administration disciplines. It is more appropriate to say that governance studies ought to be more pronounced in public administration speciality in political science discipline. To make more explicit the bond between public administration and political science, Odum (2016) stressed that there is a direct link between Public Administration and Political Science. Indeed, the former owes its origin to the latter. Furthermore, Public Administration come under the purview of the apparatus of government that undertakes the responsibility of implementing public policies/programmes and enforcing public law. It involves the coordination on human beings and allocation of material resources in order to achieve government purposes and overall interest of the public. That is to say that the basic essence of public administration is to serve public interest as deemed by the government.

As earlier noted, governance as concept and practice has over the years gained impressive attention among African scholars but "governance studies" has not find prominence in the curricula of Africa nay Nigeria political science discipline in bid to train experts, professionals, teachers and researchers in credence to peculiar challenges and expectations. In a similar sense, Isike and Olumuyiwa (2024) remarked that several attempts have been made to examine the nexus between knowledge creation, development and impact on African scholarship. A close reading of the political science course syllabus of the selected universities indicate that political science taught in Nigeria and South Africa is not relevant to the political realities of these states, their people and the continent generally. The content of the curricula does not address themes on the core issues and challenges of Africa's political realities and study of politics even when they are occurring in the continent.

However, the National Universities Commission of Nigeria acknowledged these concerns. The Nigeria's universities regulating body, NUC found the need for the curriculum of the Nigeria university disciplines to reflect 21st century realities by reviewing existing disciplines and introduced new programmes. In this vein, the Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) for Nigerian Universities was developed by National Universities Commission of Nigeria to facilitate the realization of these lofty ideals. The Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) for Nigerian Universities (2022) documents that

CCMAS is a product of sustained stakeholder engagement and interactions over the years. Its platform is a blend of academic experts, government (represented by NUC), professional bodies and the private sector. The intent is to enrich draft documents and copies of each discipline forwarded to all critical stakeholders including the relevant academic units in Nigerian Universities, the private sector, professional bodies and the academies for their comments and input. These inputs along with the curriculum of programme obtained from some foreign and renowned universities served as major working materials for the various panels constituted for that purpose.

In social science, the NUC-CCMAS report in 2022 introduced seven new undergraduate courses:

- a. Demography and Social Statistics.
- b. Petroleum Economics and Policy Studies.
- c. Criminology and Security Studies.
- d. Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution.
- e. Development Studies.
- f. Social Standard.
- g. Politics, Philosophy and Economics.

And, reviewed the following existing disciplines:

- i. Social Work.
- ii. Political Science.
- iii. Sociology.
- iv. Economics.
- v. International Relation.

However, the deficit in “governance studies” illuminate in the reviewed curricula of Political Science as provided by the NUC-Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standard (CCMAS). The figure below state as follow:

Figure 1.1. REVIEWED COURSE STRUCTURE IN POLITICAL SCIENCE CURRICULA

Course Code	Year One	Course Title
POL 101		Introduction to Political Science
POL 102		Introduction to African Politics
POL 103		Organization of Government
POL 104		Nigeria Legal System
POL 105		Nigeria Constitutional Development
Course Code	Year Two	Course Title
POL 201		Nigeria Government and Politics
POL 202		Introduction to Political Analysis
POL 203		Political Idea
POL 204		Foundations of Political Economy
POL 205		International Relation
Course Code	Year Three	Course Title
POL 301		History of Political Thought
POL 302		Logic and Method of Political Science Research
POL 303		Contemporary Political Analysis
POL 304		Political Behaviour
POL 305		Public Policy Analysis

POL 306	Comparative Federalism
POL 307	Statistics for Political Science
POL308	Politics of Development and Underdevelopment
POL309	Theories of International Relations
POL310	Democratization Studies
POL312	Theories and Practice of Marxism

Course Code	Year Four	Course Title
POL 401		Civil Military Relation
POL 402		State and Economy
POL 403		Contemporary Defence and Strategic Studies
POL 404		Nigeria Local Government System
POL 405		Nigerian Foreign Policy
POL 406		International Law and Organization
POL 407		Research Project in Political Science
POL408		Political Sociology
POL 410		Political Parties and Pressure Groups

Source: National Universities Commission-Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards(CCMAS)for Nigerian Universities (2022:178).

