THE ROLES OF TRADE UNIONS AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN GOOD GOVERNANCE: THE CASE OF NIGERIA FROM 1999 TILL DATE

ABSTRACT

The paper examines Trade Unions and Civil Societies and the role they have been playing in promoting good governance in Nigeria since 1999 till date. The idea became necessary in view of the unending political, religious, economic, social, educational, and electoral problems bedeviling the country. Over the years, ineffective governance, corruption, poor service delivery among others have been the bane of the Nigeria people. The paper argues that a virile trade union and civil society will promote good governance. It went down memory lane to the colonial era and recalls the roles of Trade unions and Civil Society about good governance and Nigeria’s independence and wondered why the trade unions and civil society of today have not been living up to the expectations of the people. The paper is of the view that such societal ills as corruption, mismanagement, of public funds, electricity failures, and extra judicial killings among others can be abated with a formidable Trade unions and civil society. It recalls that Trade union and civil society can also help to reduce poverty and straighten governance if well organized. It views recent efforts by the Nigeria labour congress, Save Nigeria Group (SNG), the News Papers Proprietor Association of Nigeria (NPAN) etc to ensure stability in the polity as a good omen in the right
.direction and therefore recommends that more efforts should be directed at service delivery and the reduction of corruption so as to bring about a sustainable socio economic development in Nigeria.

Key words: Trade Unions, Civil Society, Good governance, Service Delivery

TRACK: Trade Unions and Civil Society

INTRODUCTION

Civil societies and trade unions are the main power resources of the working people and nation at large. The power in this collectivity of workers and civil organization can promote the resolution of a variety of problems faced by the workers and the nations at large. The role of trade unions to their members includes economic emancipation, social welfare, political, psychological benefits, and opportunity to participate in managerial functions in the industry and stand against the obsequious of government that affect its members.

Mutfang (2003) sees civil society as a wide range of association and other organized collectives capable of articulating the interest of their members, moulding and constraining state power. According to him, their demands provides imput for the democratic political process which at times are aggregated by political parties. Their approval or disapproval of what goes on in government contributes to accountability. He further postulates that a country which is well endowed in this respect is well positioned to democratize and ensure good governance. It is in this same vein that a weak civil society is often used to explained the failure of democratization.

Gold (1990) defines civil society as a “whole range of social groups that seeks to operate independently of the state such as private business, enterprises, labour unions, trade unions, professional associations, religious bodies, student organizations etc. His inference is that civil societies are not only independent of the state but as interest groups they push forward their demands which might contrast with that of the government. He opined that the demand imput be specific or general.

The independence struggles of many African countries cannot be complete without mentioning the role of African trade unions and civil societies. It is also
a matter of pride that a number of the founding fathers of the former Organization of African Unity (OAU) were trade union leaders. Not only did they use trade union tactics, but also used trade union platform to launch the struggle for independence. Agreement by historians that the trigger for Nigeria’s independence started with the great six weeks general strike of 1945 led by the late Chief Michael O. A. Imoudu of the Railway Workers’ Union, which paralyzed the entire country. This was followed by the Coalminers strike of 1949, which led to the shooting to death of several coalminers. From that time on, the Nigerian Trade Union Movement was in the vanguard of the struggle for Nigeria’s independence until it was achieved on 1st October, 1960. Houss (2003) posited that Civil society and trade unions are the "hottest" concepts in all of the social sciences that touch on political life. Because so many countries have established more democratic regimes in recent years, there has been renewed interest in popular engagement in political life and everything else that relates to the way that political cultures or basic values and beliefs affect the way a state is governed. More recently, there has also been growing interest in how strengthening civil society can contribute to conflict resolution.

The political benefits of unionism include the opportunity for members to constitute a formidable pressure group to enhance bargaining power. Trade unions have already carried their yearnings beyond factory gate for example they held the government of former president Obasanjo to standstill on several occasions because of fuel hike through a protracted strike led by Comr. Adams Oshiomole when he was the president of Nigeria Labour Congress now Governor of Edo State. They thus influence to a great extent employers and government policies. Unionism has also launched some members on political trajectory such that they end up being chosen as commissioner, legislators governors during the civilian experiment in Nigeria’s government [Fashoyin, 2006]. Marxists literature believes that the union can be an institution for workers to take over the ownership of factors of productions from capitalists.

