

Implications of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) on Good Governance among African Union (AU) Member States (TETFUND SPONSORED)

Uhumwangho Patrick Nehikhare and Osuinde Jacob Osezua
Department of Political Science, College of Education, Igueben, Nigeria

Abstract: This study investigated the implications of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) on democracy and good governance in Africa. It was predicated on the assumption that good governance can be deliberately pursued and consciously nurtured to foster peace, progress and development among African Union (AU) member states. Three research questions were raised to guide the study which relied on both primary and secondary sources of data. A Focus Group Interview Questionnaire was designed. Eleven (11) countries were purposively and randomly selected for the study which fielded twenty four (24) respondents. The findings revealed the following: member states had good understanding of key indices upon which good governance could be identified, measured and/or benchmarked, that there was a prevalence of many democratic structures and institutions in member states with varying degrees of efficiency and effectiveness in performance and that while the present democratic attainment in member states cannot per se be linked to accession to the APRM, tangential benefits from same cannot be denied. Consequently, the study recommended that the formal structures of the APRM should be revised and a realistic time-frame be set for achieving different stages and processes of the review mechanism. Also, access to press freedom, justice and independence of the judiciary should be deeply entrenched as part of the democratic practice and culture of African states. The active participation of civil society and other non-state actors in the review process was also highlighted. A paradigm shift was also suggested to ensure that processes of the APRM actually change perceptions and build consensus around solutions. Lastly, African leaders were advised to compliment their verbal commitments to democracy and good governance with a strong political will to enforce Country Review Reports. The implementation of these recommendations will redirect the APRM process towards actualizing good governance, sustainable development and regional economic integration of African States.

Keywords: NEPAD, APRM, Good governance and Non-state actors.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Organisation of African Unity (OAU), the precursor of the African Union (AU), has since the post colonial era, struggled for relevance. It had not only failed to promote African unity but Africa itself has become a theatre of unending crises; heightened insecurity, conflicts and wars. These security challenges are further compounded by the nagging problems of food insecurity, poverty, diseases, external dependence, foreign debts and underdevelopment.

Greve (1980) also identified the vulnerability of Africa's economics to changes and fluctuations in the world market, as a result of their prevalent mono-cultural economies. The continued slide of Africa and her population on the Human Development Index is instructive in this regard (UND, 2008).

Again, Africa's lip service and apathy to democratic ideals and ethos are critical factors in its nemesis of governance. The African Union member states participating in NEPAD and by extension the APRM, are ideally expected to comply with its declaration on democracy, political, economic and corporate governance. Kabongo (1986) and Mangu (2002), maintain that democracy is a precondition for the African Renaissance project to which African leaders voluntarily subscribed to in the NEPAD Declaration. Nyong (2007) however, opined that the pervasive lack of democracy has hindered mobilization and effective accountability in Africa premised on the belief that good governance is not only a right, but that the African Peer Review Mechanism is the key to enshrining African States, where equality and development will come to play. This paper therefore examines the notion of good governance as the ultimate goal of NEPAD and the APRM protocols.

APRM in Historical Perspective

In July, 2001 the Heads of States and Government summit held in Lusaka adopted the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). This initiative had five core principles. These include: good governance, peace, stability and security, sound economic policy making and management, effective partnership and domestic ownership and leadership (APRM/MOU, 2003). Hence, the major objective of the African Peer Review Mechanism is to foster the adoption of policies, standards and practices that will lead to the political stability, high economic growth, sustainable development and accelerated regional and economic integration. This is, perhaps, the most innovative aspect of the NEPAD agenda. It is anchored on the latter's pillar of evolving a sustainable policy of good governance which, seemingly, had been the bane of several African countries.

The APRM is defined as a "Self-monitoring tool; voluntarily acceded to" by member states of the African Union (APRM Secretariat, undated). Ayesha (2003/4) sees the APRM process as a mechanism whereby countries voluntarily

“open their books to be examined within a formal structure according to predefined guidelines. The APRM was identified as having the capacity to provide a litmus test for the willingness and/or commitment of African political and business leaders to implement fair and socially equitable governance and business practices. It was hailed by the North and many in Africa as a panacea to the continent's governance woes.

