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# The Challenges of Good Governance and Project Implementation in Nigeria: A Review of Public Sector Projects in Edo and Delta States.

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**ABSTRACT :** This study reveals that systemic corruption and other factors including poor leadership, leadership recruitment processes, ethnic and regional politics, tribalism and mediocrity, poor planning, and variation of project design have been the causative factors that undermine projects implementation in post-independence African states, particularly in Nigeria. The study, thus, argued that successive governments of African states, using Nigeria as a case study, have been deeply engrossed in this obnoxious practice that has undermined infrastructure sector development as well as enthroned impoverishment and mass poverty in these African countries. This study, therefore, is posed to examine the similarities in causative factors, effects and consequences of corruption and how it affects governance, projects implementation and national growth. To achieve this, the study adopted historical research design which is qualitative and explorative in nature. The study among others suggests that the governments of developing countries should shun corruption and other forms of obnoxious practices in order to operate effective and efficient systems that promote good governance and ensure there is adequate projects implementation which are the attributes of a responsible government and good leadership. Policy makers should also prioritize policy objectives and competence to ensure that policies are fully implemented within stipulated time frame.

***KEYWORDS:*** *Developing Countries, Nigeria, Government, Project Implementation, Project Failure*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Today, project management has become an integral part of any organisational setup, due to the rapidly evolving nature of management processes engendered by continued technological advancement and globalization (Panayides et al., 2015; Ramazani &Jergeas, 2015; Klein et al., 2015; Nguyen et al., 2015; Maylor et al., 2006). Developmental projects are very costly to execute, thus it is vital to implement good project management practices in order to deliver projects that meet the expectations of the stakeholders involved. In lieu of this, the importance of good project management practices cannot be overemphasised as project failure can negatively impact shareholders' value both in the private and public sector. Several studies show that companies and governments all over the world lose huge sums of money earmarked for developmental projects due to project failure (Asay, 2008; Fabian & Amir, 2011; McManus & Wood-Harper, 2008; Espiner, 2007). According to Damoah (2015) research conducted to investigate 214 projects showed that only one in eight information technology projects can be considered truly successful (McManus & Wood-Harper, 2008). Asay (2008) reported in the Guardian that the UK wasted over $4 billion on failed IT projects between 2000 and 2008. Other examples of partially or totally failed projects across the world include the Health and Information Systems project in South Africa, IS projects in China, and World Bank-funded projects in Africa (Heeks, 2002, 2005, 2006). Fabian & Amir (2011) reported that the World Bank's Chad-Cameroon Pipeline project, which cost $4.2 billion, was abandoned in 2007, citing misuse of revenue by the Chad's president.

The subject of project failure is not limited to specific regions as research shows that instances of observed project failure in developing countries is similar to that of developed countries (for more information, see Aziz, 2013; Liu et al., 2011; Saad et al., 2002). Damoah (2015) observed that developing countries in their bid to attain developmental goals engage in, and commission several projects (which are usually financed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, or tax-payers) including establishment of industries, plants, and facilities, construction of road networks, e-government services, telecommunication, ICT, and others. These projects face several setbacks such as abandonment (Kumar & Best, 2006), cost deviation (Aziz, 2013; Kaliba et al., 2009) schedule deviation (Fallahnejad, 2013; Marzouk & El-Rasas, 2013; Sweis et al., 2008), scope deviation (Liu et al., 2011), and stakeholders' dissatisfaction (Ahonen &Savolianen, 2010).

In Nigeria today, the rate of project failure is alarmingly high and the cost associated with such failures is equally exorbitant (Daily Graphic, 2006; Amponsah, 2013). Many cases of project failure are reported in the media, World Bank reports and IMF (World Bank Report, 2004)

It is no longer strange or new to the global community that the developing countries of Africa have faced several challenges related to bad governance and non-implementation of developmental projects in their respective post-independence political front often occasioned by endemic and systemic corruption, poor leadership recruitment processes, mediocracy and godfatherism, ethnic and tribal politics and lack of policy prioritisation. It is equally not strange that the most affected are the marginalised local communities, the consequence of which is existence of societies beset by widespread poverty, illiteracy, high levels of infrastructural and institutional deterioration, decay of morals and values, unemployment and high crime rate.

Hanachor (2013) cited in Eja and Ramagowda (2020) opines that government projects of any nation irrespective of status in the global system, undeniably, are of immense pertinence to the citizens of the nation and form a major block of national growth of the nation. A successful completion of developmental projects, though, a very important parameter for measuring development is unfortunately and remarkably not achieved in most developing countries of Africa which has led to inadequate and stunted growth in national development. For instance, Nigeria has experienced unprecedented levels of governance failure evidenced by poor or non-implementation of projects at various levels which has led to poor socio-economic development, rising unemployment rate, capital flight, and stunted technological advancement. Ghana, the first Sub-Saharan African country to gain independence from colonial rule in 1957 and without a doubt, one of the most culturally rich and peaceful country in Africa, has been crippled by various socio-economic and developmental challenges like her West African counterpart, though, to a reasonable extent has recently recorded stability in governance and national development. Mali on the other hand, has struggled on virtually all governmental fronts leading to the recent military intervention which occurred on 18 August 2020 to check menaces identified as corruption, mismanagement, embezzlement and significant others that have eaten deep into the fabric of Malian societies, and in which President Boubacar Ibrahim Keita and his Prime Minister, Boubou Cisse were forced to resign as president and prime minister respectively (Isilow&Tih, 2020; AFRICAW, 2019). In addition to the vulnerability to shocks, the country's challenges in recent times include widespread corruption, expansion of illegal economy, poor policy measures, inter-ethnic conflicts, predominantly the Fulani against the Dogon communities or what is generally regarded to as Herders-farmer conflicts and which has become widespread and murderous in recent times. Like her African counterparts, environmental issues such as desertification, deforestation, soil erosion, drought and inadequate supplies of portable water are also a problem (World Vision International, 2019; Toulmin, 2016; Bastagli& Toulmin, 2014). This establishes the notion that these African countries, though of distinct territorial boundaries, experience similar democratic bottlenecks.

Atuobi (2007) citing the UN Office for West Africa (UNOWA) (2006) reports that from inception, African states have faced corruption as a major challenge which has attained gross and egregious theft and for which no possible moral or historical justification can be advanced. As a consequence, it has played major role in the distortion of regulatory processes as well as alienation of African people from their leaders. Corruption has undermined democracy, good governance and national growth by flouting and undermining formal processes. Additionally, corruption has eaten deep into all fabrics of the society and the government including the legislative, executive and judicial bodies; and distorts representation in policymaking, policy implementation and adjudication of justices; and in the extreme cases, erodes institutional capacity of the governments as procedures are often undermined or disregarded and resources siphoned, as well as public offices sold and bought through corrupt-ridden practices (Atuobi, 2007).

According to Cousillas et al. (2010) and Nzekwe et al. (2015) cited in Eja and Ramegowda (2020) poor planning, variation of project design and scope, inflation, contractor incompetence, and inadequate cost estimation are among the leading causes of projects failure in developing and developed countries. These factors are tied to corruption which has been identified as the major causative factor of the challenges to good governance faced by governments in Africa. The consequence of failing to adequately address these challenges is stunted and stagnated growth in national development. Undoubtedly, these challenges are visible in several developing African countries as observed in the case study, Nigeria.

### 1.2 The Nature of the Problem

In the post-independence state of Nigeria, corruption, embezzlement of public funds, ethnic and tribal politics, godfatherism and mediocracy, among others have been identified as the major challenges of governance. These factors have been the reasons for military intervention in politics in the continent, particularly in Nigeria in the 1960s, 70s and 90s respectively, yet, the endemic behaviours are still very prominent or visible in Nigeria's system.

In Nigeria today, the government seems to be less concerned with rising cases of corruption, embezzlement of public funds, poor planning, inadequate cost estimation, incompetence on the part of project planners, and the seemingly never-ending ethnic and tribal political conflict regarding the presidency, and most sympathetic, the rising cases of insecurity occasioned by the activities of the Boko Haram Islamic sect, ISWAP, bandits, and Fulani herders attacks. In a nut shell, ineffective government regulations, poor marketing facilities, absolute poverty, deficient infrastructure sector development and rampant corruption have been identified as major challenges to good governance in several African countries in recent times (AFRICAW, 2019). These factors have undoubtedly generated a lot of tension in these African countries without immediate solutions at hand. To this end, analysts and critics have alleged conspiracy and have severely blamed the inability of affected governments to resolve these problems through viable policy options. Okoli and Onah (2002) cited in Ugwuanyi and Emma (2013) argued that, though, every society is bound to experience certain problems in virtually all sectors including politics, commerce, education, agriculture, communication, housing, transportation, health, among others, unfortunately, most governments of the Third World with Nigeria in focus, allow these issues to degenerate to critical socio-economic problems rather than resolving them though efficient and effective policy options. The failures of the national government of the states of Africa to objectively respond to these problems have resulted to failures in national economic growths in these countries, they argued.

