IMPACT OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS ON NIGERIAN SOCIO-POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

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Introduction

Nigerian history of politics will be incomplete without reference to the struggle and critical role played by civil society organizations in consolidating democracy in Nigeria. Nigeria has spent about fifty seven years since independence struggle with political social and economic failure repeated attempts to sustain and consolidate democratic government have faltered. The existence of repressive and unpopular governments for more than twenty (50) years serve as impetus for the emergence and proliferation of organizations that seek to challenge the legitimacy of policies, programmes and ultimately the existence of these organizations assisted considerably to open up space for the expression of dissenting opinions and what could be regarded as alternative voices, unfortunately this very character and attribute has come to serve as a shield for

Abstract

The study critical assessed the impact of civil society organizations on socio political development in Nigeria; a case study of civil liberty organizations. A vibrant civil society is sine qua non to the sustenance of nation's development. The study adopted secondary and primary methods to data collection of sourced information regarding the subject matter. The data were analyzed based on the opinions of 141 respondents administered questionnaires. The data were presented and analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The researcher found out that civil society organization had impacted significantly on socio-political development of Nigeria. Despite certain factors bedeviling it operational objectives such as political

*i*nterference, poor funding, lack of internal democracy, corruption, a disconnection from rural organization etc. The study concluded that the civil society organizations or civil liberty organizations have sacrificed their existence goals and objectives to the course of the fight towards socio-political development of Nigeria. Far reaching recommendations were made in this study as it involves the successes of civil society organizations in a democratic dispensation in Nigeria. All the scholarly opinion adopted in the study were accordingly acknowledge in the references.

Some opportunistic and self centered civil society organizations. In the light of this, that Civil society organizations are playing prominent role as the mouth piece of the citizens on issues affecting the people and the society at large, especially in the case of polities and ideas that might threaten the peaceful coexistence of the citizens and hinder the socio political development of the society in Nigeria. The key assumptions that connotes legitimacy to the existence of civil society organizations is that they are expected to be knowledge driver, which means that actors, or at least members have requisite skills to investigate problems of society, proffer solutions and develop plans to facilitate buy on or by other segment of society and government.

Statement of the Problem

Nigerian democracy has been epidemic since 1960 when she got her independence; several attempts at ensuring that liberal democratic principles have been put in place were made but still democracy was characterized by violence, corruption, sectionalism, ethnicity, god fatherism among others have not only undermined her democracy but has gone a long way to threaten its very sustenance. Civil society organization exist as the segment of society that is distinct from the state and political society, it consist of civil associations or independent groups formed by people with common interest or aspirations, either publically, economically or culturally, with the view of exercise of power, civil and human right and distribution of resources. It sets the pace of facilitate the democratic process, providing basis for the limitation of state power. It also supplements the role of political participation,

promoting the development of democratic attributes and creating channels other than political parties for the articulation, aggregation and representation of interest. It also monitors state activities and disseminates information which can help the citizens to pursue and defend their interests and values. Despite all these commitments by the civil society organizations there is sluggish politics development in Nigeria.

Research Questions

The research questions are as follows;

i. Do the Civil Society Organizations enhance democratic consolidation in Nigeria?
ii. To what extent do the Civil Society Organizations influence government decisions/policies in Nigeria?

Research Objectives

The major objective of this paper is to assess the impact of the civil society organizations on the Nigerian socio political development. The specific objectives are to;

i. Determine whether Civil Society Organizations enhance democratic consolidation in Nigeria.
ii. Ascertain whether governance is the driving force of Civil Society Organizations in Nigeria.

Literature Review
Conceptual Issues

According to Timothy (2016) civil society organization has become a central theme in contemporary thought about philanthropy and civil activity, yet it is difficult to define, inherently complex and resistant to being categorized or interpreted through a singular theoretical framework.

The term is increasingly used to suggest how public life should function within and between societies, of the same time it provides a way of describing the social action that occurs within the context of voluntary associations or intermediary books.

Non-profit organizations like other groups and institutions in modern societies, operate within and are conditioned by three types of systems; economic, political and social non profits themselves give members the

opportunity to exercise three fundamental civil principles; participatory, engagement, constitutional authority and moral responsibility.

Civil society is the aggregate of non-governmental organizations and institutions that manifest interest and will of citizens. Civil society includes the family and the private sphere, referred to as the third "sector" of society, distinct from government and business. By others civil society is used in the sense of (i) the aggregate of non-governmental organizations and institutions that manifest interests and organization in a society (ii) individual and organizations in a society which are independent of the government.