On the other hands, many lovers of democracy worldwide are fascinated by the news coming from ondo, Edo and Ekiti states and the judicial actions that restored the Governors of these States. As this periscope these events, the control of the civil society groups who provided the raw material that was turned
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MEANING AND RELEVANT LITERATURE ON CIVIL SOCIETY IN NIGERIA

The concept of civil society is not new in Nigeria political lexicon, a lot of scholars, social political and economic have written so much about it and it's perceived role. Mutfang (2003) sees civil society as a wide range of association and other organized collectives capable of articulating the interest of their members, moulding and constraining state power. According to him, their demands provides imput for the democratic political process which at times are aggregated by political parties. Their approval or disapproval of what goes on in government contributes to its accountability. He further postulates that a country which is well endowed in this respect is well positioned to democratize and ensure good governance. It is in this same vein that a weak civil society is often used to explained the failure of democratization.

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Diamond (1995) sees civil society as that realm of organized social life that is voluntary, self generating, largely self supporting autonomous from the state.
and bound by a legal order and a set of shared rules. He went further to say that it is distinct from society in general and that it involves citizens acting together and collectively in the public sphere to express their interest, passion and ideas, exchange informations, achieve mutual goals, make demands on the state and hold local state officials accountable. Civil society, he concludes is an intermediary entity standing between the private sphere and the state. Here again, Diamond distinguished civil society from society in general. This distinguishing factor is basically “interest” it is defined interest that makes members to act collectively in actualizing their goals, aims and objectives. These interest in some cases runs contrary to government (state) policies. But, on the other hand, among civil society group, they do try to find a common ground to act, these is especially true in the developed social formation. In doing this, Diamond says they exchanged information.

Diamond (1995), further ascribes certain functions to civil society in a democratic set-up, these includes providing the basis for the limitation of state power. It is supposed to supplement the role of political parties by stimulating political participation, it also promotes the development of political attribute and creating channels other than political parties to articulate, aggregate and represent their interest.

Oyovbare, (2000), conceptualized civil society as consisting basically of non-state and non-governmental groups activity organized to pursue definitive issues and interests. He went on to exhaustively list some of them in the Nigerian context. They include the following among others, tribal and ethnic associations, the various non-governmental groups, professional interest group of numerous occupational practices such as medical doctors, lawyers, Judges and Magistrates, academics at various level of the educational industry, Pharmacists, nurses and dentists, media practitioners, proprietors, Journalists, youth and students groups, churches, mosques and related ecclesiastical organizations, human rights and civil liberties bodies groups in the environment (environmentalist) and similar nature oriented advocacy groups, organizations for the preservation and advancement of traditional institutions and values, labour and trade unions market associations, farmers and gender-based groups, even militant and violence-prone associations in his view, constitute
part of civil society in Nigeria. He, like the others, made a distinction between civil society groups which are democratic inclined and focused, and those which are not so inclined and motivated. This is because there are some civil society groups that are legally registered and many others which operate openly without legal accreditations and are outside the law and norms of society. Looking at the pluralistic and complex Nigerian society, the activitism of civil society as a collectivity of new social formations has to grapple with the pluralism of the Nigerian corporate society. Therefore, Oyovbare, (2000) contends that civil society contains contradictions among its component units as well as within each groups. These are inter-civil society contradictions, he concluded that the full value of civil society in relation to the sustenance of democracy can be related only if civil society has time to grow and develop and is able to transcend its own contradiction. Uchendu, (2000), in his analysis of civil society was more interest in what differentiates a civil society from the political society or state. According to him, in its modern expression, the concept of civil society aids our understanding of the relationship of government to pre-political and extra political associations, it addresses the concept of political space and the consequences that flow when it is differentiated as it is in modern state. The idea that a public sphere can be distinguished from a civil sphere and that while both coexist in a polity, each has important roles to play in promoting the welfare of individual and groups are central to the concept of civil society. These ideas in his view, had only gradually evolved in Western Europe and North America and have not been fully integrated into the political culture worldwide. He went further to stress that the lead of civil society is rooted in the nation of “natural law”. The central hypothesis been that man is not by nature ordered towards society rather he orders himself towards society, promoted by self interest. These could be seen from the view expressed by the social contract theorist Thomas Hobbes, John Locks and Jean Jacques Rousseau (Uchendu 2000)