Despite the outcry of the citizens of affected African countries, these challenges seem to be irresolvable and culprits seem to enjoy immunity from the governments. In Nigeria, specifically, despite the presence of anti-corruption agencies; the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), the government is yet to contain corruption in government and other sectors of the nation's economy including the private sector and society at large. To this end, several analysts and observers of the Nigeria polity have had to argue that the reason behind the inability of the government to address these problems is because of her involvement; thus undermining the efforts of anti-corruption officials while other analysts and observers of Nigeria's situation have, however, advanced lack of adequate research or study of the relationship between systemic corruption and the failure of projects implementation, poor governance and the drop in the country's socio-economic development over the years (Rahman, 2018). The inability of these anti-corruption drives and other umbrellas through which social ills are fought in Nigeria have, however, bedevilled and undermined efficient and effective campaigns against these social ills; the consequence of which is failure of project implementation, national growth and/or infrastructure sector development in these African countries.

This study, therefore, seeks to unveil corruption as the major factor undermining good governance and project implementation in developing countries, with Nigeria as a case study. This study raises a number of pertinent questions that need adequate answers and solutions. First, are there similarities in the reasons behind poor governance and failure of projects implementation in Nigeria? What are the chief causes of corruption and other social ills in Nigeria? Are there causal relations between corruption and other vices, and poor governance as well as failure of project implementation and all of which have undermined development in developing countries of Africa? The questions, thus, form the gap and basis for this study.

## 1.3 Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to examine the challenges of good governance and failure of projects implementation in developing countries of Africa using Nigeria as a case study. While the specific objectives are to:

1. Identify and examine the reasons for government project failure in Nigeria;
2. Identify the major causes of corruption and other social ills in Nigeria, and
3. Examine whether there is a relationship or link between corruption, poor governance and failure of projects implementation.

## 1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions provide directions to the study:

1. What are the reasons for government project failure in Nigeria?
2. What are the major causes of corruption and other social ills in Nigeria?
3. Is there a relationship between corruption, poor governance and failure of projects implementation?

## 1.5 Method of the Study

The study adopts historical research design which is qualitative and explorative in nature. This means that the source of data for the study is secondary source. Secondary source of data was used to review literature relevant in situating the links between corruption, poor governance and failure of projects implementation in the developing countries of Africa, particularly in Nigeria. Data were collected from sources encompassing literature survey of books, reports from dailies and periodicals, government official publications, conference papers and internet sources.

# II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

## 2.1 Stakeholder Theory

In this study, the stakeholder theory is approached from a project management perspective. In the past, stakeholder theory was rarely used in project management research. However, growing research into the subject matter in recent years as a result of writers becoming more aware of the various stakeholders associated with projects has seen extant research being carried out using stakeholder theory. In fact, in the past decade, research into project management and project failure has been conducted using stakeholder theory. In line with these prior studies, this study therefore adopts stakeholder theory as the principal underlying theory.

Specifically, this study uses stakeholder theory to analyse the various stakeholders associated with Nigerian government projects. Like most government projects, the Nigerian government's projects have a strong stakeholder base and as such this theory captures all stakeholders under this study. However, other theories were considered before the choice of stakeholder theory was made. Stakeholder theory was first propounded by Freeman (1984), although some writers credit the first definition and concept with the internal memo report of the Stanford Research Institute (SRI) in 1963, which defined stakeholders as those groups without whose support the organization would cease to exist. The foundations of the theory claim that firms have "an ethical duty to stakeholders above and beyond what is required by law and, in particular, ethical duties that require the firm to operate in ways that will foreseeable reduce long-term profits" (Heath & Norman, 2004:249). According to Freeman (1984) a stakeholder is any organisation or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisation's objectives. Organisations have various stakeholders whose activities impact on them and vice versa. The stakeholders include governments, investors, suppliers, employees, and customers. These stakeholders contribute inputs to the organisation and expect outputs from it (Donaldson & Preston, 1995), and will act for or against a focal organisation depending on whether their interests are affected positively or negatively. Stakeholder theory further argues that all persons or groups participating in a firm's activities do so to obtain benefits (Freeman, 1984).

There have been major debates about the theory over the years, especially during the 1990s. Authors have provided different views about the theory by criticising Freeman's Stakeholder Theory, and different arguments and counter arguments have been presented. For instance, the Standford definition, which is the genesis of stakeholder theory, has been criticised as being too narrow; however, Freeman's definition also suffers from being too broad (Olander, 2007). Lu *et al*. (2013) specifically criticise Freeman's definition of the term stakeholder as being unambiguously open to include virtually anyone. In sharp contrast to Freeman's definition, Clarkson (1994) offers a very narrow definition to the stakeholder definition debate – which asserts that stakeholders are only those who bear some level of risk as a result of having invested in the firm in the form of capital, human or financial resources, or any form of valuable investment, or those who are placed at risk as a result of the firm's activities.

Goodpaster (1991) contends that stakeholder theory introduces ethics into management, and that the stakeholder idea is typically offered as a way of integrating ethical values into management decision-making. In view of this, Goodpaster offers two approaches to stakeholder theory – the stakeholder analysis and stakeholder synthesis. He then classified the decision-making process of a company or an individual into six sequential steps, namely: perception, analysis, synthesis, choice, action, and learning. He argues that the stakeholder theory as postulated by Freeman (1984) only refers to stakeholder analysis and as such ends at the analysis stage. This implies that, in the practical or real world, organisations ignore stakeholders when choices and decisions are being made as well as when implementing them. Goodpaster (1991) asserts that, even though decision-makers identify the affected parties in every option and determine their positive and negative impacts; nevertheless, this information is not considered further during the decision-making process or the implementation stage of a company. Furthermore, positive and negative effects on comparatively less powerful stakeholders may be ignored in the synthesis, choice and action phase. On the other hand, stakeholder synthesis includes: the synthesis, choice and action phase of the decision-making process. Under stakeholder synthesis, stakeholders are only taken into account if they are powerful enough to affect the goals of shareholders. Based on this argument, Goodpaster splits stakeholders into two groups – multi-fiduciary stakeholders and strategic stakeholders. The multi-fiduciary stakeholder means ethics without business and the strategic stakeholder synthesis means business without ethics. Goodpaster argues that managers who pursue the multi-fiduciary stakeholder orientation face opposition from advocates of the strategic stakeholder orientation. This clearly indicates that there can be a strong defence for the multi-fiduciary orientation on the basis of ethics, and he therefore calls this inconsistent and refers to the situation as the stakeholder paradox.

Freeman (1994) rejects Goodpaster's (1991) 'stakeholder paradox' claim by criticising the idea of non-fiduciary obligations surrounding a fiduciary relationship, and therefore refers to this as 'moral obligation'. In an attempt to explain 'moral obligation', Freeman appeals to the 'nemo dat principle' – shareholders cannot expect managers to disobey reasonable community standards of ethics. He argues further that, although corporate law mandates managers to manage firms in the interests of shareholders, this corporate law is not the law that governs organisations and that there are other laws and regulatory bodies in the USA such as the Foreign

Corrupt Practices Act, the Securities Exchange Commission, the Environmental Protection Agency and others that govern organisations. Although Freeman rejects Goodpaster's stakeholder analysis preposition and his 'stakeholder paradox', he welcomes his interpretation of strategic stakeholder orientation, but not in the context of 'business without ethics'.

Donaldson and Preston (1995) offer four (4) these to the stakeholder theory debate – descriptive/empirical, instrumental, normative and managerial. They contend that the first three are aspects of the theory, and that these aspects are quite different but they are mutually supportive. The normative part serves as the basis upon which all other aspects of the theory are grounded. First and foremost, the theory describes the corporation as a collection of co-operative and competitive interests who possess an intrinsic or inherent value. They argue further that this can be tested for descriptive accuracy. Secondly, the instrumental aspect of the theory provides a link between means to an end. This provides a framework by which to test the possibility of existence of a connection between stakeholder management practice and corporate performance management achievement goals. Thirdly, stakeholder theory is normative, in that it prescribes how the world would be, and it describes how organisations should treat their stakeholders. In order to attain this, they make two assumptions – one, stakeholders are individuals or groups; they are identified by their interests in the corporation and have lawful interests in corporate activity. Two, stakeholders' interests have an intrinsic value in nature and as such stakeholders deserve consideration for their own sake without necessarily furthering the interests of some other group such as shareholders. Lastly, the authors opine that stakeholder theory is managerial in nature.

