

**THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN ACHIEVING GOOD GOVERNANCE IN
AYAMELUM L.G.A, ANAMBRA STATE**

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Abstract

The level of underdevelopment in Ayamelum local government area of Anambra state calls for urgent attention. More worrisome is the fact that no community in the local council can presently boast of average presence of basic social amenities such as road, electricity, portable water, and others. It seems that successive state governments and other leaders in the area have abandoned the people to their fate as if their tax does not contribute substantially to the state resources. However, it is the opinion of the present researcher that the church has been on the fore front in providing sustainable community development from the beginning of the Christian faith. The data used in the study was analyzed using the phenomenological tool. The researcher discovered that enough sensitization has not been made to draw the attention of the authorities especially the state government to the sorry state of affairs in the local government and the need for them to rise up to their responsibilities for the betterment of the area. The study therefore recommends that the church steps out to challenge both the state and local authorities into action since most of them are members of one church or the other including the Anglican church.

Keywords: Church, Ayamelum, Governance, Development, Anambra State

Introduction

A responsible society is one where freedom is viewed as the freedom of all humanity who acknowledge responsibility to justice and public order, and where those who hold political authority or economic power are responsible for its exercise to the people whose welfare is affected by it. The citizens it is believed are not to be made mere means for political or

economic ends. They are not made for the state but the state for them. They are not also made for production but production for them. And for any society to be responsible by law and tradition, and be distributed as widely as possible through the whole community. It is also required that economic justice and provision of equality of opportunity be established for all citizens.

Over the years, the Ayamelum local government area with headquarters at Anaku has been bedeviled with deplorable infrastructure such as bad roads, lack of electricity absence of standard hospitals, portable water, clinics, maternities, healthcare centres, and dilapidated school facilities and others. There is also the challenge of poverty, hunger, diseases, unemployment, flood disaster, despair, frustration, deprivation and impoverishment. This is as a result of bad leadership from those saddled with the responsibility of providing good governance for the welfare and greater good of the natives. The council which seem endowed with abundance of natural resources most especially in the form of very fertile land used mainly for agricultural purposes such as farming has overtime struggled to deliver sustainable development to the people as a result of near government neglect, corruption and selfishness among the political class both elected and appointed alike.

Some traditional and community leaders including supposed illustrious sons of the council who is one way or the other have been in government according to Enweonye (2020) have only succeeded in “enriching themselves instead of championing the cause of good governance for the wellbeing and greater good of the indigenes and contributing to open up the area for sustainable growth and development”(p.14). This is evidence to the fact of a flagrant abuse of power and reckless show of irresponsibility and insensitivity which also attest to the fact that most people in government seem to carry the toga that they are not answerable and accountable to the citizens because they did not contribute either to their election or appointment instead it has been their efforts all the way. Ironically, the council generally regarded as the food basket of the state apart from Anambra West local council is where the people are suffering from poverty, hunger, and are tragically impoverished.

However, the impact of the church in pushing for good governance and sustainable development within the local council cannot be overemphasized. The church according to Ekwunife (1992) is called,

To contribute to the building of a just and equitable human society and responsible leadership, a society that cares for all its citizens especially those that are weak, marginized, oppressed and the vulnerable; a democratic society that

respects the constitution, rule of law that guards against misuse of power, fosters the citizens diversity and plurality, and that of the role of civil society (p.154).

Such a society can only be built on the moral and ethical values founded in the scriptures, teachings and traditions of the church and some of these values include respect for life, human dignity, humility, honesty, integrity, compassion, credibility, accountability and service to one another. And for the church to achieve the goal of fostering good governance within the local council, there is an urgent need for her to be envisioned to take up the responsibility of producing what Ifesieh (1989) referred to as “credible and visionary christian politicians” (p. 126), who will work towards making positive and indelible impact in the local government.

The major thrust of this study therefore among other things is to discuss the near failure of good governance in Ayamelum local council and the likely contributions and intervention of the Anglican church in bringing about sustainable development to alleviate and improve the living conditions of the natives.

Definition of Key Terms

For better understanding of the concepts employed in the topic, it will be proper to clearly define those terms so as to enable the readers come abreast with the comprehension of the issues under investigation. Such terms that require operational definition include: good governance, role, and the Anglican church.