Despite the divergent views of these scholars as to the origin of the state, a common ground can be noted, the desire of man to live a much more
organized life where the common good can be much more assured gravitate them towards reaching an agreement to ensure this. Thus, the philosophical state emerged. Strauss, (1972), building on this, reminds us that the “desire for self preservation is a passion, a powerful passion that makes itself the basis of civil society”. In other words, Strauss makes natural law a sufficient basis for all rights and duties in society and derives man’s civil duties from the right of self-preservation. Here, we can see that rights are made absolute while duties are conditional.

The state of nature is the state of man without government. In this state of nature, man’s right are perfect and man owe no duties to the state: still according to Hobbles (1946), life is described as solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short. One way to get out of this dilemma was to view the state as a partnership in duties.

In Aristotle analogy, justice is inferior to friendship, when men are friends, as they must in a state of nature, they have no need for justice but when men are just, they still have the need for friends (Sabine and Thouson, 1973). The true remedy for the state of nature is the state of civil society. We can infact infer that, from the above, a state advances politically, economically, socially and otherwise only when there is a strong civil society or it can boast of one.

Helin, (1996), in the light of the above, sees civil society as a concept used to describe a dynamic process of constructing and reconstructing political space normatively in order to accommodate new patterns of political participation outside the formal state structure and institutions. The idea of political space suggest that the polity is one of the many sphere of society and of political action. The empirical validity of civil society therefore, rests on the fact that society is a bundle of capacities which functions best when it permits or admits other sectors into the arena of political and social action. Helin, (1996) also states that the idea of civil society rests on four pillars such as,

i. The concept of a political space which permits multiple power centers and is flexible, divisible and limited by constitution or self limiting in a consideration of moral order.

ii. A plurality of actors, each possessing a self-sustaining actor system.
iii. A public sphere that is capable of expansion and contraction as it’s civil support grows and varies in effort to restrain arbitrary state action.
iv. The capacity to promote governance that is responsible, responsive and eminently accountable with a limited or term tenure. These pillars could as well be called the basic functions civil society strives to fulfill in any given polity.

Hegel (1967), one of the earliest writers in the concept of civil society, places civil society between the family and the state. Hegel believes the state to be the highest form of human society in which the spirit (God, reason, or a blind cosmic force, Hegel was silent as to what the spirit means) objectifies and actualizes itself. Below the state, we have the family and the civil society, the spirit first objectifies itself in the family, then in the civil society and finally in the state.

Civil society therefore to him, is a state in the development of the state, a state between the family and the state, the state been the synthesis of the unity of the family and the diversity of the civil society. According to Sarbine and Thouson (1976), Hegal views shows that the state depends upon civil society for the means of accomplishing the moral purposes which it embodies and as such it uses civil society for achievement of it’s own ends. Hegal bore no contempt for civil society, Hegal’s account of civil society was infact a careful one, even an elaborate analysis of the guilds and corporations, the estates and classes, the associations, Hegal regards as indespensible.

From hega’s pointof view therefore, the state is not composed primarily of individual citizens, the individual must be mediated through a series of corporations and associations before he arrives at the final dignity of citizenship in the state. (Omoregbe (1991).

The above review of the various scholarly writings on civil society shows it to be an indespensible tool in the administration of the state so that citizens should be able to actualize their goals. It has been able to show too, that the law of natural right is the precursor to the development of civil society, however, the contention of these research report is that civil society in Nigeria is indeed in other third world nation came up as a result of dissatisfaction with the state, the inability of the state to provide the good life needed by man necessitated
the creation of parallel institution. Secondly, the autocratic nature of leadership in Nigeria especially during the Abacha regime led to various coalitions formed primarily to fight dictatorship. These abnormalities led to numerous civil society been formed (as these wemes shows) has also been the basis for their weakness as these research work intends to show. Lets now turn to our other concepts.