Jensen (2001) criticises the theory by arguing that it fails to show how managers will be able to make decisions that will make stakeholders satisfied given that various stakeholders of a corporation have different interests/stakes in the focal organisation. For him, it is highly impossible for corporate managers to maximise more than one corporate direction. He argues that goal-directed behaviour requires an idiosyncratic valued objective function. As a result of this, Jensen contends that stakeholder theory may best help the interests of managers and directors. Taking directors and managers' bonuses for instance, he is of the opinion that once this is attached to performance, they will pursue short-term goals that will maximise their chances of getting a 'fat' bonus at the expense of the numerous stakeholders that are associated with the company. He also links change of personal management interests to the class of stakeholder(s) being served.

In view of this, Jensen contends that firm value maximisation is meaningless if a group and/or any of the stakeholder(s) is ignored, and suggests a better alternative to firm value maximisation, which is called the Enlightened Value Maximisation or the Enlightened Stakeholder Theory. The theory is similar to the stakeholder theory except that it offers a criterion for making a trade-off among the various stakeholders with competing interests. For example, whilst stakeholder theory allows managers and directors to freely decide which one of the stakeholders' interests to serve at one particular point in time without offering a criterion for making the trade-off, the enlightened stakeholder theory prescribes one firm objective that serves the interests of all stakeholders – long-term value maximisation (Jensen, 2001).

Nonetheless, despite these diverse opinions about the theory, there is a common thread that runs through various definitions: stakeholders have an interest in the focal organisation and will act for or against a focal organisation depending on whether their interests are being affected positively or negatively (Freeman, 1984; Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Rowley & Moldoveanu, 2003). Thompson (2009) identified two steps that must be followed to manage stakeholders. Firstly, there should be stakeholder analysis, which is crucial in managing stakeholders. This involves the identification of stakeholders of the project. The next step is to work out their power, influence and interest. This identification helps to know on whom to focus and how to deal with each group (Davis, 2014). The development of a good understanding of the most important stakeholders should be worked out to win their support.

The second step is management of the stakeholders. This can be done through making a 'Planning Tool' (Thompson, 2009). After this, communication is most important. In order to communicate effectively with stakeholders, Yang (2014) asserts that stakeholders have to be grouped according to their interests; this is discussed in detail in the next sub-section. One study into stakeholder analysis indicates that there is no one method for stakeholder analysis that is perfect; the selection of analytical perspective is an art with extensive considerations of 'when, what, and how' to choose methods to achieve the project objectives (Yang, 2014). This implies that stakeholder analysis and identification of method(s) to be used must be project-specific; the next subsection provides some of the methods that have been used in the past.

Alexander and Stevens (2002) provide practical guidance for identifying stakeholders. This begins with the identification of project leaders. In this approach, managers assist performing organisation(s) in listing all the various parties and/or people who will be involved in the implementation of projects. This is done on the basis of decision levels and hierarchies that exist in the organisational structure. Sharp et al. (1999) present a methodology where the first step is to define a 'stakeholders' baseline' formed by stakeholder groups such as users, developers, legislators and decision-makers. They further evaluate who the suppliers and clients are, and then identify which of those stakeholders in the baseline interacts with the other. In this way, identification is concluded when all groups in the baseline are analysed. In a similar way, Robertson (2000) and Alexander and

Robertson (2004) present a model that describes diverse stakeholder types using 'the onion model' and locate each type in one of the 'onion levels' (rings). They work with producers, consumers, sponsors, influencers and consultants and others as stakeholder types. They explain how each type must be identified in the model, and then included in each concentric circle. However, they posit that this approach does not take into consideration the work context of the project.

However, these procedures have been criticised for being more of a practical than of a theoretical framework that can be used in stakeholder identification (Ballejos & Montagna, 2008). In line with this criticism, Mok et al. (2015) assert that the foundation for stakeholder identification and prioritisation is not strong due to the limited cognition of project managers and incomplete stakeholder boundaries. Despite this criticism levelled against stakeholder identification procedures, other stakeholder theories have successfully been used in stakeholder identification by researchers. One popular stakeholder theory for such a purpose is the Stakeholder Salience Theory proposed by Mitchell et al. (1997). The work of Pan (2005) and Olander (2007) is notable in project failure research – they have successfully applied the theory in identifying stakeholders in their studies.

In the theory, Mitchell et al. (1997) identifies three main criteria – stakeholders' power (ability to influence the firm), legitimacy (relationship between stakeholder and the firm based on contracts and legal title), and urgency (the degree to which managerial delay in attending to the claim is unacceptable to stakeholders). They call these criteria stakeholder salience (power, legitimacy and urgency), and are of the view that a stakeholder should possess at least one of these attributes, but they further opine that managers tend to pay more attention to those who possess all three attributes. In view of these stakeholder attributes, Mitchell et al. (1997) further categorised stakeholders into seven groups: (1) Dormant stakeholders – they possess the power to impose their will but do not have any legitimate relationship or urgent claim, and their power remains unused; (2) Discretionary stakeholders – they possess legitimacy but have no power or urgent claims, therefore there is no absolute pressure for management to engage in an active relationship; however, they may choose to do so; (3) Demanding stakeholders – they have an urgent claim but no power or legitimate relationship; this is bothersome but does not warrant more than passing management attention; (4) Dominant stakeholders – they have power and legitimacy and therefore their actions bother management; (5) Dangerous stakeholders – possess power and urgency but have no legitimacy; they are coercive and have the possibility of being violent, hence, 'dangerous'; (6) Dependent stakeholders – possess legitimacy and urgency but have no power, therefore they depend on others for power to carry on their will; and (7) Definitive stakeholders – have power and legitimacy; they are normally part of the organisation's dominant coalition and therefore if their claim(s) is urgent, management gives priority to them.

Stakeholder identification is very crucial for the success of every project (Ballejos & Montagna, 2008). However, studies over the years show that researchers have not reached a consensus on the process and procedures for their identification. This indicates that researchers have not reached a consensus as to the criteria and/or method or approach to be used. It can therefore be said that this is so because of the differences that exist across different projects and that no project is similar to another (Suderland, 2004; Kersner, 1993; Kersner, 2009). However, most of these criteria are drawn from Freeman (1984) and Mitchell et al. (1997). Even though researchers have not come to an agreement about this process, many procedures and theories have been proposed. Some have used stakeholder attributes such as types, roles (Robertson, 2000; Alexander & Robertson, 2004; Ballejos & Montagna, 2008), influence or power (Ballejos & Montagna, 2008) and interest, or stakeholder salience (Mitchell et al., 1997).

This is a strategy used in identification of the various stakeholders associated with a particular company and/or its project. Specifically, it identifies stakeholders by 'mapping' the organisation and/or project to all the individuals and groups of individuals who are connected to the project. Like the stakeholder matrix, stakeholder mapping traces stakeholders with either the interest and/or the power to influence a project. Ballejos and Montagna (2008) grouped stakeholders into four quadrants (stakeholder matrix) according to their power or influence and their interest. The first quadrant (A) consists of stakeholders who have high interest and high power to influence projects. The points of view and goals of these stakeholders need to be understood more, especially their objection to anything in the project. They require much time and attention in order to grasp their needs (Ballejos & Montagna, 2008:288).

The second quadrant (B) consists of stakeholders who have a high level of interest in the project but their influence is very low. However, they can be a valuable source of information when they agree on the projects. In government projects, they are normally the citizens who concern themselves with the project deliverables (Diallo & Thuillier, 2004). The third quadrant (C) consists of those stakeholders who have high power to influence the project but are less interested in the project. These stakeholders therefore do not pay particular attention to the project's details, because they consider that these details do not affect them. However, their needs and requirements need to be met if a project is to be successful. In some circumstances, they are the sources for financing the project and therefore their approval of the project is paramount. In this case, enough information about the project needs to be given to them in order to avoid them being obstacles to it. Such stakeholders include government and government agencies, regulatory bodies and industry regulators.