- ***Good Governance***

According to Nnoli (2011), good governance attempts to:

Harness the resources of a nation and promote national prosperity and an efficient, dynamic, and self-reliant economy; it controls national economy in such a manner as to secure maximum welfare, freedom and happiness of every citizen on the basis of social justice and equality of status and opportunity (p.134).

Good governance according to Okwueze (1998) holds that “individuals and institutions are obliged to perform their functions in a manner that promotes good values of efficiency, public honesty, transparency, and responsiveness to society”(p.186).

Maduewesi (2006) on his own defines it as among other things:

Participatory, transparent and accountable, effective and equitable, and it promotes the rule of law. It ensures that political, social, and economic priorities are based on broad consensus in society and that the voices of the poorest and the most vulnerable are heard in decision making over the allocation of development resources (p.314).

However, an indepth reflection on the above definitions point to the fact that good governance is in itself a normative principle which determines what ought to be done in connection with governance issues as well as how political and other leaders at various levels should manage public resources to promote national prosperity, equitable distribution of national income, realization of human rights and provision of food, shelter, education, security, healthcare services and road infrastructure to citizens. Therefore, the above definitions will be applied as the working parameter in this study.

- ***Role***

This according to Oxford Dictionary of Contemporary English is defined as “the position and function of an individual or institution in a situation or society. It is also a function that is assumed or a part played by an individual in a given human environment and in respect of a general debate, conversation and national issue”.

It is further defined as “a set of responsibilities which every citizen is perceived to possess, exhibit, act, and perform on a daily basis”. It is Important to point out that peoples’ institutions including the church and different groups and organizations play different roles in life generally. These roles, obligations, responsibilities, and duties may change according to age, gender, location and through a person’s attitude.

Again, the Cambridge English Dictionary defines role as “the position or purpose that an individual has in a situation, organization, relationship or society”. Oloyede (1994) affirms that it is “a comprehensive pattern of behaviour that is socially recognized, providing a means of identifying and the placing of an individual in a society, and a set of actions assigned to every human person, organization and institution including the church in a given society”(p.187).

These definitions so far highlighted appear to agree with this study for it succinctly mirrored the church as a religious body that is engaged to service to humanity in a given social environment. This service to humanity therefore are a set of actions assigned to her with an expectation of fulfilment.

- ***The Anglican Church***

The term Anglican according to Wotogbe-weneka (2004) emanates from “a combined ancient greek and latin name *ecclesia anglicana* meaning the church of England; that is a church which has its origin and root in England”(p.21). Those churches which took after or share faith in common with the church of England are according to him referred to as Anglican churches or simply Anglicans. It is also a church or churches in full accord or communion with the church of England as to doctrine and church order in any part of the world.

Furthermore, the term Anglican according to Nmadu (2010) represents “the people, institutions and churches as well as the liturgical traditions and theological concepts developed by the state established church of England and the Anglican communion”(p.68). There is a theologically broad and often divergent affiliation of thirty-eight provinces that are in communion with the see of Canterbury representing the church of England and with the Archbishop of Canterbury as its spiritual head.

Ayamelum local council: A historical overview

The Ayamelum clan’s history has remained very frustrating and tortuous mainly as a result of several political injustices and lack of development to endured from the central province in the 1900s through the Onitsha Rural Areas Native Authority (O.R.A.N.A) and Nsukka division. After Nigeria’s independence in 1960, a military rebellion and its emergent coup d’etat in 1966 brought major General J.T.U. Aguiyi-Tronsi to power. Following this development, the ayamelum clan subsequently bounced back from Nsukka division to that of Anambra division with headquarters at otuocha in Aguleri.

However, after the Nigerian civil war that happened between 1967 to 1970 and during the time of Ukpabi Asika who was then the administrator of the East Central state of Nigeria, *Ayamelum* was again pushed back to *Nsukka* division where it remained till 1976. The old Anambra was later created in 1976 from part of the East Central state with its capital at Enugu. With this creation, *Ayamelum* was again scripted into *Uzo-Uwani* local government area with headquarters at *Umulokpa*. In 1987, during the time of Colonel Robert N. Akonobi, *Oyi* local government was created and *Ayamelum* was placed in this local council.