However, as at now only 28 member states of the African Union have signed the APRM Memorandum of Understanding. Hence, according to be reviewed by their peers. Ghana, Rwanda, Kenya, South Africa, Algeria and Benin have been peer reviewed and are currently implementing their National Programme of Actions (NPOA). On the other hand, Nigeria, Burkina Faso and Uganda have recently been peer reviewed and are at different stages of the review mechanism. Lesotho, Mali, Mauritians, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia have all received Country Support Missions (CSMs). Yet, 13 member states of the African Union are yet to formally key into the review process. The review processes are geared towards meaningfully engaging states in the task of facilitating exchange of information and promoting national dialogue on good governance, political and social economic development programmes.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework adopted for this study is structural functionalism. Central to this theory developed by Waltz (1987), cited in Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff (1990), is the view that structures are variables which condition or limit the political behavior of States. The application of structural functionalism to this study is relevant in many ways. Firstly, it emphasizes that if any system; and in this context, the global system is to be adequately maintained, it must have requisite structures, within member states, which must perform indispensable functions to optimum capacity. Secondly, since the bane of many African countries and their tendencies towards fragility are largely a function of weak structures / institutions and poor leadership, structural functionalism presents itself as a veritable tool of analysis for studying contemporary good governance deficiencies in the continent. Thirdly, is the proposition that only a structural transformation of States can positively impact on and alter the anarchical nature and tendencies of the international system. Thus, in the view of structural functionalists, “as structures change, so do interactive patterns among its members as well as the outcomes that such interactions can be expected to produce” (Dougherty & Pfaltzgraff, 1990). In this context, it is the distributions of capabilities amongst the units that form the defining characteristics of the structure of the system. Hence, the utility of this theory lies in the fact that in the event of a systemic failure one can easily identify the structure(s) which are not performing their functions efficiently (Talcott Parsons cited Azelama (2000). Lastly, given the differing levels of development and historical antecedents of member states of the APRM and the fact that participating countries

are expected to start from different baselines and reach their highest levels of performances at different times, structural functionalism presents itself as an appropriate theory for the evaluation of the APRM.

Statement of the Research Problem

Given the obvious governance deficit in many African States; heightened by prebendalism, corruption, weak monocultural economies and dependencies on the North, the study will:

- i. evaluate the level to which the APRM has impacted positively, negatively or transitorily on the concept of good governance among AU member states.
 - provide information for determining the strategic and organizational efficiency or state institutions in translating democratic ideals into demonstrable good governance in Africa.
- ii. attempt to answer the question of whether improvements in the democratic practices of member states of the Africa Union can be linked to the effects of NEPAD and/or the APRM.

Research Questions

The following research questions are formulated to guide the study.

1. What are the thematic areas of the APRM upon which member states of the African Union can be benchmarked?
2. Are there effective democratic norms, structures/institutions within member states of the African Union to drive the pre-set goals of democracy and good governance?
3. What are the general implications of the APRM on its identified thematic objectives; including good governance?

Analytical Assumptions

The study is predicated on the following analytical assumptions. Firstly, that the bane of many African Union member states is the poverty of leadership and by extension, poor governance. Secondly, the general culture of poor governance in Africa, can be reversed through deliberate determination and effort. It involves the mustering of appropriate political will to engineer sustainable change. Thirdly, that the APRM processes allow African countries to start from different baselines and reach their highest levels of performance at different periods.

Objectives of the Study

The study has the following objectives:

1. Assess the APRM capacity to structure quality leadership
2. To evaluate the implication of the APRM on good governance ; in qualitative terms, among Africa

states that have not only subscribed but implemented stages of the Protocol.

Significance of Study

The research is intended to promote studies in International Relations especially within the context of South-South cooperation amongst member states of the African Union. It will also promote open and participatory process implementation and strict compliance with APRM processes by governments, officials, civil society, scholars, politicians, diplomats, the media and Africans generally towards galvanizing the necessary political will to drive the objectives of the APRM to its logical end.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Constitutive Act of the African Union identified the advancement of democratic principles and institutions of popular participation and good governance amongst others, as veritable indices of a good system of government. The APRM principles complied substantially with these goals within the context of its four thematic areas viz

- * democracy and good governance
- * Corporate governance
- * economic management and governance
- * socio-economic development

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Declaration (2003) expressly stated in paragraph 71, that development was impossible in the absence of true democracy, respect for human rights, peace and good government. Hence, one can deduce that African leaders, even before the NEPAD declaration, had a burgeoning commitment to democracy, democratic ideals and good governance as necessary tools for galvanizing development in the continent. Perhaps, this explains not only Ghana's early accession to the APRM but also the effective implementation of the protocol (Ashante, 2014)

Defining democracy is challenging but a definition of the concept accepted by African leaders under NEPAD (and the APRM), is a system of "governance in which people effectively and meaningfully participate in the decision-making processes that affect their lives and livelihood (Ghana Report 2005). In this context, democracy is conceptualized as and consists of good governance. The point must also be made that whereas the national constitution of many (it not all) member states of the African Union, reflect sufficient principles and demonstrable commitment to representative and participatory democracy, establishment of democratic structures and institutions, rule of law etc, there still exist a yawning gap between theory and practices of political governance. This deficit is manifested in the poverty of leadership and the failure of institutions to translate democratic ideals into reality. (Ihonvbere (2000).