### 2.1.2 Application of the Theory

#### 2.1.2.1 Stakeholder Theory and Project Management

In every project, there are numerous stakeholders whose activities can affect or be affected by the project and who therefore have interest in the deliverables or output of the project (Haughey, 2008). In other words, stakeholders can impact the output of the project or can affect or be affected by the project (Olander, 2007; Heravi et al. 2015). From a project management perspective, project stakeholders are persons or groups of persons who have a vested interest in the success of the project and the environment within which the project operates (McElroy & Mills, 2000). Project Management Institute (PMI) adopts Freeman's (1984) definition and defines project stakeholders as individuals and organisations that are actively involved in the project or whose interests may be affected as a result of project execution or completion (PMI, 2004). However, the PMI definition is also too broad (Olander, 2007). Mulenburg (2007) describes a stakeholder as anyone who has a stake in the project's outcome and for him 'stake' in this context refers to interest. However, stake and interest are different, and authors have not been able to provide a sound and clear understanding of the terms 'interests' and 'stakes' in their literature. However, stakeholders' interests appear in diverse forms – they have influence or can influence the focal organisation (Freeman, 1984). Stakeholder(s)' interest can either be direct or indirect; depending on the interest they have in the project in question (Mulenburg, 2007; Haughey, 2008). Based on the role of the stakeholders associated with companies as postulated by Freeman (1984), Donaldson and Preston (1995), Rowley and Moldoveanu (2003), and Mulenburg (2007), it can be argued that the success of every project is largely dependent on these stakeholders, and as such the need to manage them well at all levels of the project life cycle is very crucial. Project success and failure can therefore be linked to the perceptions of stakeholders about the value created by the project and the nature of the relationship that exists between the various stakeholders and the project team (Bourne, 2008). Thus, individuals and institutions that have stakes in the projects need to be explicitly managed in order to bring about project success (Missonier&Loufrani-Fedida, 2014). This implies that, if the value being created by the project team is perceived by the project stakeholders as unable to create value or conforming to their satisfaction (Toor & Ogunlana, 2010), then the project will be seen as a failure and vice versa.

These stakeholders can be categorised into two groups – internal and external (Olander, 2007). As the names suggest, internal stakeholders are those stakeholders who are directly involved in the implementation of the project. External stakeholders, on the other hand, are those stakeholders who are not directly involved in the implementation of the project. Mulenburg (2007) shares a similar view but goes further to add a third category including (i) stakeholders within the project organisation: senior management, sponsor, customers, and users. These stakeholders define the need and requirements for the project. They control the traditional project constraints of cost, time and scope. This includes the organisation of senior management, the sponsor and possibly others who by their position may influence the project. They are senior management who approve and provide resources needed for the project. In most projects, they are the end-users of the deliverables of the project or clients of the projects who act on behalf of the end-users; (ii) stakeholders within the project: these include the project manager, core team members, vendors and suppliers, and support staff. This is where the actual players of the project can be found. They are those who work directly in the project, carrying out the actual work of the project. They are very important stakeholders who make the deliverables come to pass; and (iii) stakeholders from outside organisations: regulators, licensing agencies, pressure groups, etc. They are indirectly involved in the project or the performing organisation. They do not participate in the project work. They are, however, relevant to the project's success because of their potential impact and/or influence on the project. In the UK and most developed countries, these stakeholders are as important as those who are directly involved in projects, as there are a lot of regulations and pressure groups which can influence the outcome of projects. This implies that efforts should be made to actively manage important stakeholders (Saebo et al., 2011).

In order to manage these stakeholders to bring about maximum co-operation in the project life cycle, all stakeholders who are directly involved must be part of the goals and objectives setting and must be part of the planning of the project, and this must happen before the commencement of every project (Mulenburg, 2007; Bourne, 2008; Haughey, 2008). Stakeholders often become interested in projects when they actively contribute to goal and objective setting and, if this happens, it can improve business performance. Seeking the views of stakeholders is therefore very crucial to the performance of the project (Haughey, 2008). Further, stakeholders are not always keen to participate in the project but engaging them at all stages of the project life cycle helps to bring about project success. Mulenburg (2007), Bourne (2008) and Haughey (2008) recommend that project managers should ensure that there is a good relationship among all stakeholders at all levels of the project life cycle. World Bank (2013) and Fabian and Amir (2011) revealed that in the case of Nigeria and developing countries in general, the project management's ability to bring on board the various key players is very crucial; this is especially so in government projects, which have a strong stakeholder base. Most stakeholders provide resources for such projects and as such they tend to give guidance and orders as to how such projects should be managed.

#### 2.1.2.2 Stakeholder Theory and Government Project Failure

Stakeholder theory was first used in the private sector context. Nevertheless, many writers have applied it in a government or public context in recent years. For instance, Elias et al. (2002) uses the stakeholder framework to highlight Research and Development (R&D) project management in New Zealand. In the study, they identify 10 stakeholders: special interest group, citizen action, community, media, financial, internal, government, supplier, legal & political and consumer. This approach has also been used by Pan (2005) to highlight why poor analysis of the stakeholders of Singapore's e-procurement system project (E-PRO) was abandoned. Olander (2007) uses stakeholder theory to analyse stakeholder impact in construction project management. In an attempt to understand the dynamics of stakeholders in Norwegian government e-participation initiatives, Sæbø et al. (2011) identify politicians, administrators, consumers, activists and vendors as the stakeholders of these government projects.

### 2.1.3 Importance of the Theory

The stakeholder theory is of significant importance in this research work titled "The Challenges of Good Governance and Project Implementation in Nigeria: A review of the Public Sector Projects in Edo and Delta States" for several reasons:

1. Identifying Key Stakeholders: Stakeholder theory helps in identifying and classifying the various individuals, groups, and organizations that have an interest or stake in the governance and project implementation in Edo and Delta States. This is crucial for understanding the diverse perspectives and interests that can impact these projects.
2. Assessing Stakeholder Influence: By applying stakeholder theory, researchers can assess the level of influence that different stakeholders have on public sector projects. Some stakeholders may have significant power and influence, while others may have less, and understanding this balance is essential for effective governance and project management.
3. Balancing Stakeholder Interests: Public sector projects often involve multiple stakeholders with differing interests and priorities. Stakeholder theory provides a framework for managing and balancing these interests, which is vital for ensuring good governance and successful project implementation.
4. Accountability and Transparency: The theory emphasizes the need for transparency and accountability in decision-making processes, particularly in the public sector. It encourages researchers to examine how well stakeholders are informed and involved in the governance and project implementation processes.
5. Conflict Resolution: In a complex environment like public sector projects, conflicts among stakeholders are common. Stakeholder theory can guide researchers in understanding the sources of conflicts and proposing strategies for resolving them, which is essential for project success and good governance.
6. Public Engagement: Public sector projects often impact the lives of citizens directly or indirectly. Stakeholder theory emphasizes the importance of engaging the public and local communities in decision-making processes and project planning. This ensures that projects align with the needs and aspirations of the people they are meant to serve.
7. Ethical Considerations: Stakeholder theory underscores the ethical dimension of governance and project implementation. Researchers can use this framework to assess whether decisions and actions related to these projects align with ethical principles and values.
8. Long-term Sustainability: Effective stakeholder management can contribute to the long-term sustainability of public sector projects. By considering the interests of various stakeholders, decision-makers can make more informed choices that benefit both current and future generations.

In a nutshell, the stakeholder theory is essential in this research work because it provides a comprehensive framework for understanding, analyzing, and addressing the challenges related to good governance and project implementation in the public sector in Edo and Delta States of Nigeria. It helps ensure that the interests of all relevant parties are considered, which is crucial for achieving successful outcomes and fostering transparency and accountability in public projects.

## III. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### 3.1 The Concept of Governance

Governance is defined as a process of the act or function of exercising (usually legitimate) authority to regulate affairs of men in a given territory, generally referred to as a State. In reality, it can essentially be described as the conduct of business of a policy or society. Due to the perceived orientation of people in favour of a democracy (defined as a government of the people, by the people and for the people), the good and welfare or interest of people is assumed to be the necessary and sufficient condition of governance (not to speak of good governance) and its legitimacy (Arora, 2007). A government is established by a civilised society to decide and direct, on behalf of the people, how things should be done. Therefore, a government in contemporary times is

expected to protect the lives and properties of its citizens as well as foster human, infrastructural, and technological development across all its regions (Efeosa-Temple, 2021). In earlier times, the term governance referred to a broader sense of government, which is not suitable in present times. Governance means more than maintaining law and order. Thus, it can be said to be a participative system in which persons who are chosen to govern on behalf of the people are motivated with a will to give their best, serve, and address pressing challenges, which will result to an improved quality of living, enhanced socio-economic, prospects, and all round development (Tariq, 2020). According to Frey (2008) Governance is the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority to manage a nation's affairs. It encompasses all the modes (good and bad) that societies use to distribute power and administer public resources. Governance is the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's social and economic resources for development. A review of extant literature on the concepts of "governance" and "government" shows that both concepts are used interchangeably to indicate the exercise of authority in an organisation, institution or a nation state. Thus, the term government essentially describes the name given to an entity or a body that exercises authority on behalf of the people and the state. To study government is to study the exercise of authority which indicates that government is closely tied to politics. Put differently, the study of politics is the study of government or "the exercise of authority" which frequently impacts the welfare of the citizens through efficient and effective governance (Efeosa-Temple, 2021; Heywood, 1997). Historically, the concept depicting governance has been in use since the fourteenth century. It was first used in France to connote the seat of government. Since that time its meaning has evolved to capture several facets describing the act or manner of governing, administering an office or exercising power which made it synonymous with government (Tariq, 2020). The concept of governance during late eighties and early nineties, received added importance in the hands of multilateral and bilateral aid-giving agencies that used it as a pre-condition for providing aid particularly to developing countries. This trend was started by the World Bank in 1989 followed by OECD, UNDP and UNESCO.