Democratic governance is a very recent practice, this democratic practice varies in different places and historical periods. The current position is that democracy like human right should go beyond voting, it should encompass the rights to make economic decisions in governments chosen by the citizens. However, many associate democracy at first thought with one true United States President, Abraham Lincoln (1861-1865) when during the Gettysburg address, which was made to mourn those who have fallen during the great battle of Gettysburg and for which a national secretary of the battlefield was elected, gave a speech which has been considered as one of the most eloquent statement of the democratic fight ever made. He said “it is for the living rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have”. Thus, so far nobly advanced that from these honored dead we take increase devotion to, for which they give the last measure of devotion, that these nations under God, shall have a new birth of freedom and that “GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE SHALL NOT PERISH FROM THE EARTH” Kelvin, (1990).

However, the theory of democracy is immensely complicated, this is because of difficulties in understanding who the people are and which acts of government are truly there rather than those of some dominant group. Agi (2000) writing on the conceptual problematique of democracy firstly, made a distinction between direct and representative democracy. In direct democracy, all citizens participate directly the laws and take turns in carrying them out. Thius form of democracy practiced in ancient Greece and in decentralized pre-colonial Africa societies gave way to representative democracy due to size in population and territory. In representative democracy, the people do not generally make the laws or administer them but choose those who do, these latter type characterized modern type. Apart from these distinction, there is little agreement as to what constitute a
regime as democratic. This is because of two conflicting criteria that might be employed in the assessment of any political decision, by whom was it taken - which raises the problem of collective choice and whose interest does it serve - which raises the problem of social welfare and social choice. According to Cunts (1990), it is normal in the so-called western countries to use the first criterion above and to call a state democratic if there is some way of attributing every major political decision to the people either because they take part in making it. While in the communist states, the second criterion is often employed, decisions are regarded as democratic if they further the interest of the people even though taken by a ruling party which forbids popular membership of its ranks.

Adopting the chamber's twentieth century dictionary (1972 edition) which defines democracy as “a form of government in which the supreme power is vested in the people collectively and is administered by them or by officers appointed by them, the common people, a state of society characterized by recognition of equality of right and privileges, political, social or legal equality. Toyo, (2000), saw that there are certain elements that catch the eye, one is the supreme power and the vesting of power in the people collectively, for the people to have supreme power, it is not enough to hold elections. Democracy goes beyond elections hence, the people should be seen to be involved in the decision making process of government. Another is the term “the common people” democracy is class recognizing terms and the term the people refers to the common people as distinguished from kings and so on.

Equality too should be noted. The equality of rights and privileges (political, social and legal) among citizens is crucial for the true definition of democracy. To have a genuine democracy, there must be first and foremost a real equality of citizenship.

MEANING AND REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE OF TRADE UNIONS IN NIGERIA

Trade union has attracted variety of definitions from scholars. Definitions depend on the perception of workers and the definition imposed by legal framework of a particular country. According to Akpala (1982) the exact definitions of trade union may vary from one situation to another depending on
the economic and political situation encompassing the worker–management relations. The Nigerian Labour law Section 1 of Sub section 1 Trade Union Act No 31 of 1973 defines Trade Unions any combination of workers or employers whether temporary or permanent, the purpose of which is to regulate the terms and conditions of employment of workers whether the combination in question would not apart from this act be an unlawful combination by reason of its purpose or any of its purpose be in restraint of trade and whether its purpose do not include provision of benefits for its members. Another definition is “an association of wage or salary earners formed with the object of safeguarding and improving the wage and employment conditions of its members and to raise members’ social status and standards of living in the community” (Fajana, 2000), Also, Sidney and Beatrice Webb (1920) defined Trade Union as a continuous association of wage earners for the purpose of maintaining or improving the condition of their working lives.