Indeed, a further re-organization in 1991 according to Enweonye (2020) “divided Anambra into two states hence Anambra and Enugu”(p.36). With this development, Awka became the capital of the new Anambra state. In December 1996, *Ayamelum* local government was created by the General Sani Abacha led military junta and during the time of Group Captain Rufai Garba as the military administrator of Anambra state and with the local council headquarters located at *Anaku*. The local government comprises of eight communities which include *Anaku*, *Omor*, *Umerum*, *Umumbo*, *Igbakwu*, *Ifite-Ogwari*, *Umueje* and *Omasi*. According to the National Population commission record of 2006, it has a population of 158,172. Each of these eight communities has very large expanse of land use mainly for agricultural purposes. Unfortunately, 26 years after the creation of the local council, nothing seems to have changed significantly from the tortuous political era of injustices, bad governance, neglect, absence of social infrastructures and basic amenities among others. There is very little or no government

presence in the area particularly in terms of road infrastructure, electricity distribution, youth empowerment programmes, quality schools for quality education, employment opportunities and job creation, skill acquisition, portable water for consumption, cooking and others, standard health care centers, maternities and hospitals as well as other developmental benefits that will encourage the natives, improve their living conditions and by extension open up the area for sustained development.

Again, the location, terrain, insecurity and road infrastructure have remained major threats to achieving good governance in the area. Those whose responsibility it is to push for the development of the area have continued to point at these challenges. Instead of looking for ways to nip these threats in the bud so as to deliver good governance to the natives, they have continued to give unending and frivolous excuses. For instance, why some local council staff, teachers, political and opinion leaders who are indigenes, government contractors and even some traditional rulers from the area do not reside or attend to their responsibilities consistently within the council is mainly as a result of these factors. According to them, it is only one route that leads one into the local council. This road usually referred to as *Igbariam-Anaku-Omor* road is dangerously lonely with thick forest on both sides, without constant vehicular movement, but very little presence of security personnel who have inadvertently converted it as their official toll gate where they unrelentlessly extort money from the few motorists who ply the road. Any individual who plan to access any of the communities within the council is expected to go through this road.

The road lacks adequate construction as well as sustained maintenance due to incessant flooding which usually occur during rainy season. Due to the lonely and dilapidated nature of the road and because it is the only route into *Ayamelum*, Nnoli (2011) observes that “criminal activities such as kidnapping, armed robbery, car snatching, ritual killings and the likes occur on the road”(p.164). Such is the political development, injustices and the challenge of good governance in the *Ayamelum* local government.

Infrastructural deficit and inconsistency in agricultural interventions

Since the creation of the local government in 1996, most indigenes from the area had got strategic and important political positions in government to positively change the fortunes and outlook of the council. For instance, they have had two majority leaders, a house of assembly speaker, representatives at the state house of assembly and three members of the federal house of representatives. The council has also produced a chief judge of the state who is Justice P.A.C Obidigwe, captains of industry, including representatives in the academia yet dividends of democracy are far from the reach of the natives.

Some basic social amenities which these leaders have failed either to attract or sustain in order to improve the living standard of the people as well as the opening up of the area for further development are here highlighted.

Education

Although the missionaries arrived as early as 1910 to *Ayamelum*, schools were not immediately built until 1920. The first schools in the area were built in *Anaku* and *Umumbo* but they were irregular. There were no standard five classes anywhere in the clan until 1951 when *Umumbo* community built a school to accommodate that and it eventually reached standard six in 1952. Even when all the primary school classes became available in other communities, the natives did not take advantage to go to school. They remained massively illiterate and ends up as herbalists, native doctors among others without serious interest to education. Till date, they are educationally disadvantaged.

Health centers and hospitals

Except a sub-standard private hospital at *Omor*, there is no single government built hospital in *Ayamelum* clan. There are also a very few health centers in the area but without capacity to handle serious medical cases such as surgery. Oftentimes, the people have to travel to Onitsha or Awka in search of adequate medical attention as well as proper child delivery facilities. There are no quality drugs available for the people. Instead, drugs available are the ones they can afford, and so they are exposed to uncontrolled health hazards and lack of standard treatment.