According to the World Bank, governance is defined as "the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources by government" (World Bank, 1990). Here, governance is described as having three distinct aspects:

a) the form of a political regime (parliamentary or presidential, military or civilian, and authoritarian or democratic (Furio, 2017).
b) the process by which authority is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources, and
c) the capacity of governments to design, formulate, and implement policies and discharge governmental functions (World Bank, 1994).

These terms usually describe conditions in a country as a whole.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) describes governance as the use of political authority and exercise of control in a society in relation to the management of its resources for social and economic development (Keping, 2018).

The OECD describes the key components of governance as follows:

a) Legitimacy of government,
b) Accountability of political and official elements of government,
c) Competence of governments to make policy and deliver services, and
d) Respect for human rights and the rule of law (Srivastava, 2009).

UNESCO in 1997 defined governance as the process whereby citizens' desires and interests are articulated for the positive social and economic development of the entire society and in the light of perceived common good. In this context, governance means more than government. It refers to a political process that includes the whole society and contributes to the making of citizens, active contributors to the social contract that binds them together (Pardeep &Vayunandan, 2010).

Contextually speaking, the concept of governance has been described as an ideal state since ancient times. This notion holds true today as good governance is attributed to a flourishing society. It is also associated with efficient and effective administration in a democratic framework. Thus, administration should be development oriented and committed to the betterment of people (Tariq, 2020). Three contextual uses of governance are discussed.

As the Minimal State, governance redefines the extent and form of public interference and the use of markets and quasi markets to deliver "public" services. The extent of any change is a matter of dispute. For example, in the United Kingdom, the size of government was reduced by privatisation and cuts in the size of the civil service. However, public expenditure remained almost constant as a proportion of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Also, public employment rates reduced slightly in local governments and regulatory agencies replaced ownership as the preferred form of public intervention with the government creating ten major regulatory bodies. (Dalingwater, 2015).

In Corporate Governance, the concept of governance refers to the system by which organisations are directed and controlled. (Cadbury, 1992). Here, the role of governance does not involve running the business (of the company) but focuses on providing overall directions to the business accompanied with overseeing and controlling the executive actions of management and satisfying legitimate expectations for accountability and regulation by the interest beyond the corporate boundaries. All companies need to be governed as well as managed (Tricker, 1984)

Governance is also related to New Public Management (NPM). There are two meanings tied to governance in this context:

a) Managerialism: this occurs when private sector management methods are introduced to the public sector, and
b) New Institutional Economics: this is a system where incentive structures (such as marketing competition) are introduced into public service provision.

Manageralism was the dominant trend in Britain before 1988 after which New Institutional Economics became more prominent. New Public Management and Entrepreneurial Government share a concern with competition, markets, customers and outcomes. Governance calls for one steering, providing impetus to other forces, rather than rowing. The emphasis has thus been placed on enabling rather than providing (Larbi, 1999). Common models of governance that can be adopted by countries include self-governance model, open system model, hierarchy model, and rational goal model (for information on the features of these models see Tariq, 2020).

### 3.2 Project Implementation in Developing Countries of Africa

Developing countries of Africa have been plagued with innumerable socio-economic and political challenges which have led to deepening poverty, frequent civil unrest, poorly executed and inadequate infrastructure, increased unemployment rates, capital flight, anaemic technological growth, etc. Accordingly, the implementation of projects that support development is not only imperative but essential to any hopes of improving the social, political, and economic conditions of the affected regions. These projects include development of roads, dams, urban and rural water supply, schools, factories, hospitals, houses, etc. To ensure that such projects are delivered (as touching the agreed upon quantity, quality, and timeframe, especially within the confines of finite resources available in such countries), project management practice and project monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) must be incorporated (Zuofa& Ochieng, 2012).

According to the Project Management Institute (PMI), project management is described as the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities to meet the project requirements (PMI, 2008). Thus, project management practices are construed as vital for the planning, organizing, managing, and control of activities, which lead to improved performance and increased productivity for projects. Kupakuwana and van der Berg (2005) opined that the use of project management techniques and principles may result in more effective service delivery and product success. Thus, Prachi (2021) defined project management as the art of managing all the aspects of a project from inception to closure using a scientific and structured methodology. Project management can also be seen as the process of organizing and managing resources to achieve set objectives. It includes identifying requirements, establishing clear and achievable objectives, balancing the competing demands from the different stakeholders and ensuring that a commonality of purpose is achieved.

Several studies have evaluated project management practices in developing countries (Eja &Ramegowda, 2020; Amade, 2015; Damoah, 2015; Nzekwe et al., 2015; Wani, 2014; Nguyen, 2007). Project management practice has morphed into a highly advanced process as a direct result of technological advancements and accelerated national and industrial developments experienced in recent times (Cleland & Gareis, 2006). To this end, Collyer and Warren (2009) proposed that the use of early warning signals aimed at managing risks in these developments should be adopted. Consequently, Zuofa and Ochieng (2012) postulated that tools and techniques from project management should be considered among such early warning signals, because project management supports the use of normative approaches for the effective management of projects.

Diallo and Thuillier (2004) identified that the construction of roads, houses, water, and educational facilities, as well as other government core prerogatives, were among the key projects frequently executed in the developing countries of Africa as a result of socio-economic and political challenges, and poor levels of infrastructural development. These projects are mainly funded independently by the home government or through direct or indirect support from external agencies.

Mbatha (1993) developed a framework for project management in Kenya which aimed at fostering project management practice in developmental project activities. However, Muriithi and Crawford (2003) suggested that given that project management practice utilises principles based on economic rationality, the application of such a framework for project management in a developing country like Kenya may become difficult to comprehend; this is because certain values in the Kenyan society may not explicitly support economic rationality.

Nigeria is considered to be an emerging market by the World Bank. However, the country ranks very low in the Human Development Index and remains one of the most corrupt nations in the world (Campbell, 2020; The CSM, 2020). Odusami et al. (2003) argues that despite Nigeria's growing economy and its status as an emerging global power, project management is still in its infancy stage. Their position is supported by an observed absence of formalised project management frameworks or professionally recognised project management regulatory bodies in the country which indicates that project management practice in Nigeria may be constantly tangled with similar challenges faced in other developing countries. In support of this position Zuofa and Ochieng (2012) stated that "project management practice in Nigeria may, to a large extent, be characterised by a lack of top management awareness of project management practice, highly bureaucratized projects because of an over dependence on government for project funding and control as well as corrupt practices that may occur at various project phases". Likewise, Okereke (2012) observed that failures in the execution of several projects in Nigeria may be attributable to the absence of structured project management practice and Lawal (2000) posited that several projects embarked on by the Nigerian government have remained incomplete or abandoned due to poor project management.

The need for the establishment of project management agencies and independent firms rendering monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) services to the Nigerian government cannot be overemphasized. This is expedient as several projects and schemes carried out by the Nigerian government are usually not properly monitored for better and/or desired outcomes and impact. Presently, there exists a paucity of available research documents published by the Nigerian government that clearly shows the impact and learnings derived from projects and schemes previously implemented, thus missing the opportunity to improve on subsequent projects and schemes. MEL also allows for extensive monitoring and evaluation of projects being implemented by the government in order to increase transparency and accountability; this is necessary because one of the major reasons public officers blatantly engage in corrupt practices and indiscriminate mismanagement of resources without being held accountable is lack of data and information available to the public. This position is supported by Muriithi and Crawford (2003) which cited the paucity of information on project management and insufficient literature describing the experiences of project managers as limiting factors for project management practice in most developing countries of Africa. Thus, Zuofa and Ochieng (2012) argued that project management practice in such countries will be characterised by the limited use of lessons learned from past projects which in turn hampers the execution of future projects and affect the effectiveness of project management practice in the concerned countries. Most accounts in literature paint a fairly unified perception of project management practice in developing countries highlighting the fact that inexperienced and incompetent personnel, and inefficient administrative procedures often lead to the poor implementation of project management practice in most developing countries of Africa. In lieu of this, general conclusions regarding the challenges facing existing project management practice can be reached.