Schneider (1999), defined good governance as the exercise of authority or control to manage a country's affairs

and resources. USAID, (2002) defined governance as a Complex System of interactions among structures, traditions, functions (responsibilities) and processes (practices) characterised by three key values of (i) accountability (ii) transparency and (iii) participation. The UNDP defined good governance as striving for "a rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, participation, equality, effectiveness and efficiency accountability and strategic vision in the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority". Annan (1999) posits that "... good governance involves the promoting of the rule of law, tolerance of the minority and opposition groups, transparent political process, independent judiciary, an impartial police force, a military that is subject to civilian control, a free press and vibrant civil society institutions as well as meaningful elections". Common to these definitions is the nexus between good political governance and democracy. The higher the compliance level of a state on the democratic index, the higher its achievement ratio on good governance. Also, the importance of private sector, non-state actors, and civil society organizations to free participation in the political and social-economic forces shaping their national destiny is also highlighted. This is only possible where due respect for human rights and the full expression of same by government is the norm. UNECA (2003) , identified six components of good governance, which are summarized below. A political system that:

- * encourages broad input from all elements of civil society
- * has a credible electoral administrative system and informed/active citizenry
- * has strengthened public sector legislative and administrative institutions
- * show transparency, predictability and accountability in decisions taken by government and public institutions
- * has an effective public sector management and efficient use of public resources and
- * demonstrate strict adherence to the rule of law and protection of personal and civil liberties.

However, critical to the implementation success of the above was the commitment and will of African Heads of States and Governments to agree to a rolling pre-planned cycle of activities that will, in the long run, improve their political and governance regimes.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The study, a descriptive survey research, combined primary and secondary sources of data/ information relevant to the study. A Focused Group Interview and Questionnaire was designed and administered on target respondents who were Desk Officers in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Embassies, Consulates and High Commission of African Union members, located in Abuja; Nigeria Federal Capital Territory (FCT)

Population, Sample and Sampling Technique

The population of the study includes all the 53 member states of the African Union. However, the sample was randomly and purposively drawn from the 28 states that had signed the APRM Memorandum of Understanding till date. These countries were further stratified into three (3) broad categories.

- (a) States that had acceded to the protocol and are at different stages of the APRM processes
- (b) States that have acceded but yet to commence stages of the review processes and
- (c) States that are yet to accede to the Protocol, at the first instance

Using the purposive sampling technique, three countries viz Algeria, Nigeria and South Africa were selected for the study. From the horn of Africa, Algeria was selected because it was the only country in that region that had not only signed the protocol but had gone beyond to receive Country Review Mission and hence a National Programme of Action.

Nigeria’s choice, for the study, was based on her hegemonic influence in the geo-politics of Africa, huge population, rich national endowments, substantial standing military force and her prominence in the international affairs of the continent. According to Mundt & Aborisade (2004) “... learning about Nigeria is also an efficient approach to learning about Africa because Nigeria embodies much of the variety of African political experience within its borders”.

South Africa was selected because she is perhaps the most viable country in Southern Africa and classified by the World Bank to be a “newly industrialised Country”. She is also identified as a middle power in international affairs with strong hegemonic influence over her neighbours (Wikipedia.org/wiki/south Africa). These countries constitute Group (a) countries

From Group (b) countries, Egypt, Sierra Leone Zambia and Angola were randomly selected. While from Group (c) countries Tunisia, Liberia, Democratic Republic of Congo and Swaziland were randomly selected. These random selections represented the North, West, East and Southern Africa respectively only Swaziland could not be used for the study.

Analysis of Data

Three (3) interview questions were fielded in the section A of the Focused Group Interview Questionnaire which measured the intellectual depth and understanding of the APRM panelist. Their responses are presented below.

Research Question 1: What are the thematic areas of the APRM upon which member states of the African Union can be benchmarked?