Skill acquisition center

The local government has skill acquisition center built around 2016 at *Anaku* by Senator Stella Oduah, the senator representing Anambra North Senatorial district where *Ayamelum* belongs and handed over to the Anambra state ministry of social welfare, children and women affairs. The center is given the responsibility of empowering youths and women in the areas of computer education, food and nutritional education, fashion and designing, craft and bead making, hair dressing and cosmetology, and vulcanizing.

The center no doubt has witnessed more problems than solutions and successes. For instance ten trainers at the center were owed monthly stipend at N15,000 between November 2017 to October 2018 by the ministry and this has adversely affected the smooth running of the center. Other challenges bedeviling the center which have been made known to the ministry include the collapsed fence of the center, vandalization, stealing, failed security system and upgrading of teaching equipments and materials.

Water

The local government is bordered by *Ezu* and Anambra rivers. These two rivers are not easily accessible for domestic use. Geo-physical surveys reveal that the area is not suitable for deep borehole drilling. And so to ease off tension caused by water scarcity, Nnoli (1980) disclosed that “hand dug wells are recommended”(p.128).

As earlier pointed out, these hand dug wells because they are not treated could be said not to be suitable for consumption either by drinking or food preparation. And because the scarcity is usually tortuous and tormenting in the entire area especially during the dry season, the people are left with no choice other than to make do with that which is available hence the hand dug well and other untreated water bodies that poses serious danger to their health.

Roads

The Nsukka-Adani-Otuocho-Onitsha federal road which passed through *Ayamelum* as it is presently referred to as Igbariam-Anaku-Omor road was finally constructed in 1983 with a bridge crossing the *ezu* river. After centuries of neglect, this is the only road connecting *Ayamelum* to the external world. With the coming of the federal road, the area seem to metamorphosed into one of the food baskets of Anambra state. Due to environmental pressure such as flooding, age, and lack of sustained maintenance, the road has been badly dilapidated. Infact, during rainy seasons, reveals that the road is completely impassable by motor vehicles hindering rural urban migration.

It is important to also posit that apart from this only road leading to the area and the terrain challenge, the inter-community roads within the hinterlands are nothing to right home about. The roads are so bad, completely dilapidated, impassable, death traps, and without any form of construction or palliative repairs. Granted, the state government through the intervention of the speaker of the house of assembly Hon. Uche Okafor who is a native of *Ifite-Ogwari* has presently reconstructed a large part of the road. But without drainages and proper water and flood channels, the reconstruction may not likely stand the test of time. Presently, work on the remaining part of the road is ongoing with drainages and flood channels in place.

On the other hand, agriculture especially since the post colonial era has continued to suffer from the inertia associated with policies and programmes intervention and reformation that pervaded the country. Agricultural policy is a statement of action and a fundamental tool employed in achieving agricultural development. A programme on the other hand according to Olatunyi (2005) is “a collection of coordinated activities that are

mutually directed towards the attainment of a definite goal and it usually comprises of several segments or projects which can be separately pursued as a component of the whole”(p.253). It is generally accepted that the country’s agriculture has suffered as a result of the resource curse effect of oil and inappropriate policies and institutions. This coupled with heavy handed and unpredictable government intervention programmes which have led to short term investment decisions and rent seeking behaviour by programmers has created dysfunctional disconnected benefit to the poor masses. Clearly, the persistent failures of agricultural intervention programmes in Nigeria which extends to *Ayamelum* local council have revealed the basic weakness of agricultural policies in the country and the inability of several administrations to address the basic and fundamental problems of agricultural development.

It is important to also observe that these policies and programmes have undergone changes mainly as a result of changes in government. This is because they vary only in nomenclature and organizational network. They emphasize almost same objectives such as food security and sufficiency for the citizens, export excess to other countries, and the provision of extension services, agricultural support and rural development services. It is also necessary to consider some of these programmes and the impact of their inconsistency on agriculture in *Ayamelum* council area.

- ***Agricultural Development Projects (ADP)***

It was originally established in 1974 in Funtua, Gusau and Gombe as pilot schemes. This approach to agricultural and rural development according to Amalu (1998) was based on “collaborative efforts and tripartite arrangement of the federal and state governments and world bank” (p.238). The important features of the programme are reliance on the small scale farmers as the main people that will bring about increase in food production and the feedback information mechanism. Some of its shortcomings include shortage of fund due to decline in oil price which began in 1982 and led to delays in recruiting competent staff and provision of materials as well as facilities needed for the take off of the projects. Farmers in *Ayamelum* as could not benefit from the project mainly as a result of its emphasis on high input technology like sole cropping when majority of them are into relay or mixed cropping.