Nigeria, often referred to as the Giant of Africa owing to its large population (approximately 216.7 million in 2022) and economy, prides itself as the most populous country in Africa (Statista, 2022; Wiki, 2022b; World Bank, 2009; The Round Table, 1959). The population comprises over 250 diverse ethnic groups presently dispersed among thirty-six states and the nation's federal capital territory. These fragmentations in the numerous ethnic groups create ethno-political divides in addition to divisions caused by religious affiliations and geopolitical zones which results in inequality, marginalisation, and under-representation of some groups despite the position held by the country's federal structure, which places an emphasis on equal representation. Since its independence in 1960, Nigeria has faced serious socio-economic and political challenges since the oil boom over two decades ago, and in an attempt to address these challenges, the nation has sought to overhaul its politics, which resulted in cycles of civilian (1960 – 1966 and 1999 till date) and military government (1966 - 1999) and sustained efforts at institutional change. This period has been externally marked with prolonged periods of economic stagnation (in 2020, Nigeria's economy faced its steepest decline since 1983 as it shrunk by 1.8%), deepening poverty levels (with a poverty rate of 71%, an estimated 90 million persons or 45% of the population will live below the poverty threshold in 2022), capital flight, and a deterioration of its public institutions (World Bank, 2021; CA, 2021; Ugwuja, 2019; Lewis, 2006; Kirk-Greene & Rimmer, 1981). In support of this position Okonjo-Iweala and Osafo-Kwaako (2007) explained that lack of public investments in the past three decades has led to critical infrastructural bottlenecks which has hindered private sector activities.

Thus, this study seeks to contribute towards a sustainable governance path by fostering new thinking and systemic change across government that call for a stronger policy signal to allow Nigeria to achieve rapid development across all regions by incorporating project management and MEL into the implementation of developmental projects.

### 3.3 The Conception of Corruption

The term corruption and its forms which include moral corruption, economic corruption, political and business corruption, and electoral corruption, indisputably, are not strange words and practices in the world today. It has become a norm particularly in developing countries of the world (Alamu, 2016). This has led to proliferations of conceptual explanations of the term in recent years. The English Dictionary defines the term as an "act of changing, or of being changed for the worse; departure from what was good or pure, simple or correct". Rotimi et al. (2013) cited in Alamu (2016) defined it to include bribery, smuggling, fraud, illegal payments, money laundering, drug trafficking, falsification of documents and records, window dressing, false declaration, evasion, under-payment, deceit, forgery, concealment, aiding and abetting of any form to the detriment of another person, community, society or nation. The term has also been defined as the intentional abuse of public office for private gains (Word Bank, 1996).

Corruption, undisputedly remains one of the most pressing problems of the contemporary world as it sabotages good government, essentially distorts adopted public policy, fosters the misuse and misallocation of natural and/or project resources, negatively impacts development and investment in the private sector and hurts the masses, especially economically challenged persons. Corruption has no regard for national, political or ethic divides and represents the main cause of deepening poverty levels in the world by distorting political, economic and social life (Otalor&Eiya, 2013).

According to Otalor et al. (2015) there exists a large number of corruption cases involving political office holders, companies, and individuals operating in the public and private sectors since Nigeria transitioned to democratic rule in 1999. These include the Police Equipment Fund scam, Pension Reform Fund scam, Fuel Subsidy scam, Police Pension Fund scam or several cases of bribery scandal. The inexhaustive list of accused persons include some public servants, chieftains of political parties, chief executive officers of banks, former ministers, principal officers and committee chairmen of the of the National Assembly, principal officers of the State Houses of Assembly and ex-chief executives of some states amongst others. A prominent example of corrupt practices by public office holders in recent times is that of disgraced Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Abba Kyari, who was first indicted in the United States (U.S.) in a case of money laundering involving a high flying, big spending Ramon 'Hushpuppi' Abbas and his group of transnational internet fraudsters, and is currently being investigated (alongside some other police officers) by the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) for their alleged involvement in a 25 kilogrammes cocaine deal. This scandal not only irretrievably tarnishes his image and reputation as well as that of the Nigerian Police Force but also represents a tragedy too for Nigeria that, like its Police Force, has been struggling to get away from a global perception as a corruption-ridden country. The 2021 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) compiled by Transparency International (TI) scored Nigeria a miserable 24 of a possible 100 points which meant a fall from 149th of 180 countries in 2020 to 154th. There is no gainsaying that every Nigerian shares this reputation damage; it has just been worsened by those cases against Kyari (Premium Times, 2022a; The Guardian, 2022). A typical feature of several of these corruption cases is the abuse of public power for personal benefit and/or auxiliary affiliations including political party, class, tribe, friends, family or organization. According to Rose-Ackerman (2010) Smith Jordan asserted that in Nigeria, corruption is embedded in daily instances of patronage that are related to a network of kin, community and other interpersonal associations which can look like common moral behaviour from local perspectives. The protest by some kinsmen of a former governor who was arrested in London in 2010 on corruption charges corroborates Smith's assertion (Otalor et al., 2015).

The first day of January in 2012 heralded a new era in the Nigerian energy sector as a new fuel price regime was introduced by the Federal Government of Nigeria. This move resulted in a massive public outcry (marked by street protestations by majority of Nigerians condemning the high cost of petroleum products, bad governance and corrupt tendencies of government, especially public office holders) that was followed by a nationwide strike led by a coalition of labour and civil society groups. Protestors questioned the propriety of the government's so called subsidy regime and the purported expenditures on the scheme. In response to this public outcry, the lower chambers of the National Assembly ordered a probe of the subsidy regime. The House of Representatives Ad Hoc Committee that investigated the management of subsidy on petrol uncovered a monumental rot in the energy sector and the subsidy scheme. Findings revealed no less than 35 unregistered firms collected allocation and some were reported to have claimed and collected subsidy for products that were never imported. Additionally, certain marketers obtained foreign exchange but never fulfilled petroleum products import duties, and close to ₦1 billion was said to have been paid a staggering 128 times within 24 hours (12th and 13th January, 2009) by the office of the Accountant General of the Federation. The report amongst others recommended that the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and 72 other firms

should refund ₦1.067 trillion belonging to Nigerians which they collected fraudulently from the Nigerian government (Jason, 2012). Moreover, both the print and electronic media are replete with news of the arrest of one ex-state governor or either a former or serving government official. The numerous and seemingly endless cases of abuse of political office levied against companies and persons in both the public and private sectors foster the perception that corruption in Nigeria cannot be stopped, or is difficult to curb, not even with the advent of democracy although democracy is not necessarily a cure for corruption (Rose-Ackerman, 1997). Based on the background data, this study proposes that corruption influences developmental projects failure in Nigeria which in turn depicts poor governance.

### 3.4 Projects Failure in Delta and Edo states

The states considered as case studies for this research are part of the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria thus, fall under the administration of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) which is responsible for the development of the region. However, there are several instances of failed projects cutting across various sectors in the states leaving communities to suffer the effects of underdevelopment.

In March 2023, an NGO, Connected Development (CODE), started a campaign to track and determine the status of abandoned projects in Delta state (Punch, 2023). The projects considered include the construction of a Multipurpose Hall at the School of Marine Technology, Umusam-Ogbe awarded by the NDDC, construction of Modern Civic Centre and Museum awarded by the Delta State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission in Isumpe community among others. The Delta State Support Officer for CODE, Mr Ugochukwu Alexander, observed that that the government had "continued approving new projects on a daily basis but failed to complete the already approved projects" leaving residents to lament the abandoned projects. In February 2021, the advocate for Accountability and Good Governance sued the NDDC over alleged abandonment of projects, which include road contract for Urhokpe Street in Kokori Inland and others in Ethiope East Council (The Guardian, 2021). According to Sahara Reporters (2017) multi-billion naira roads constructed by then Governor Ifeanyi Okowa administration of Delta State were collapsing just 6 months after their commissioning. This report came on the heels of the status report shared by then Delta State Commissioner for Works James Augoye, who had earlier in the week boasted on a Radio program "that the roads were built to last by first class contractors". The commissioner also stated that the state awarded a contract last year for the construction of a new ₦17 billion sewage drainage system connecting DLA, Jesus Saves, and Agric roads in Asaba in an effort to reduce severe flooding. However, despite the construction of this sewage system, the streets of Asaba are regularly flooded following heavy rains, further damaging the roads till date (Sahara Reporters, 2017).

In 2014, the NDDC awarded 10 road projects worth over ₦2 billion in various communities in Edo State, with a stipulated 12-month completion period. In 2019, a reporter for the International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR) visited the project sites to determine their status and observed that "many of the projects were awarded to proxy companies or unregistered entities that did not have the capacity to execute them" thus they all failed or were abandoned and residents continued to experience flooding and the associated dangers of plying waterlogged roads (ICIR, 2020). While completing this research, the researcher experienced first-hand the extremely negative impact of failed/abandoned road projects in Delta and Edo states, as the Benin-Sapele road that normally required less than one (1) hour to move from Benin City to Warri by bus now took as much as 5 hours while commuting via bus from Benin City to Asaba through the Agbor-Benin expressway took 4 hours, instead of the usual 2 hours.