TRADE UNIONISM UNDER MILITARY RULE
Nigeria’s history is benefit with contrasting political climate. Since independence in 1960 the country has been under military dictatorship for twenty-nine years while democratic rule span for the remaining account for the remaining years. The long years of military rule has had its impact on the nation’s trade unionism and workers struggle in the country. In view of the dictatorial tendency of such military administration, trade unions have a herculean task in responding to policies and unpopular programmes of such regimes. The first challenge posed to trade unions is with regards to how they can mobilize the members to agitate against unpopular and repressive programmes of military administration. Trade union movement in Nigeria attained its highest crescendo of activities during Military dictatorship. While trade union activities were heightened under previous military regimes of General Gowon (1967-1975), General Muritala/Obasanjo (1976-1979), General Buhari/Idiagbon (1984-1986), Gen Babangida (1986-1993) it was during Gen. Babangida’s regime that witnessed active involvement of trade unions in the struggle both for the improvement in the living standard of members and restoration of democratic rule. For example in 1992, there was widespread discontent in the country in which citizens were harassed, repressed and hungry (Akinyanju, 1997). Wages were generally low, however, the leadership
of the Central Labour organization (NLC) were collaborators of the military junta, hence could not muster any resistance against the Military government. It was against this background that the ASUU embarked on a nation-wide strike in 1992 to advance the improvement of the working condition of its members. The high level of poverty among members fostered unity of purpose among members. The strike was largely successful in terms of total participation of members and the military Government was forced to negotiate with the union. During Gen. Babangida’s regime (1986-1993) trade unions were able to mobilize their members to protest against the negative effects of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) of the government. The protest led to the introduction of some relief measures meant to caution the effect of economic policy on the citizens. Such relief measures include wages and salaries increment.

Oche, O. (1999), posited that the experience of the struggle towards revalidation of true annulled June 12, 1993 Presidential election is another instance of workers struggle during military era. MKO Abiola won a decisive victory however, on June 23 Babangida using several pending law suits as a pretence annulled the election throwing Nigeria to turmoil. More than 100 were killed in riots before Babangida agreed to hand power to an interim government on August 27, 1999. With the country sliding into chaos Defense Minister Sani Abacha assumed power and forced the interim Government headed by Ernest Shonekan a prominent nonpartisan businessman who was meant to rule from August 27 1993 to February 1994 when elections were scheduled for to hand over power to him in November 17, 1993. Abacha dissolved all democratic institutions and replaced elected governors with military officers. On June , 1994, Moshood Kashimawo Olawale Abiola declared himself president and went into hiding until his arrest on June 23, in response, petroleum workers (NUPENG and PENGASSAN) called a strike demanding that Abacha release Abiola and hand over power to him

PROBLEMS BEDEVILING THE COUNTRY

The problems bedeviling the country since 1999 during this democratic dispensation are such as travesty of justice, corruption, power failure, High cost of living, Bad Road network, fuel scarcity, oligarchy that breeds authoritarialiam,
etc it is proper to give vivid elucidation of these problems bedeviling our country one after the others;

TRAVESTY OF JUSTICE: Jega (2006) posited that this is one of the major problems bedeviling the administration of justice and rule of law. This is because, it is as if there no leader with integrity in this country. political party A and B contest for an office because of loopholes in the constitution, political party A declares the winner of the election, instead of the regulating body INEC to wait for the appeal, to come up with their findings such will be declared the winner even if it is so glaring like that of Ondo, Edo, Ekiti now Delta and Oshun waiting. Nobody and no one is doing anything to avert the situation that is the reason why trade unions and civil society groups can now organize themselves to ensure that the perpetrators of these travesties of justice are brought to book Featus Keyamo (2010).

CORRUPTION: Femi Falana (2010) opined that is a cancan warm which has eaten deep into the fabric of our society. Political offices in our country are now being targeted by businessmen who see it as give and take. Karl Marx (1848) posited that the main motive of these elite class is to exploit and oppress the masses with sole aim of maximizing profits. With the huge sum of money invested either directly or indirectly such will be expected to come in triple folds, by aspiring for their gains lead to; frauds, financial misappropriation, mismanagement, double-standard, inflation of contracts, transfer of money to foreign account, etc. unless and until, Trade unions and civil societies organize themselves by carrying their yearning beyond factory gate and stage a protest before those occupying or perpetuating these dastardly act by forcing them out or showing them their way out, the economic development is going to be delayed in this part of the world Nuhu Ribadu (2010)

POWER PROBLEMS: Is turning out to be something impossible with the way things are going. Since 1999 different ministers had vowed with the expectation that will have overcome it, at least expected, this sector continued to be deteriorated the more. The successive governments had made us to understand that there is no hope in that sector. The only way out of these problems according to Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (1847) opined that workers’ unions or civil society groups turned this anger into a political movement. They announced the goals of this movement in their1848 book,
(The Communist Manifesto) is for trade union to organize and civil societies to stage protest by paralyzing the economy, blocking the high ways no movements until government deem it fit to retrace their steps.