- ***National Fadama Development Project (NFDP)***

This was floated to promote simple low-cost improved irrigation technology. Its main objective was to sustainably increase the incomes of the fadama users through farm expansion and non-farm activities with highly value-added output. It emphasizes poverty reduction and beneficiary participation. The challenge face by this project in the area lies

on the fact that unskilled handling of water application through irrigation can deplete the soil of its productive capacity.

- ***National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS)***

The key elements of this development strategy included poverty eradication, employment generation, wealth creation and value reorientation. It offer farmers improved irrigation, machinery and crop varieties which would help to boost agricultural productivity and tackle poverty head on since half of the citizens who appear to be poor largely engage in agriculture. In spite of its difference from other programmes on participatory process which ensures sustainability and attractiveness, its being problem solving and achievement oriented could not do much in the area due to obvious infrastructural deficit most importantly accessible roads.

- ***Roof and Tuber Expansion Programme (RTEP)***

It was designed to address the problem of food production as well as rural poverty. It hopes to achieve economic growth, improve access of the poor to social services and execute intervention measures to protect the poor and vulnerable groups. It gives special attention to women who play significant role in rural food production, processing and marketing. The impact of this programme was felt a little by the citizens in *Ayamelum* clan no thanks to the state government, political and other stakeholders inability to attract same for the benefit of the rural dwellers.

However, apart from the RTEP intervention programme, it is only the River Basin Development Authorities (RBDA) that appear to some reasonable extent benefited the locals in the area. The aim of the authorities was to boost economic potentials of the existing water bodies particularly irrigation and fishery with hydroelectric power generation and domestic water supply as secondary objectives. This programme eventually gave rise to the emergence of the Anambra Imo River Basin Development authority located in *Omor*. This authority also created another agricultural development project referred to as the Lower Anambra irrigation project (LAIP) which main objectives were to construct an irrigation and pumping station along with a modern rice mill complex and to introduce mechanized rice irrigation farming with efficient application of fertilizers and agrochemicals with a promise of double crops of paddy rice within a year.

It is important to also acknowledge that rice production activities according are still actively being carried out at Adarice farm settlement at *Omasi*, cosharis farm at *Anaku* and in other communities like *Omor*, *Umumbo* and *Umerum*. *Ayamelum* it is believed has abundant food, meat, fish and vegetables since the natives are mostly farmers, fishermen and hunters. Other agricultural products from the area include yam tubers, cassava, okro,

maize, pigeon pea, cocoyam and wild animals. It is regarded as one of the major agrarian local councils in Anambra state, hence the food basket of the state.

The Anglican Church and promotion of sustainable development

The term development is a multifaceted concept that encapsulates the totality of established culture and processes that do not only mediate good living and create a viable economy, but also plant institutions that defy time and are stronger than individuals which makes it possible to have an ideology driven society in which potentials could be harnessed to the fullest without the interventions and interruptions from selfish and corrupt leadership. A few explanations aptly capture the meaning of development in line with this position of the researcher. Nnoli cited in Nwanegbo and Odigbo (2013) submit that development is the “interaction of humans and the society with their development and inter-human environments in order to transform and harness them for the improvement of their lives, society and humanity”(p.194). This culminates in the elimination or reduction of such human problems as inequality, poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and others (Okolie, 2009). But given the realities of the avalanche of problems related to human welfare, security and survival such as unemployment, hunger, poverty, disease and mortality rate, crime and insecurity, corruption and misrule, poor education and illiteracy, and the deplorable state of social infrastructures, it has to include a people-based or humanistic perspective. As Nwagboso and Duke (2012) posited, development therefore could be seen as the “process of empowering people to maximize their potentials and the ability to exploit nature to meet daily human needs. It can also be seen as a process by which the quality of human lives and capacity to surmount daily needs are considerably improved”(p.233).