A close look at the figure of the reviewed 30 undergraduate political science courses offered from first year to final year showed absence of a course on “governance”. Also, a cursory look at the course description and content of POL 103, “Organization of Government” showed non-essentials in “governance studies” beyond arms of government, systems of government etc. This foundation limitation also undermined effort to conceptualize fundamental themes in “governance studies” for specialized knowledge and training at the postgraduate level of political science. A further search in the curriculum of Public Administration and Economics disciplines also showed gap as seen in Political Science.

Nonetheless, the study of Corporate Governance, CG has gained prominent relevance and status in postgraduate programme of Business Management and Human Resource Management disciplines in most Nigeria universities. However, curriculum of Nigerian political science and public administration are yet at undergraduate level expose learners and train specialists at the level of postgraduate in functioning precedents, reflective practices and models of impact in national governance, multilevel governance, rural governance, resource governance in deference to realities and expectations of our clime. Unfortunately, the underlying factor to crises of national development in Nigeria is failure of political leadership occasioned by dysfunctional governance process at federating levels of policy and administration.

Indicators of Assessment and Appraisal of Governance Challenges in Nigeria

The appraisal of a country’s governance should be conventionally anchored on “indicators”. It implied that “governance assessment” is facilitated by explicit established criterion otherwise known as “governance indicators”. Basically, governance indicators are many and differ remarkably in their respective scale of purpose and value for

national governance, corporate governance, global governance, rural governance, multilevel governance, resource governance, etc. In this vein, Report of United Nations Development Programme (2014) documents that governance indicators are plethora as used by government, non-governmental organizations, development agencies, academic institutions and private sectors. The indicators are intended to inform and enlighten.

In this regard, Mo Ibrahim Foundation since 2007 has remained consistent on periodic index report of African governance. Its overall governance indicators are obvious in safety & rule of law (personal safety, national security and access to transparent and accountable justice system), participation & human right (participation, rights and gender equality), sustainable economic opportunity (public management, business environment, infrastructure and rural sector) and human development (welfare, education and health). The Human Development Index as popularized by the United Nations Development Programme, UNDP also serve as viable governance assessment benchmark. In this category is also the World Governance Indicator, WGI otherwise known as Global Governance Indicator which espouses six fundamental indicators of governance assessment. Also, the Resource Governance Index: a periodic report of National Resource Governance Institute, New York. The periodic index report review and reveal data on governance impact in the management of oil, gas and minerals for growth and development across resource driven economies in Africa and Asia. These indicators in their respective significance conventionally examines government effectiveness, voice, accountability and rule of law. Sadly, many commentators, opinion survey experts and some researchers are often in a haste to assess governance performance without acknowledging indicators as guide for valid findings and lucid generalization.

Nigeria is a democratizing polity. Its economy is in transition for sustained growth and development. Empirical insights on Nigeria's democratic culture, institutions and processes enunciate uncivil orientation, weak structures and murky politicking. These unpleasant development are reflection of effects of the past and occurring adverse political development which resonate from three years armed conflict, twenty-nine years of militarization and climate of widespread impunities and irregularities. The absurdities of these upheavals had invariably affected orientation, institutions, process and outcomes of governance in the country. From these indications, Lawal, *et al* (2012) opined that lack of rule of law, absence of development oriented leaders occasioned by crises of accountability and transparency are obvious challenges of governance in Nigeria. Also, corruption and electoral malpractices are also the underlying governance challenges in the country.