Table 1: Evaluation of respondents’ knowledge of the APRM and its thematic objectives

S/ N	Questio ns	Group A		Group B		Group C	
		Positi ve	Negati ve	Positi ve	Negat ive	Posit ive	Negat ive
i.	What are your perceptions of the APRM?	09	-	07	02	02	04
ii	What are the thematic areas of the APRM?	09	-	09	-	06	-
	All respondents (24) were well versed in all the four thematic areas of the APRM. These include (a). Democracy/good governance (c). Socio economic development (b). Reviving political, economic and social institutions for (d). Corporate Governance						
iii	What in your opinion is the best thematic feature of the APRM	09	-	09	-	06	-
	Good Governance	Good Governance		Good Governance		Good Governance	

From the table one, sub (i) above, which questioned respondents perception of the APRM above eighteen (18) respondents out of twenty four (24) representing 75% held very positive views of the APRM. Some saw it as an “innovation in south-south cooperation”, “a good step in promoting accountability in governance” and a process “which, if sustained, will fully promote the dividends of democracy and good governance”. However, seven (7) respondents held a contrary negative view. This group variously believed that aspects of the initiative “engendered systemic failures” and must be reviewed to make it “workable”, “acceptable” and “going beyond rhetoric”. Consequently, it was discerned that while the APRM was generally acceptable, its implementation processes and procedures were prone to challenges which hampered its efficiency.

In table 1, sub (ii) above, all twenty four (24) respondents representing 100% showed adequate intellectual depth and knowledge of all the thematic areas of the APRM Protocol.

In table 1, sub (iii) above, all twenty four (24) respondents representing 100% variously identified “good governance” as the best thematic feature of the APRM. The question of good governance was identified as “germane”, “crucial”, “fundamental” and “common” problem faced by all the countries sampled for the study. The respondents’ knowledge and understanding of the APRM is certified adequate and hence fit to participate in this interview/study.

Research Question 2: Are there effective democratic norms, culture, structures/institutions in member states to drive the present goals of democracy and good governance; devoid of influences/manipulations?

Table II: Perception of the extent to which the rule of law, fundamental rights, and democratic institutions are prevalent and free of political influences and manipulations

S/N	Interview statements	Group A	Group B	Group C
1	Is your country's political system participatory /inclusive?	Yes	Yes	Yes
2	Are citizens of your country sufficiently mobilized to perform their civic duties?	Yes	Yes	Yes
3	Are all sectors of the citizenry fully integrated into the political process?	Yes	Yes	Yes
4	Are some classes of people deliberately excluded from the political process?	No	No	No
5	Are your country's electoral laws adequate?	Yes	Yes	Yes
6	Is the electoral commission of your country truly independent?	Yes	Yes	Yes
7	Does the electoral commission of your country have the capacity to conduct free and fair elections?	Yes	Yes...but	Yes...but
8	Is the rule of law entrenched in your country's democratic practice?	Yes	Yes	Yes
9	Do you think citizens are equal before the law in your country?	Yes...relatively	Yes	Yes
10	Do citizens of your country have equal opportunities to justice?	Yes	Yes	Yes

In the table 2, question 1, all twenty four (24) respondents across all three groups, representing 100% agreed that their country's political system was inclusive in practice. However, thirteen (13) respondents representing 54% agreed to varying levels of discrimination based on gender and religion. Discrimination against women in the exercise of voting rights and other forms of political deprivations were identified.

One question 2, all twenty four (24) respondents agreed that citizens of their respective countries were sufficiently mobilized to perform their civic duties. However, about eighteen (18) respondents representing 75% identified "low levels of education" and "apathy" as veritable reasons why mobilization for civic duties were "generally low".

On Question 3, all twenty four (24) respondents representing 100% agreed that all sectors of the citizenry are fully integrated into the political process. They harped on the fact that their national constitutions recognized the principle of Universal Adult Suffrage. However, about 15 respondents representing 60% remarked that despite this constitutional provision, the level of political participation was relatively low. A look at the April, 2015 Nigeria Presidential Elections revealed a low level of political participation, relative to number of registered voters and the national population which is estimated at about 160,000,000.(See the table below):

Table showing level of Political Participation in the April 2015 Presidential Election (Nigeria)

Results for 2015 Presidential Elections	
No. of Valid votes	28,587,564
No. of Rejected votes	844,519
No. of Votes cast	29,432,083
No. of Accredited voters	31,746,490
No. of Registered voters	67,422,005

(Source: http://www.inecnigeria.org/?page_id=31)

On question 4, all twenty four (24) respondents, across all groups, denied that any particular class of citizens is deliberately excluded from the political processes of their countries. However, they all acknowledged some constraints associated with extending voting rights to women, prisoners and citizens in diaspora. Hence, the electoral processes in many African countries cannot be said to be totally inclusive.