The *Ayamelum* clan just like the country situation in terms of sustainable development depicts that of a failing or failed society. The socio-political realities appear deplorable with multifaceted problems strangled to misrule and neglect over the years. Good governance and development are shadows of themselves in the area. Democracy which is purported to be the harbinger of good governance seem to have collapsed due to flagrant disregard for the rule of law and due process occasioned by the quest for personal or selected group advantage. Democracy as Omosor (2021) averred is a “political ideal which it’s principles when religiously upheld and reflected in the political actions of a state would mediate good governance to the people and evolve a stable egalitarian society where developmental prospects can be actualized”(p.264). The democracy that is practiced in Nigeria lacks social and economic responsibility, and this has emasculated development across the country and especially *Ayamelum*. The various government institutions are accomplices in the subversion governance. The security agencies

judiciary, government agencies such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and even some civil society organizations are willing tools for negative governance in Nigeria. This has made the living conditions of an average citizen despicable. Ogundiya (2010) maintains that the,

Political elite in the country almost without exception have an insatiable capacity to steal from the common wealth and leave the people more impoverished. Unrestrained by any real accountability to the electorates, many of those who came to power in fraudulent elections have committed abuses against their constituents and engaged in the large-scale looting of public resources (p.23).

The church of Nigeria Anglican communion has remained a very key figure in the socio-political experience of the Nigerian-nation. There is no gain saying the fact that the major task of the christian church is evangelism and propagating the gospel of Christ. Apart from the mandate of harvesting the people who have been so prepared into the kingdom of God, the gospel is also directed to repair and improve the society and as well offer humanity good life here and now. It should be pointed out that the obligations performed by the Anglican church including other churches such as the Roman catholics, Methodists, Baptists, and independent ones in attempting to ameliorate the sufferings of the masses especially in *Ayamelum* as well as finding ways of dealing with the problem of survival cannot be undermined. The church has been challenged in this respect since the country's drift to a certain doom. At the turn of the year, the country primarily as a result of bad governance continue to descend into corruption which has inevitably hatched into low standard of living, hunger, poverty, fraud, unemployment, insecurity, deplorable infrastructure, to mention but a few. The series of communiqués and resolutions issued by the Episcopal synods speak for themselves about the interest of the church's Bishops in realizing social emancipation.

In a bid to achieve social emancipation hence sustainable development, the Anglican church through the Diocese of Niger West which has ecclesiastical jurisdiction over *Ayamelum* has to engage in the provision of some basic social amenities which it has capacity for. It must find a way to tackle poverty in leadership in the area which is one of the factors that fuel corruption and the attendant youth restiveness on the social level. Undue closeness with some overbearing but wealthy political leaders generally waters down the awe and reverence for the church and her pronouncements. Without stating that the rich, elites and political class have to be treated as outcasts in as much as they need also to be redeemed, the leaders of the church need to stand a little afar from them to have the courage to condemn their actions and as well give them reason to listen and act wisely for the good and wellbeing of the people. Such a distance is necessary so as to sustain the church's thorough prophetic calling as in the case of David and Nathan. The church is of

the view that in maintaining relationship with the political class, she must be wary that her prophetic mission is not short-changed or truncated. The church has refused to sit on the fence blaming the government for ineptitude and lack of action in the area for that is tantamount to blaming the government indirectly for failing in her own mission.

Sustainable development therefore as Obiefuna and Uzoigwe (2012) affirms is “a product of good governance which also is a predicate of responsible and selfless leadership”(p.262). Responsible leadership is in turn partly a function of critical and conscientious followership. The leadership of the Anglican church have to develop capacity to influence and prod political leaders to offer good governance and bring about development in *Ayamelum*. Rather than becoming partisan, the church should pursue the agenda of good governance and as such function as the watchdog of the council area. She should constantly seek the face and mind of God to know which way the leaders and people should go. With the overwhelming populations in the other denominations, they have the capacity to influence political option by exposing the vices of those in power including the politicians traditional rulers, president-generals, town union executives, security chiefs, civil society groups, artisans and market union leaders.