In a different perspective, Zulum (2024) argued that governance challenges in Nigeria also manifest along the geo-political lines of its six zones (North-Central, North-West, North-East, South-East and South-West) reflecting stark regional disparities in development and governance. The northern regions particularly in the North-East and North-West lag significantly behind the southern regions in human development indices such as education, health-care and infrastructure. The governance challenges in these northern regions are further complicated by the Boko Haram insurgency which continue to undermine state authority and displace millions of people. Conversely, the southern regions particularly the South-West are relatively more developed and politically stable

with stronger governance structures and economic opportunities. The disparities between governance outcomes in the North and South underscore the deep inequalities within Nigeria federal structure posing significant challenges to the realization of a cohesive national governance model. Similarly, Madubuegwu and Madukwe (2022) posits that one of the desired expectations of modern plural state is the reasonable scale of sense of nationhood and cohesion among its cleavage components. Hence, the realities of social relation and interaction among its diverse nationalities over power, resources and privileges are susceptible to suspicions, conflicts and restiveness. Thus, governance inextricably becomes expedient for inclusiveness, equity and fairness in the allocation of dividends of power, resources and privileges. This is premised on the fact that national integration is imperative for meaningful development.

In an explicit sense, the federal structure of governance in Nigeria is lopsided. Beside the Federal Capital Territory and its six area councils, the North has 19 states with 413 local government areas compare to South with 17 states and 355 rural council areas. The unbalanced federal structure also created inequalities in regional representation at the level of national legislative governance between the North and South. Interestingly, inspite of the uneven structure and its adverse socioeconomic and political effects, the governance outcomes differ remarkably as the South was seen as more stable and developed in comparison with the North. However, Zulum (2024) ironically conceived the difference in governance outcomes between the North and South as caused by inequalities within Nigeria federal structure. On the contrary to Zulum's assertion rather the disparity in governance outcomes between the two regions (north and south) is a function of multifaceted variables or factors. One of such factors emanate from dispositions of political leadership and the people as assessed from the scale of commitment and drive of *governance institutions*; the orientation and innovations entrenched in *governance practice*; the scale of public enthusiasm to demand for accountability and avenue for corporate institutions/civil society participation to complement government obligations for enhanced *governance performance* and, the scale of public awareness and concerns in government policies and actions to ascertain *governance impact* on expressed plights and expectations. These indicators as seen as one of the factors basically provide further insights beyond structure to explain dynamics and trends of governance outcomes between the two regions.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusively, this paper evinced the pertinence of the re-examination of concept and practice of governance to further underline its imperatives in literature and enfolding realities in modern state. From desk review of scholarly and institutional conceptualizations, governance as concept and phenomena has evolved over time in credence to uncertainties and urge to bolster government effectiveness and state capacity. However, the epistemological essence of governance studies in Political Science and Public Administration disciplines is yet to be fully explored in deference to challenges and expectations of national development in Nigeria. To measure governance responses on these challenges and expectations obviously begin with explicit indicators of assessment. Undeniably, Nigeria as a polity is currently grappling with multifaceted governance challenges which continue to militate against genuine efforts toward democratic consolidation and national rebirth.

- From the findings of this discourse, the following recommendations are posited:
- (a) Scholars and practitioners should reflect on government effectiveness as a function of governance process. This critical reflection begins with thought-provocative conversations on governance process at the levels of national, regional, state, rural and corporate administrations through interactive forums that will provide platform for scholars and stakeholders to share perspectives and insights on plausible way forward.
 - (b) Governance epistemology should be mainstreamed in curriculum of Nigeria Political Science and Public Administration disciplines. Introductory course on “governance” should be introduced at undergraduate level as national governance, multilevel governance, rural governance, global governance, resource governance, energy governance and corporate governance should be conceptualized as specialized areas for knowledge and training at postgraduate level.
 - (c) Nigeria Tertiary Education Fund and National Research Fund should not relent in supporting research undertakings in governance in affinity with priorities of national development. In same vein, Nigeria universities should continue to create environment that support research and innovations in governance practice as community service for global, national, regional, state and rural development.
 - (d) Indicators of governance assessment is practitioners’ and scholars’ guide map to measure correlation between target, practice, outcome and impact. Hence, this discourse espouses the imperatives of “G4 indicators” as conceptualized: *governance institutions, governance practice, governance performance and governance impact* as indicators of governance assessment.
 - (e) Finally, the challenges of Nigeria governance can be mitigated through entrenchment of principles of transparency, accountability and rule of law in government processes as voice and participation are acknowledged as drivers of policy administration for impact.

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