On question 5, all twenty four (24) respondents representing 100% agreed that their country's electoral laws were adequate. However, respondents acknowledged that, overtime, areas where the electoral laws were found inadequate and/or obsolete were subjected to reviews and amendments by the Parliament. All respondents denied the chances and possibilities of politically induced amendments of the Electoral Act by a sitting government in their country. This observation gives credence to the failure of President Olusegun Obasanjo (Nigeria), to secure a third term in office. His efforts at amending the Electoral Act were thwarted by the National Assembly. The respondents from Angola, also held the view that President Robert Mugabe, did not run "foul" of the electoral laws of his country by presenting himself for a fourth term in office!

On question 6, all twenty four (24) respondents agreed that the Electoral Commissions in their respective countries were "independent". This was to the extent that they had serially conducted free, fair, peaceful and generally acceptable elections in the past. However, majority of the respondents agreed that they were not "there yet." It was a general consensus that with "increased political education," "International support" and "collaboration among African countries," the democratic culture of free and fair elections will be gradually by sustainably entrenched in Africa.

On question 7, all nine (09) respondents from Group A expressed confidence in the ability of the electoral commission of their countries to conduct free and fair elections. However, Group B and C states identified "poor logistics", "lack of adequate finance", "the tendencies towards one-party dominance" and "general insecurity" as likely impediments to the "efficient" and "independent" discharge of electoral duties by their respective Electoral Commissions. Even the relative successes of the INEC in Nigeria did not mean "all was well". This view was generally held by all twenty four (24) respondents.

On question 8, all twenty four (24) respondents, representing 100%, agreed that the rule of law was a sine qua non to any democratic practice and, by extension, good governance. However, they acknowledged that in their different countries, there were varying levels of “rules of law” and NOT “rule of law” (emphasis mine). This implied that the same rules did not apply to all citizens. For example, while common thieves go to jail, corrupt politicians walk the streets freely in many African States.

On question 9, which flows logically from the above, all twenty four (24) respondents agreed that their citizens do not enjoy equal access to justice. They postulated that the higher the citizens were on the socio-economic ladder, the higher their chances of breaching and escaping the long arm of the law. This view was generally accepted as true in all three groups of countries sampled for the study. The degree of pervasiveness in States however, marked the difference.

Lastly, on question 10, all twenty four (24) respondents agreed that citizens of their respective countries had equal opportunities to justice. They however identified some factors which precluded many from seeking justice, even when their rights are blatantly abused. These factors are listed below:

- i. Lack of civic education
- ii. Poverty
- iii. Corruption and
- iv. Lack of access to legal aid.

On legal aid, while many respondents eulogized the concept, it was a general consensus that these services were not wide enough, in coverage, to reverse the problems associated with access to justice; especially among the low income/poor members of society.

In the light of the foregoing analysis, it is evident that the rights of citizens are not sacrosanct and the democratic institutions of many African states, whether subscribed to the APRM or not, are not free from political influences, manipulations and other structural challenges.

Research Question 3: What are the general implications of the APRM on its thematic objectives; including good governance?

Table III: Showing the implications of the APRM on good governance

s/n	Interview statements	(Group A (09)	Group B (09)	Group C (06)
11	In your candid opinion, do you think the review processes in your country are free from political influence/manipulation?	Yes; but with bottlenecks.	- More government appointees - need for adequate representation by civil society/ stakeholders	
12	Are your country's laws adequate to guide private and public sector conduct?	Yes	Yes	Yes
		-weak institutions -Lack of political will to pursue compliance -Corruption tendencies		