HIGH COST OF LIVING: Total fall in standard of living has lead lots of Nigerians to indulge in something that are inhuman by Subjecting the majority of Nigerians to unknown hardship and servitude. Jega (2006) posited that such leads some to sell their babies, crime , prostitution, rituality hide under disguise of religion to exploit innocent hardworking people, exploitation, maternal mortality, infant mortality, fake drugs, labour migration etc. All these need to stop now. The only viable way such economic turnover and growth can be achieved is for civil societies and trade unions use strike and staging of protest as weapon to achieve their aims.

THE BAD ROADS NETWORK: Ayoku Eze (2010) throws more light that in our society road transportation are death traps. With incessant Road Safety daily reports of auto crash which must have claimed so many lives. The youths that ought to be the future leaders are untimely be killed by auto accidents, even some are inflicted with disability, time constraints, inaccessibility to market etc.

THE ROLE OF TRADE UNIONS AND CIVIL SOCIETIES IN NIGERIA.

Many lovers of democracy worldwide are fascinated by the news coming from Ekiti State and the judicial action that restored Dr John olukayode fayemi as the news executive governor. For many of us, this is a victory of the power of the silent majority against predatory political class. ‘we the people’ have spoken again. There are many reasons that make victory of Fayemi John (2010) posited that this is a very symbolic and significant at this time in our national life there are also many lessons we must learn as citizens from it. It is a model that can be quickly replicated in other part of the country where directionless leadership still holds sway. We must commend and celebrate the courageous role that the judiciary played as a dependable island of integrity and the last hope of the common man Akinnaso T.O.(2010)

As we periscope these event, we must applaud the core role of the civil society. For those who do not know governor Fayemi cut his teeth first as a rights cum development activist and founder of centre for Democracy and development. He is a well respected and admired member of the civil society community from
where he threw his hat into governorship race. When it was time for Ekiti State rerun therefore, many civil society organisations all over the country abandoned their duty posts and literally relocated to Ekiti State. And I must say that the presence of civil society groups in their scores as observers during the elections spread across most polling booths became the “game changer”. It was very difficult for the other side to steal the votes of citizens before these “invasive trouble makers”. The end product is what is what we today celebrate. This is not the first time that civil society groups in an implicit alliance with the judiciary have dethroned the will of the few to enthrone the popular wish of the majority.

The civil society cannot continue to turn a blind eye to the democratic process. The umbrella of civil society can be used to rally many non state actors and can give civil society democratic velocity beyond monitoring of elections. At a time like this when the Independent National Electoral Commission is in the midst of time constraints in the conduct of 2011. The civil society can lend a hand in numerous ways. The lessons of Ekiti are here with us. Clearly, civil society groups in alliance with the judiciary are becoming important apostles for change that can no longer be ignored Okei Odumakin (2010). We should not forget that it took a marriage of prominent civil society minds in the Save Nigeria Group to spread the fragrance of freedom that emancipated Nigeria from the shackles of oppression. Who else could have foiled the coup of those disgruntled and selfish political viruses that constituted themselves into a cabal and attempted to hold Nigeria into ransom while the late president Umaru Yar’Adua was sick abroad? What about infamous tenure elongation campaign that former president Olusegun Obasanjo and his apologists thought was the best way for Nigeria? How can we forget that whatever we see today as electoral reforms is a product of a vigilant and insistent civil society that demanded the implementation electoral reform panel? Who says it cannot happen soon?