Achieving good governance: The role of the church

The church is one of the oldest institutions that represent the views and interests of humanity especially the downtrodden, marginalized, oppressed and vulnerable. A common feature of these interventions and networks is their advocacy to foster a specific agenda such as social justice, democratic participation, peace and development for every community and again identifying with the poor and marginalized. Thus, this seemingly universal agenda of the church Onwudiwe (1998) observes was “always directed at influencing public gender for social movements as well as political institutions such as parliaments or elected governments”(p.84). Sometimes, it could also be through specific campaigns including advocacy for priorities in public spending on resource in a way that the poor will really benefit and social justice advanced. The struggle against bad governance for instance in the country has been on the increase since the return to democracy. There have been series of national campaigns such as one against poverty alleviation, injustice with regard to standing for the truth, human trafficking and a national consultation process to highlight the plight of the poor and vulnerable. The challenge for the church in this regard according to Kukah (2007) is to be “provocative and political without being bound by loyalty to a specific political party to analyze economic systems and their consequences without adhering to one economic ideology, to challenge and question policies that exclude specific sections of the society” (p.57).

In this regard, there are pertinent questions in the current public debate that seem prominent thus. Should the state spend so much money especially on the members of national assembly whilst there is very little to fund adequate social housing, quality medical services, and affordable education? Churches must therefore rise to challenge political parties, parliamentary organized public hearings and government officials with regard to the priorities they have set bearing in mind that these choices and their outcomes are complex. It is needless to assume that the church, is in possession of all the answers to the complex policy decisions. It is therefore expected of the church to challenge all political and economic decisions especially from the perspective of social justice, decisions on economic policies, and for priorities of government to be defended in a manner that distribution of basic social amenities should be taken care of according to societal needs.

A look at Ayamelum and the urgent need for good governance in the area, Onah (2002) posits:

Its inhabitants are mainly farmers who maintain small holdings and practice seasonal farming; their production is subsistence level and crops productivity, and standard of living is extremely very low. They are certified victims of preventable and available diseases which derive from malnutrition. Inside the rural dwelling place many families are herded together under conditions which defy all rules of hygiene, a condition of life so poor that it prevents the realization of man's total potential (p.188).

In the area, the locals as earlier observed are generally not well educated while some are oblivious of modernity because of ignorance and illiteracy. There is paucity of schools and the existing ones are dilapidated, shabby, poorly equipped and under staffed. Health institutions are also in short supply as hospitals, health centres, clinics and maternity homes are sparsely located and inadequately equipped. This encourages the natives to patronize quacks and traditional medicine dealers. Their wrecked homes reveal a pathetic and pitiable sight. The obvious picture being painted here again mirrors the underdeveloped nature of *Ayamelum* and why the church especially the Anglican church should seriously and unrelentlessly champion and ultimately draw the attention of government, private investors, civil society organizations, donor agencies, political as well as community leaders on the need for sustainable development in the area.

What the church has so far done particularly in areas of establishment of schools, hospitals, provision of scholarship schemes and digging of boreholes in some of the communities like *Umumbo, Umuerum, Omor, Igbakwu, Umueje* and *Ifiteogwari* cannot be judged to effectively serve the needs of the populace and by extension have serious

impact in the area; this is why the Anglican church maintains is pushing for a sustained effort in achieving good governance in a manner that it shall impact directly on the lives of the locals. This is also because as the church derives their mandate from God, she is therefore called to serve divine purpose by working for the common good and for conditions that promote human dignity, responsible stewardship, and fairness in human relations.

Indeed, the Anglican church apart from the earlier projects provided which represents a far cry from the expected developmental interventions still maintains that there are other contributions the church has to make so as to attract and impact good governance in *Ayamelum*.

1. Citizen's empowerment

The Anglican church observes that one of the ways politicians succeed in manipulating the people is by keeping them ignorant of their inalienable human rights and liberties bestowed on them by God. And so she maintains that good governance can be achieved when the citizens are empowered to participate in community building. The church further argues that the people may not be granted participation in decision making unless they demand for it and they will not demand for it unless they understand that it is their right hence the need for their empowerment.

2. Influencing policies

It is often stated that the changes people desire to see in the society remain wishful thinking until they are translated into public policy. The church has resolved to be more strategic in achieving this by challenging her membership to be part of the political arrangement and also become part of the political discuss and process without afterall being partisan.