		-Weak/compromised judiciary -Obsolete laws requiring review		
13	What is the level of accountability in your national public service?	Poor	Poor	Poor
14	Are public funds/resources used efficiently for assigned projects?	No - Immunity clause - Corruption - Poor supervision - White elephant projects	No	No
15	Are public anti-graft agencies effective in combating corruption in your country?	No i.EFCC ii.ICPC Though some successes have been recorded, many high profile cases had escaped conviction especially through the rather “dubious” plea bargaining	- - No specific anti-graft agencies but had enough laws in the books to check corruption and other graft tendencies	
16	Are there improvements in your country's transparency/corruption rating?	No significant improvement	No	No
17	In specific terms what do you think your country has gained from its accession to the APRM?	Democracy and good governance	-	-
18	Talking about democracy good government, do you think your country is better off today than it was before going through the review process? If yes, in what area(s)	Yes - Twenty-two years of sustained civil rule Nigeria - increased efficiency of the electoral process - Change in perception of politics as a zero sum game - Opposition party winning elections over an incumbent party in government.	-	-
19	Do you think good governance had been achieved through the APRM in your country?	Not achieved; (but the APRM is a process, still unfolding with high prospects of achieving success; given the right commitment from member states and the political will to implement fully the recommendations of its review panel report.		

Key: Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Nigeria

Independent and Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC). Nigeria

In table III question 11, all nine (09) respondents in Group A agreed that the review processes and Country Reports of their countries were free from political influences and manipulation. They however acknowledged that government's provision of logistics, funding and inclusion rate of government officials, to the detriment of other critical stakeholders like civil society groups and other non-state actors, may have compromised the integrity of the review process.

On question 12, all twenty four (24) respondents agreed that their country's existing laws were adequate and capable of guiding private and public sector conduct. However, eighteen (18) respondents representing 75% variously identified the problem of obsolete laws, compromised judiciary, weak institutions, corruption and lack of political will by governments to ensure compliance as the bane of efficient public and private sector conduct. In some cases, governments and government officials have been implicated in violating their oaths of office, oaths of allegiance and the very Constitution they swore to uphold.

On question 13, all twenty four (24) respondents agreed variously that the level of accountability in their national civil and public services are "poor", "weak", "low" and "nothing to write home about". They faulted the restriction placed on sourcing of public information, corruption and weak financial/ accounting procedures as veritable shortcomings promoting lack of accountability and due diligence in the public service.

On question 14, all twenty four (24) respondents representing 100% across all three groups answered the question in the negative i.e. that public funds and resources are not efficiently utilized for assigned projects. Corruption, the "immunity clause" (in Nigeria), pursuit of "white elephant" projects and "lack of proper supervision" were indicated as reasons for this development.

On question 15, all nine (09) Group A respondents held that public anti-graft agencies were not effective in combating corruption in their respective countries. While the Nigerian respondents agreed to having specialized agencies to fight graft and corruption in public life, they acknowledged the "kid gloves" with which corruption-related cases were fought. They held the view that many high-profile cases of corruption, had escaped conviction through the "dubious plea-bargaining" arrangement. However, Group B and C acknowledged the absence of specialised anti-graft agencies in their countries. Nonetheless, they agreed, variously, that they had enough laws in their books to fight the phenomenon.

On question 16, all twenty four (24) respondents across all three Groups, held that there was no significant improvement in their country's corruption/transparency ratings. Hence, even for States that claim to have enough

laws in their statute books to fight graft, it is doubtful how well these laws have been applied to stem the tide of corruption.

On question 17, while (09) respondents from Group A identified democracy and good governance as specific benefits their countries have gained from acceding to the APRM, Group B and C had nothing to say; owing to their status on the APRM Protocol.

On question 18, Group A, especially Nigeria, harped on sustaining democratic practice (for about 22 years) now, increased openness of the electoral process and efficiency of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), shift in the erstwhile perception of politics from being a "do or die" affair and the peaceful transition of political power from an incumbent political party and President to an opposition party. These developments were identified as fall outs from the APRM's objective of promoting democracy, peace and good governance. Nigeria also brokered peace and contributed significantly to entrenching democracy and good governance in Guinea Bissau, Cote d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso and recently in the Gambia, all in the spirit of sub regional cooperation.

On question 19, all nine (09) respondents in Group A agreed that good governance had not been attained through the APRM per se. Many recognized the APRM as a process still "unfolding, with "high prospects" of success given the "right commitment" and "political will" to implement "fully", not selectively (emphasis mine), the recommendations of the Country Review Reports.

While one cannot doubt that "...there is peer learning; as experiences from one country are being introduced to others, but the pace of learning and the pace of change are slow" (Taylor, 2010). In the light of the above, it is evident that the implications of the APRM on democracy and good governance indices, in many African States, remain very weak. Hence, the APRM, as it is today, has not demonstrated sufficient capability to deliver on this mandate. There are obvious systemic and organisational deficiency in policies, processes, strategies and power of enforcement which need to be re-jigged to promote positive change and sustainable efficiency and effectiveness.

V. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Firstly, the study showed that though many member states of the African Union had the rule of law and fundamental human rights expressly entrenched in their national constitutions, compliance was exercised, most times, in breach. The rule of law was not as sacrosanct as it should be. Also, several democratic institutions/structures were subjected to sundry political influences and manipulations. Some of these institutions like the Electoral Commissions and the Judiciary cannot be truly described as free or independent. Yet, their true independence is a sine qua non to the evolution,

growth and sustainable development of a true culture of democracy and good governance in the long run.

On the implications of the APRM on its thematic objectives; including good governance the study rated the APRM poorly. The study showed further that the utilitarian value of the APRM laid Not (emphasis mine) in its achievements but more in its future potentials. An observation, not too complimentary; given that memorandum of understanding had subsisted for many years

VI. CONCLUSION

The following conclusions can be drawn on the basis of the study:

The study did not show significant changes in the practice of democracy, political, economic and corporate governance between countries that had subscribed to the Protocol and those that did not. In fact, there is no evidence to show that perceived marginal improvements, under these sub-themes, in any member states of the AU, was a direct or indirect consequence of the operationalisation of the APRM Protocol. For example, in a statement jointly signed by the Chairman of the National Steering Committee on the second Peer Review of Nigeria, Senator Ken Nnamani and Senior Fellow, Centre for Democracy and Development, Dr. Jibril Ibrahim, the Country Report described Nigeria as “having a paradox of extreme riches as well as mass poverty”. It noted further that this development had resulted in “... neglect of other sectors, leading to high levels of corruption, poverty, high unemployment rates, poor infrastructure, low growth rate and wide spread insecurity and crime”(Aborisade,2015,APRM 2009b). No doubt, the above remark is a sad commentary on a Nigeria which is one of the foremost signatories of the Protocol. Surely, Nigeria offers a window to peep into the situation in other countries of Africa. Corruption has also been identified in several Country Reports as endemic in both the Private and Public sectors of State economies. Perhaps, the APRM has succeeded more, in exposing Africa’s governance issues/deficiencies than solving them per se. While the enthusiasm generated by APRM has been inspirational, it can indeed live up to its great potentials, if sustained, and Africa will be better for it.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Against the preceding discussion, the following recommendations were made

- * The processes of the APRM should be made more practical and discrete in implementation and expected outcomes
- * Effective and realistic time frames should be set for different stages and processes of the APRM.
- * The secretariat should do more to improve timing schedules and change the present open-ended situations for country review. This is because some of the recommendations may have been overtaken by events at

the time of implementation. To achieve this the structures and institutions mandated to execute the APRM must be strengthened. This agrees with GTZ (2007) who submitted that the institutions are structures “need to be capacitated.

* Again the technocratic nature of the APRM which focuses more on report writing must be changed. The reports must be seen as a means to an end. Hence it must concentrate on how the process changes perceptions on issues and build consensus around solutions.

* Africa states will need to improve on their practice of the rule of law and respect for human, political, social economic from making these rights justiceable, access to justice must be liberalized. And the judiciary empowered to assert its true independence. This remains the plank upon which a strong, virile and sustainable democratic practice and culture of good governance can be laid.