In 2018, after an audit of projects commissioned from 2011 to 2017, the Governor of Edo State, Godwin Obaseki, expressed his disappointment with the poor execution of projects by the Edo State Oil and Gas Producing Areas Development Commission (EDSOPADEC). A representative of the audit firm, Mr. Sylvester Osara, reported to the governor that 46 out of the 117 projects executed by the commission in the Ikpoba-Okha, Orhionmwon and Ovia North-East local government areas of Edo state either failed or were vandalised while 44 other projects were abandoned in the affected areas (Punch, 2018). The governor promised to institute a new board to run the commission and "clean up" the system. With such a stern rebuttal from the governor, one would expect that his administration would fare better than his predecessors however, when speaking at the governorship debate put together by Channels Television and its partners on 20th September 2020, the governorship candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC) for the Edo State election, Osagie Ize-Iyamu stated that the Godwin Obaseki Administration had "nothing to show for monies purportedly allocated to various projects". He cited several failed projects in the agricultural sector including the ₦2 billion naira Sobe Maize project; the 5 billion naira Agenebode rice project; and then the 69 billion naira oil palm project. He stated that the astronomical sums were borrowed from "the Central Bank and the money has been shared with cronies, and no Edo person has benefitted from that money and I can tell you that has also gone down the drain". He continued "So just from agriculture alone, I have named three areas where over 75 billion naira has been collected, not to talk about monies you are collecting from the World Bank and the rest of them" (Channels TV, 2020).

## IV. EMPIRICAL REVIEW

### 4.1 Reasons for Government Project Failure in Nigeria?

According to Eja and Ramegowda (2020) several factors have been identified as the reasons for government project failure in Nigeria. These according to Ogunmola (2015) and Nweze (2016) include:

Unavailability of project resources: the successful implementation of a project requires capital that is sufficient to cover the execution of the project and ensure the desired design and outcomes are delivered within the timeframe agreed. However, this is not the case in Nigeria as Akande et al. (2018) observed that many government projects in Nigeria experience issues (e.g. delays, abandonment) due to financial constraints. This problem is exacerbated by the commonplace practice of returning unexhausted funds to the national coffers at the end of each financial year by government ministries and agencies which leave projects with inadequate financial resources and in turn increases the likelihood of project failure. Additionally, contractors involved in developmental projects also play a major role in project failure as many contractors are not financially capable of executing projects which they are awarded. The corruption-ridden process of awarding contracts by public office holders contribute to this problem as contracts are awarded with bias to personal associations (nepotism), political party affiliations, religious and/or ethnic ties (tribalism) without due diligence on the financial (and/or technical) capability of the potential contractor considered for the project. As contained in the Nigerian Procurement Act, every contractor must have the required capital outlay to execute the project before a bid is submitted. Regardless of this principle, project contracts are awarded to contractors who lack the capacity to execute the required project which leads to project failure (Eja &Ramegowda, 2020). Furthermore, deficiencies in the approved national budgets play a role in government project failure in Nigeria. In support of this position, Ubani and Ononuju (2013) observed that the lethargic or non-disbursement of funds from the government towards the implementation of projects due to corruption, toxic bureaucracy, and little or no allocations for developmental projects has led to a high rate of non-implementation of projects such as roads, buildings and other infrastructural activities in Nigeria. Likewise, Dim (2018) stated that a lot of road construction projects in Nigeria have failed due to insufficient project resources.

Corruption-ridden practices: corrupt practices by public office holders (project leaders) and contractors contribute immensely to government project failure in Nigeria. According to Botchkarev (2015) to successfully implement a project, the project costs must be accurately estimated at the initial (design) phase of the project.

Unfortunately, the projected costs for many government projects in Nigeria are inaccurate which inevitably leads to project delay or abandonment, and ultimately project failure. This problem is caused by many factors including corruption, incompetent project leaders and contractors, lack of project management, etc. Nweze (2016) observed that Nigerian government ministries and agencies responsible for delivering projects are vested with the authority to start and monitor projects under their purview without external evaluation or supervision which creates room for unchecked manipulation of project costs. Such a weak, untransparent system fosters corruption (Gyimah-Boadi, 2002) and contractors exploit this process to produce falsified financial reports to line their coffers while the project suffers. Corrupt practices which include the unethical awarding of contracts to contractors by public officers, deliberate non-performance on awarded contracts by contractors, and embezzlement of funds allocated to projects by both public officers and contractors have led to sub-par delivery of projects, late completion, project abandonment and ultimately, failure of government projects across all states in Nigeria (Sahara Reporters, 2019; Uyo, 2019; Sonuga et al., 2002). Damoah (2015) states that deepening poverty rates across the country has been favourably cited as the primary driver of these corrupt practices by the perpetrators. However, Ijewereme (2015) argues that these practices negatively impact the lives of Nigerians who are denied access to basic amenities such as good roads, stable electricity and clean water. Project failure as a result of corrupt practices also lead to non-functional healthcare systems, supply chain problems, increasing unemployment rates and worsening poverty. Eja and Ramegowda (2020) observed that although several mechanisms have been put in place to curb these practices, the problem still lingers and hampers project implementation in the country.

Incompetence: as stated earlier, incompetent project leaders and contractors contribute to government project failure in Nigeria. Despite Nigeria's status as the most populous African country there exists a paucity of skilled professionals to proffer technical, financial, and policy-based competencies and expertise for project implementation (Okuntade, 2015; Kuroshi& Lawal, 2014). The sustained migration of skilled professionals and young graduates to other countries is a major reason for this problem as fewer competent project managers are available to execute projects thus, projects are left in incompetent hands or awarded to foreign professionals at prohibitive prices. Eja and Ramegowda (2020) argue that despite the commonplace belief that the application of project management significantly improves project success rates, many government projects in Nigeria fail due to poor or non-existent project management practices. This position is supported by findings of a study conducted on project management practice in the Nigerian public sector by Olateju et al. (2011) which showed a lack of core knowledge of project management tools such as Gantt charts among project professionals.

Poor planning: According to Adebayo et al. (2018) project planning, control and monitoring positively contributes to successful project implementation. However, lack of proper planning, estimation, scheduling, and team member selection in the implementation of projects in Nigeria results in government projects failure. This problem is mainly attributed to the lack of competent project professionals in the country. Poor development of project design and objectives by project leaders, inaccurate costs and time projections by contractors, slow disbursement of resources for projects by government agencies, and inefficient regulatory policies combine to hinder project implementation in Nigeria (Dosumu&Aigbavboa, 2017) thus, many government projects are undertaken in a haphazard manner and lack structured progressions which inevitably lead to project failure (Nzekwe et al., 2015).

Political instability and ethno-political conflict: The successful implementation of developmental projects requires a stable political climate. Geo-political instability hampers project implementation as observed in many developing countries of Africa where poor governance and tribal conflicts has led to a recent rise in military coups across the continent. Such illegal and often violent takeover attempts as well as geo-political divisions undermine international co-operation, ignite violence, breed extremism and transnational criminality, and sabotage efforts to build democracies. Worsening poverty and poor economic performance are cited as the major drivers of military interventions and geo-political tensions in many developing countries with Africa having experienced more coups than any other continent. In February 2022, 2 attempts to unseat sitting leaders by the military were reported in Burkina Faso and Guinea Bissau, although the latter was a failed attempt. The year 2021 witnessed a remarkably high number with 4 successful coups in Chad, Mali, Guinea and Sudan and 2 failed takeover attempts in Niger and Sudan. In 2020, a coup was reported in Mali and in 2019, long-serving leader, Omar al-Bashir of Sudan was ousted from the presidency which he himself held after a military coup in 1989. In 2017, one of Africa's longest serving presidents, Robert Mugabe, was removed from office in Zimbabwe after a 37-year rule. According to reports, Africa averaged about 4 coup attempts per year in the 4 decades between 1960 and 2000 with Sudan witnessing a record high 17 attempts while Burkina Faso's history has been marked with the most successful coups, with 8 takeovers and 1 failed attempt. Historically, Burundi, Sierra Leone, and Ghana have experienced 11, 9, and 8 coup attempts respectively. Nigeria, with 8 military coups between 1966 and 1993, has experienced sustained geo-political tensions leading to insurrection, militancy, and domestic terrorism since its transition to democratic rule in 1999 (USIP, 2022; BBC News, 2022; Efeosa-Temple, 2021).

Eja and Ramegowda (2020) observed that despite the transition to a democratic system of government, several government projects in Nigeria such as the Aluminium Smelting Company at Ikot Abasi, in Akwa Ibom State, Ajakuta Iron Company, in Kogi State, Ogidigben Gas Industrial Park in Delta State and Gelegale Seaport in Edo State have failed due to instability in the running of government offices (constant change of public officials who are affiliated to different political parties and agendas). The practice of discontinuing projects started by a preceding government by a succeeding government (usually by refusal to allocate funds or withdrawal of licences for the project under consideration) despite the preparedness of stakeholders to back the project not only hampers project implementation but also negatively affects the project contractor and investors who may have invested significant funds into the project (Okoromadu, 2019; Yusuf, 2018).