Pollock, Graham (2001) posited that indeed, the democracy we enjoy today is as a result of the price paid by the civil society. Non- state actors can and will be able to do more, especially in areas like the Niger Delta where that has been insufficient “civil” progress. Many have attributed the dearth of progress to an infiltration of genuine “civil” struggle in the delta by an amorphous mass of
cacophonous voices with mundane intentions masquerading as civil society contaminating the arena with faulty and fragmented strategies that utilized predominantly “uncivil” approaches often to selfish ends. Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed people can change the world. ----- Margaret Mead. However, genuine civil society mobilization remains the pathway for sustainable progress in the Niger Delta, especially in the area of good governance at the state level.

SUCCESS OF TRADE UNION AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN OTHER COUNTRIES
According to Sunmonu (2007) posited African Workers and trade Unions contribute today, to the consolidation of democracy, regional and continental economic integration, as well as to peace and security. They oppose all neo-liberal anti-people socio-economic policies that most African countries have been blackmailed into adopting by International Financial Institutions, Donor Countries and Agencies. Sunmonu (2007) gave few examples include:-

The Sierra Leone Labour Congress, which led the Sierra Leone Civil Society in their opposition to military dictatorship in the 1990s. The longest strike in the history of African Trade Union Movement was the 9 months general strike launched by the Sierra Leone Labour Congress during the Captain Strasser Military dictatorship until the West African ECOMOG forces defeated the military dictatorship and installed a democratically elected government in Sierra Leone.

It is to the credit of Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) that one-party rule in Zimbabwe was brought to an end with the founding of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), led by Morgan Tsvangirai, former Secretary-General of the ZCTU. In Swaziland, the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions is leading the Swaziland Civil Society in the struggle for democracy.

POLICY REFORM
“Getting policies right is of crucial importance. If economic and social structures are inequitable and if policies (either for preserving the status quo or reform) are inappropriate, then the mere expansion of funds and programmes in a country would not be enough and may indeed increase the problems. This applies to structure and policies at both national and international levels” (Khor, 2003).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS
The paper examines Trade Unions and Civil Societies and the role they have been playing in promoting good governance in Nigeria since 1999 till
date. We pointed out that, the idea became necessary in view of the unending political, religion, economic, social, educational, and electoral problems bedeviling the country. Over the years, ineffective governance, corruption, poor service delivery have been the bane of the Nigeria people. The paper argues that a virile trade union and civil society will promote good governance. It went down memory lane to the colonial era and recalls the roles of Trade unions and Civil Society about good governance and Nigeria’s independence and wondered why the trade unions and civil society have not been living up to the expectation of the people. This paper is of the view that such societal ills as corruption, mismanagement, of public funds, power failures, and extra judicial killings among others can be abated with a formidable Trade unions and civil society. It recalls that Trade union and civil society can also help to reduce poverty and straighten governance if well organized.

The civil society and Trade Union serves as catalysts for a regime change, and there is a direct link between the civil society and democratization. In democratic societies, as Mansfeldova [2006,p.26] argues, a strong non-profit sector can “be a partner, critic or supporter of the government”. For Hearn [48, p.14], “A thriving civil society can widen democracy by promoting pluralism, and it can deepen democracy by embedding the values and institutions of liberal democracy within society at large, not simply at the state level.” Moreover, according to Sfeir-Younis [2004], “Civil Society Organizations have been instrumental in granting power to many people who are poor, voiceless, and powerless.” As Narsoo [96, p.27] rightly pointed out, the strength of a civil society depends on the democratization level of the government because it is the latter that provides the former with the necessary conditions and access to public decision-making without which the existence and the activities of the civil society become questionable. For Carothers [97], “civil society helps advance democracy, discipline the state, ensure that citizens’ interests are taken seriously, foster greater civil and political participation.”

It views the recent efforts by the Nigeria Labour Congress, Save Nigeria Group, The News Papers Proprietor Association of Nigeria, Nigeria Union of Journalists, Campaign for Democracy etc to ensure stability in the polity as a good omen in the right direction and therefore recommends that more efforts
should be directed at service delivery and the reduction of corruption so as to bring about a sustainable socio economic development in Nigeria. Civil societies groups can also stand the test of time by organize and educate its youths in a non violent manner but disrupt the activities of government for several days with sole aims of achieving the yearnings.

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