REFERENCES

- [1] Aborisade, S.(2015), ‘APRM Rates Jonathan Administration Low’, Punch, 16th May,2015.
- [2] Anyang 'Nyong'O.P, Ghimazion, A., Lamba, D.,(ed), (2002), *NEPAD:A New Path?* Heinrich Boll Foundation, Nairobi. p.32
- [3] APRM Secretariat, (2004), ‘*Country Self-Assessment for the APRM*’, Midrand, South Africa.
- [4] APRM Secretariat, (2003), ‘*APRM Questionnaire General Guidance*’, Midrand, S/Africa
- [5] APRM Secretariat, (2003), ‘*Guidelines for countries to prepare for and to participate in the Africa Peer Review Mechanism*’, article 36, pp 11-12.
- [6] APRM Secretariat, (2003), ‘*Objectives, Standards and Criteria Indicators for the APRM*’, Midrand, S/Africa.
- [7] APRM Secretariat,(2003), ‘*African Peer Review Organisation Processes*’. Midrand, S/Africa.
- [8] APRM. (2009b) Federal Republic of Nigeria, Country Review Report No 11.
- [9] Asante, S.K.B (2014) The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM): A Decade of Ghana’s Experience being Public Lecture at the South African Institute of International Affairs, Republic of South Africa.
- [10] Azelama,J.U.,(2000), *An Introduction to Comparative Public Administration*, Benin City: Ambik Press. pp.30.
- [11] Black J. & Champion, D.,(1976), ‘*Methods and Issues in Social Science Research*’, New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- [12] Country Review Report (CRR) of the Republic of Ghana (20015_ page 30 para 2.
- [13] Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit(GTZ), (2007) ‘*The APRM Journey So Far*’ prepared for the conference ‘*Africa’s Bold March to Capture the 21st century – The Role of the APRM*’, Accra, Ghana, 8-10 May p. 9
- [14] Dougherty, E.J. & Pfaltzgraff, J.R.(1990), *Contending Theories of International Relations: A Comprehensive Survey*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers Inc. p.24.
- [15] Greve, R (1980) Sub-saharan Political and Economic Structures and the NIEO, in the
- [16] Lozoya, J and Cuadra H. (ed) Africa, the middle East and the New International Economic Order, USA: Pergamon policy Studies pp 24-27.
- [17] Grieco, (1997),*Realist International Theory and the Study of World Politics*. in *New Thinking in International Relations Theory*, Michael D. and G. J. Ikenberry (ed.) Boulder, C.O.; Westview Press
- [18] Holsti, K.J.(1992), *International Politics: A Framework for Analysis*, New Jersey, Prentice Hall Inc. pp.48-66,381-383.

- [19] Ihonvbere, J. (2000). Towards a new constitutionalism in Africa---
- [20] Independent National Electoral Commission, (2015) @http://www.inecnigeria.org/?page_id=31 retrieved on 15th October, 2015.
- [21] Kabongo, I (1986) 'Democracy in Africa: Hopes and Prospects in Roueu, D.(ed) Democracy and Pluralism in Africa, Boulder (1986) p.35
- [22] Mangu A.M. (2007) Assessing the Effectiveness of the APRM and its impact on the promotion of Democracy and good political Governance. African Human Right Law Journal vol. 7 No. 2.
- [23] Mangu, A.M. (2002) The Road to Constitutionalism in Post Colonial Africa. Cited in
- [24] Mangu, A.M. (2007) Assessing the Effectiveness of the APRM and its impact on the Promotion of Democracy and good political governance in African Union Member States being Inaugural Lecture delivered at the University of South Africa (UNISA), Pretoria 28th June.
- [25] MOU of APRM (2003): *NEPAD/ Head of State and Government Implementing Committee Memorandum on the African Peer Review Mechanism*
- [26] Mundt, Robert J. & Aborisade, Oladimeji, (2004), 'Politics in Nigeria' in Almond, G.A., Powell, G. B.(Jnr.), Strom Kaare & Dalton J. Russell (ed), 'Comparative Politics Today: A World View', California, Pearson Education, Inc. pp.690-741. .
- [27] Non State Actors (NSA, 2019); <http://www.escri-net.org>>resoru. Accessed 4/05/2021.
- [28] Ojo, S.O. (2018). "Reinventing Politics and Governance in Nigeria: Matters Miscellaneous". Faculty of Social Sciences, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma. Seminar Series No. 3:23-24
- [29] Taylor B. (2010) 'Reviewing Africa's Peer Review Mechanism: A Seven Country Survey,(Editor)', Canada, Partnership Africa Publishers.
- [30] Umozurike, U.O.(2007), 'Introduction to International Law', Ibadan, Spectrum Books Limited.
- [31] United Nations Development Programme (1997), 'Reconceptualising Governance: A policy paper on Governance and how it relates to Human Development' Retrieved on 15/10/2013.
- [32] United Nations Development Programme (2003), 'Essentials' NO.14 retrieve on 15/10/20(<http://hdrstats.undp.org/countries/countryfactsheets/ctyfsNGA.htm>. – retrieved Dec. 8, 2014.
- [33] United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2008). 'Human Development Report 2007/2008- Country Fact Sheets-Nigeria'
- [34] United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (2003), 'Report' p.9-10.
- [35] United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) Report (2003) p.9-10.
- [36] [Wikipedia.org/wiki/Nigeria_geni](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nigeria_geni) retrieved 10/6/2017.
- [37] [Wikipedia.org/wiki/South Africa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Africa) retrieved 10/06/2017 www.gov.za/South Africa Government retrieved on 10/6/2017.