Poor Communication: Several government projects have not been implemented in Nigeria as a result of miscommunication and lack of feedback between various stakeholders tied to developmental projects. Poor communication leads to project delays and/or abandonment, which ultimately results in failure. This problem could be between the Federal and State governments, government agencies and private stakeholders enjoined in the project, and government agencies, private stakeholders, and local communities involved in a project (Eja &Ramegowda, 2020; Dim, 2018; Ogundelea &Somefunb, 2008). During the life cycle of many government projects in Nigeria, constant changes are made to the original project design without proper dialogue and consideration by the parties involved and sometimes erroneous and defective project designs and estimations are pushed forward for implementation which negatively impacts project implementation (Dosumu&Aigbavboa, 2017). This practice goes unchecked due to lack of project management and MEL practice in the country. Onungwa, et al. (2017) stated that design changes and errors increase projects' costs and results in delay in the completion of building projects in Nigeria while Anigbogu and Shwarka (2011) observed that up to 50% of all public building projects in Nigeria fail before commencement due to design change related issues.

### 4.2 Major causes of corruption and other social ills in Nigeria?

The ugly and sustained rise of corruption in Nigeria may be attributed to several factors, including: the cultural orientation of the country which sponsors corrupt practices and in turn negatively influences the implementation of government projects. According to Hofstede (1983) there exists six cultural dimensions that explain the rise of corruption, especially in project implementation. These dimensions include: Power Distance; Individualism; Masculinity; Uncertainty Avoidance; Long-Term Orientation and Indulgence. Reports from

several studies on project implementation in developing countries show that these dimensions play a major role in creating an enabling environment for corruption, especially in a country like Nigeria (as well as that of most sub-Saharan African countries) where the hierarchical nature of its society, best described as a master-servant relationship (or godfatherism), advocates that the elite and those in positions of authority are revered; this results in the abuse of power by public office holders (project leaders) who wield significant power to divert project resources for personal and/or allied use (The Hofstede Centre, 2016).

Additionally, the political culture in Nigeria also fosters corruption which directly or indirectly leads to project failure. Nigeria's multi-party democratic setup has given rise to partisan politics which may engender corrupt practices. Nigerians often fail to hold their political leaders accountable in regions where there is a strong attachment to political parties and vice-versa which results in indiscriminate abandonment of commissioned projects or execution of projects outside the stipulated timeframe and/or using outrageous costs (cost and time overrun) without fear of backlash from the citizenry.

Lastly, the corporate structure or management practices within the public sector in Nigeria may also engender corruption that leads to government projects failure. There exists is a high level of bureaucratic and institutional bottlenecks within all levels of the public administration system in Nigeria which allows corruption to thrive and hamper project implementation. Otalor et al. (2015) observed that inefficient regulatory policies adopted by the government foster corrupt practices that negatively impact the economy. These include government subsidies, price controls, multiple exchange rates, low wages in the civil service, natural resources endowments, and other social factors. Such government pervasive regulations in addition to the excessive degree of discretion allowed government officials and willingness by private parties to pay bribes to government officials in order to obtain any rents that these regulations may generate continues to promote corruption in both public and private sectors (for more information on the causes and effects of corruption in developing countries of Africa, see Nweze, 2016; Damoah, 2015; Ijewereme, 2015; Odeh, 2015; Gray & Khan, 2010).

### 4.3 The Links between corruption, poor governance and failure of projects implementation

Corruption is undoubtedly the main cause of bad governance, poor economic growth and development as well as worsening decay in morals and values (in recent times, Nigeria has experienced an unprecedented increase in cybercrimes popularly referred to as "yahoo yahoo" and ritual killings perpetuated by individuals known as "G-Boys, Yahoo Boys, 419, etc.") in Nigeria today. This social menace has eaten deep into the fabric of society across both public and private sectors and has elicited the deformation of the economy through wastage and misallocation of resources, hence the need for strong policy signals and practical mechanisms to effectively curb this problem. Additionally, increased corrupt practices has rendered Nigeria as an unattractive investment hub. To this end, accelerated capital flight can be observed as prominent Nigerian investors are pulling out of the Nigerian market while Nigerian citizens in Diaspora and potential foreign investors are unwilling to make significant investments in the country. According to reports, astronomical sums of Nigerian money are deposited in foreign banks abroad by corrupt public officials while the Nigerian Stock Exchange has remained seriously undercapitalized, thus hindering the process of economic growth and good governance (Odeh, 2015).

Project failure in Nigeria has been linked to slow or derailed socio-economic growth in the communities where such projects were to be implemented (Eja &Ramegowda, 2020). A classic example of this is the failure to kick-start the $20 billion Ogidigben Gas Industrial Park in Delta state of Nigeria which promised to be a game-changer in the oil and gas sector. According to Yusuf (2018) the failure of the proposed project has caused severed socio-economic underdevelopment in Ogidigben community despite the readiness and willingness of stakeholders and investors to financially back the project. The Nigerian energy industry was also affected as establishing a state-of-the-art refinery in the Niger-Delta region would have enhanced oil and gas refining and distribution processes in the country. This would have reduced the frankly ridiculous practice of exporting crude oil to foreign countries for refining before importing the refined petroleum products (considering Nigeria is one of the largest producers of crude oil globally and the largest producer in Africa this corruption-ridden setup continues to blight the economy), created numerus job opportunities, opened up investment opportunities for direct and allied stakeholders, and ultimately boosted the oil and gas sector which is the main driver of Nigeria's economy. However, the failure of the refinery to take off since 2015 has led to worsening production, refining and distribution systems within the region and increased cost of petroleum products. In early 2022, Nigeria faced public embarrassment when news that adulterated Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) popularly known as "petrol or fuel" was imported into the country from Antwerp in Belgium broke. This led to fuel scarcity, hike in price of fuel and emergence of queues in several cities including Abuja and Lagos (Nairametrics, 2022, Premium Times, 2022b). This shows that government project failure hinders socio-economic development that could arise from the timely and proper implementation of developmental projects across Nigeria.

The alarming number of failed government projects in Nigeria has led to a decline in foreign or donor support of projects undertaken at sub-national levels. According to Adeyemo and Amade (2016) development agencies working with the Nigerian government on developmental projects provide essential technical and financial support to facilitate the implementation of such projects, however bad governance and corrupt practices such as embezzlement and misappropriation of funds by public officers, local government councils, chieftains, and other leaders has led to the withdrawal of donor support and welfare packages. Additionally, this problem has led to tougher donor regulations and tighter criteria to meet sponsorship requirements. Recently, foreign development agencies, individual and/or corporate donors, and non-governmental organisations (NGO) have established stringent measures to ensure transparency and accountability of funds provided to implement projects at grassroots levels in Nigeria (Campbell, 2020). Furthermore, it is becoming increasingly difficult for the Nigerian government to secure credit facilities from financial institutions to execute developmental projects. This is due to lack of confidence in the government (and by extension its leaders) as a result of embezzlement scandals, lack of transparency and accountability, and inefficient processes in the execution of government projects across the country. Lastly, project implementation impacts the approval ratings of public officers. Due to the growing appetite for infrastructural development across the country, the failure to execute a tangible project in some communities in Nigeria can cost the incumbent leaders their seats during subsequent elections (Eja &Ramegowda, 2020). On the other hand, successful implementation of developmental projects which is perceived as good governance engenders trust and goodwill between the masses and their leaders.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

To achieve good, outcomes-based, sustainable governance in Nigeria there is a need for new thinking and systemic change across government that call for stronger national policy signals to allow Nigeria address pressing challenges facing project implementation in the country. This study has established corruption has a major cause of project failure which in turn hinders good governance. Thus, developing countries of Africa should establish effective regulatory procedures to curb corruption and other social ills in order to create an environment that fosters socio-economic, technological and human capacity development.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings of this study, the challenges of good governance and project implementation in the Nigerian public sector can be clearly attributed to different factors identified. Hence, the following recommendations are proffered:

1. Stakeholder Participation: Improve consultation and communication with stakeholders.
2. Government Responsiveness: Establish mechanisms to address citizen concerns and allocate resources effectively.
3. Transparency: Increase transparency in project details and budgets.
4. Equity: Implement effective policies and practices to ensure equitable resource allocation.
5. Effectiveness/Efficiency: Assess and reform existing project management practices to improve effectiveness and efficiency.
6. Foster a collaborative culture: Encourage open communication, information sharing, and joint problem-solving within project teams.
7. The government should invest in communication tools and strategies: Utilize technology and communication platforms to facilitate collaboration and information flow effectively.

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