3. Contributing to strengthen public accountability

The church should lobby government so that legislation is strengthened to make corruption and other social vices unprofitable, increase the distribution of resources to reach every community in *Ayamelum*, to operationalize the information bill so that information is made available at all levels to facilitate monitoring.

4. Human rights and responsible citizenship

The church in partnership with other civil society organizations should design programs that should aim at raising the level of general consciousness in this area of human rights and responsible citizenship.

5. *Giving voice to the voiceless*

Marginalization is one of the reasons for tension, agitation, conflict, and armed rebellions. Solidarity with those who suffer marginalization, alienation, intimidation, harassment and oppression is one way through which the church can challenge the state to be accountable to all citizens irrespective of age, class, gender, tribe, religion and region.

6. *Provision of infrastructures*

The church maintains that government should provide infrastructural facilities, economic, and development programmes to reduce unemployment, criminality and poverty.

7. *Scholarship on education*

The church advocates for scholarship on education and mass enlightenment of the people to know the negative consequences of inter-communal as well as intra-communal conflicts, crime and criminality on the council's quest for good governance. The value of education in an individual's development is to be promoted through government's effort in policy formulation.

8. *Activities of civil society groups*

Moreso, the church can also intervene to see that there is security of lives and property and that political office holders should ensure that killings, kidnapping and diversion of funds for the development of the area are halted. It should consistently challenge the government to be responsible for the overall welfare of the natives as well as committed to actions that would eliminate extreme poverty, hunger and deprivation. The church should further commit herself to finding solutions to the needs of the locals through prayers, consultations with the government and other community leaders on issues of unemployment, giving advice and necessary support. It must make concerted effort to liberate the poor from their daily struggle for them to survive and enjoy relative comfort in the society. There must be a formal co-operation between the Anglican church and state to ensure effective utilization of limited funding and the adding of value so as to stretch opportunities for all citizens in *Ayamelum*.

Conclusion

Good governance is an ideal which seem difficult to achieve most especially with what is currently playing out in the country and *Ayamelum* in particular. The cry for change is getting progressively stronger by the day. Government's wholistic intervention irrespective of its operational usage Joshua, Oni and Agbude (2012) maintains involve a positive noticeable change which will impact and bring about a much improved and sustainable standard of living of the citizens away from poverty, hunger, and deplorable environment"(p.166). It is also a positive term targeted at making an individual or

situation better for the benefit of others. The government's intervention to good governance Egwu (2001) submits represent therefore "a marked change in appearance or character of a nation wholly for its betterment despite the fact that there are uncharacteristic actions of government which tends to militate against efforts geared towards achieving good governance for the citizens"(p.213). Of course there are elements in government who are taking advantage of the bad governance situation in the country to enrich themselves, and because they are responsible for the sordid situation, they will frustrate any effort towards sanitizing the polity so that the status-quo will remain.

However, government has some major interventions to make in bringing about these positive changes that will by extension impact on the lives of the citizens. This intervention is not about setting up committees or organizing conferences because Nigeria as a country is not suffering from lack of policies but the mutual implementation of the policies. It goes beyond challenging Nigerians to be good citizens to a level where leaders become good citizens themselves as example for others to follow. It most importantly goes beyond self enrichment to selflessness for Nigeria to be a great nation occupied by good people. This is the kind of government's intervention expected in a bid to develop the communities in *Ayamelum*, hence a situation where political and other leaders become good citizens as well as credible leaders and lead by examples. The ultimate goal of this set of leaders is to better the lot of the locals and by extension take them out of the shackles of hunger, poverty, joblessness, corruption, poor infrastructure, injustice, marginalization, deprivation and others. Actions must be taken to work towards the ideal of governance with the aim of making it a reality.

It is important to also posit that just like the Anglican church and traditional institution are partners in ensuring sustainable development in the society especially in *Ayamelum*, so it is with the church and government. The church remains the watchdog of government in all its policies and actions towards the welfare of the citizenry. The Anglican church through her synod communiqués, resolutions, pastoral letters, biblical preaching and teachings oftentimes condemn government's anti-people's policies and actions.

The church however remains the voice of the voiceless, defender of the poor, helpless and oppressed. It ensures that leaders are accountable, corruption is condemned outrightly, the views of the minorities are taken into account and the voice of the vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making, and responsive to the present and future needs of the society.

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