Sometimes the term civil society is used in the more general sense of the elements such as freedom of speech, an independent judiciary etc. that make up a democratic society.

According to (Collins English Dictionary) especially in the discussion among thinkers of Eastern and central Europe, civil society is seen also as a concept of civil values one widely known representative of this concept is polish former dissident Adam Michnik.

The term civil society goes back to Aristotle's phrase Koinonia Politik occurring in his politics, where it refers to a community; commensurate with the Greek city state (polis) characterized by a shared set of norms and ethos, in which free citizens on an equal footing lived under the rule of law.

The civil society, organization include trade unions, professional association, faith base group, media organizations, community base groups aid other forms of non-governmental organizations.

Civil Society Organizations is comprises of groups or organizations working in the interest of the citizens but operating outside of the governmental and for profit sectors. Organization and institutions that make up civil society include labour unions, non-profit organizations, churches, and other service agencies that provide an important service to society but generally ask for very little in return.

Adam (2015); opines that civil society is sometimes referred to as the civil sector; a term that is used to differentiate it from other sectors that comprises a functioning society such as rotary club, red cross society, NGOs etc.

Theoretical Framework

There are several models or theories used in the analysis of the political system or phenomenon by political scientists. But this study sees more

appropriate the use of Gabriel Almond structural functional model as primarily concerned itself, with the maintenance of order and stability in the society.

Structure functional analysis originated in the biological and mechanical sciences of part of the system analyses. It was adopted and adopted as a model of analysis in sociology and anthropology as it is evident in the work of Emile Durkheim and Talcott parsons. It was developed in political science by Gabriel Almond; S.P. Verma who stress around two main concepts; functions and structures on the basis of which three questions could be posed.

     i.   What basic functions are fulfilled in any given political system?
     ii.   By what structures?
     iii.   Under what conditions?

Functions have been defined by Marton Robert as those observed consequences which make for the adaptation or adjustment of a given S.P Verma notes that while functions deal with consequences involving objectives as well as processes or patterns of the functions. The basic assumption of the structures functions. The basic assumption of the structures functions refers to the arrangement within the system, which performs the function framework is that all system has structures which can be identified and these structures perform functions within the system, necessary for existence. Thus, it is perceived by Gabriel Almond that political systems in existence in various political systems. These functions may be performed by different kinds of political structure and some time even by structures, which are of overtly, recognized as being primarily political. Verma notes that, that there no one correspondence between function and structure.

A particular functions may be fulfilled by a complex combination of structures just as structural arrangement may perform function which might have different kinds of consequences for the structure in the analysis of the political systems, the analyst compare not simply the political structures since these may not actually be the mechanisms through which all the necessary functions are being performed or they may not be performing the functions originally allotted to them.

Structural functional analysis tries to shift the focus of analysis away from the observable institutional political mechanisms to any area where the actual performances of the functional requirement of the system are located

political system are therefore compared in terms of the manner in which structures perform the expected functions in the society. All political systems are therefore perceived to perform two basic functions; input and output functions. All input functions are seen as being performed by nongovernmental organization or system of the society such as pressure group interest groups, schools, family political parties, independent news papers, civil society organizations etc. the output functions are all governmental and it is the governments and their bureaucracies which make rule apply rules and adjudicate between individual and groups on the basic of rules.

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Structural functional analysis tries to shift the focus of analysis away from the observable institutional political mechanisms to any area; functional requirement of the system are located. Political systems are therefore compared in them.

Civil Society and Civil Society Organizations Clarification

There is little agreement on the precise meaning of civil society organizations, though much overlap exists among core conceptual components. Aside this, the types of organizations that make up the list of Civil Society Organizations have also been generating controversies among scholars. This prompted Matsuura (2001) to raise a pertinent questions that should it include political parties and private or corporate sector? It should be noted that it is now a settled matter in the annals of literature that civil society excluded political parties and business organizations (see Cohen and Arato, 1992; Diamond 1992 and 1999; Hirata, 2002; Simai, 2006 and Scholte, 2001). Though, the latter is still shrouded in controversy. Civil society is distinguished from political society (i.e. the party system) on the ground that political parties seek to capture political power and form government while civil society only influence government policies and activities without the intention of forming

the government. On a broader note, while civil society organizations may form alliances with political parties, their primary activity is not party politics. As Diamond (1999) asserts, if they (civil society organizations) become captured by parties, or hegemonic within them, they move their primary focus of activity to political society and lose much of their ability to perform certain unique mediating and democracy building functions. On the other hand, the controversy trialing the inclusion of business organizations became evident in the widely acknowledged illustrative definition posit by the centre for civil society of the London School of economics (CCS of LSE) (2004) that:

Civil society refers to the area of uncovered collective action around shared interest, purposes and values. In theory, its institutional forms are distinct from those of the state, family and market, though in practice, the boundaries between state, civil society, family and market are often complex, blurred and negotiated. Civil society commonly embraces a diversity of spaces, actors and institutional forms, varying in their degree of formality, autonomy and power. Civil societies are often populated by organizations such as registered charities, development non-governmental organizations, community groups, women's organizations, faith based organizations, professional associations, trade unions, and self help groups, social movements, business associations, coalitions and advocacy groups. This definition contradicts the argument of scholars who define civil society as organizations that fall outside government and which are not primarily motivated by profit (See Diamond, 1992; Simai, 2006 and most importantly Scholte)

Another contentious area in the conceptualization of civil society is whether militant groups should be included in the comity of civil society organizations since it is neither political nor profit making. It should be noted that certain characteristics have been identified as prerequisite for an organization to be seen as civil. These include; being voluntary, self generating, rule abiding, and distinct from parochial, economic and political societies. Diamond (1999) argued that since civil society also entails important characteristic like the promotion of pluralism and diversity; thus, civil society excluded narrowly focused, intolerant, ethnic chauvinist groups, hate groups, religious fundamentalist groups, and militia groups that claim, often through violence, that they are the only legitimate representation in society. Although it is commonly assumed that civil society is equivalent to everything that entails

non state activities, civil society does not consist of groups that deny pluralism and diversity even though they are non state actors. In the context of Japan, Hirata (2002) argued that groups such as the Japanese Red Army, or various extreme right wing groups (Uyoku) are not part of civil society, primarily because they either propagate the use of violence to achieve their goals or glorify Japan's violent military past. He (Hirata, 2002) premised his argument on the incidence of 1995, when it was found that the Aum Shinrikyo, for example, tried to destabilize Japanese society through chemical weapons attacks as part of the group's strategy to eventually overthrow the government. The Red Army's main goal was to bring about radical revolution throughout the world, including the destruction of the state of Israel through terrorist attack. Japanese extreme right wing organizations promote wartime militarism and racism through propagated public campaigns. Hirata (2002) concluded that these groups are by no means part of Japanese civil society. On this premise, groups such as Odua peoples' Congress, Boko Haram (though now classified as International terrorist group), Arewa Youth Forum (Militia wing), Egbesu amongst other militant groups in Nigeria cannot be admitted as civil society organizations.

Principles and Characteristics of Civil Society Organizations in Nigeria
The literature suggests that the three principles participatory engagement, constitutional authority and moral responsibility are found in all civil societies regard less of cultural context (Mercy 2012).
Participatory engagement indicates that members of the society;
1. Enjoy access to and governance of resources used for the common good,
2. Are free to be involved in civic action and social change, and
3. Are free to participate in group affiliations that provide a sense of belonging on a community level.

Constitutional authority protects the rights and privileges of citizens in a civil society under the rule of law, citizens and social groups are constitutionally legitimized and empowered to hold economic and political actors accountable for their work as community servants and trustees. Local and national decisions makers, motivated by the common good rather than self

interest, are expected to design and implement public policies that strengthen the vitality and welfare of the community.

Within this social, all community members have moral responsibility to use their civil liberties in ways that so not violate the human rights of others the practice of equity, justice, and reciprocity produces social order and stability.

Civil Society Organization and Social Political and Development in Nigeria: An Overview

Civil service Organizations have played vital roles in the enthronement of democracy as well as, the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria. Many of these groups like Campaign for Democracy (CD), Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), Committee for the Defense of Human Rights (CDHR) and Civil Liberties Organizations (CLO) were instrumental in the restoration of civil rule. It would, be recalled, that between 1993 and 1999, in collaboration with the Nigeria Labour Congress, which is another civil society organization, these groups fought the Nigerian Military to a standstill. They mobilized students and workers for civil disobedience, strikes and protest marches across the country. Many in their ranks were killed and maimed while some lucky few were able to escape into exile Civil Society Index, 2007; only to come back after the 1999 democratic enthronement to continue their struggle for good governance and national development. In light of this, they immensely contributed to the present day national development on the following ground; (Osaghae, 1997).

      a. **Third term agenda:** Ex-president Olusegun Obasanjo's administration (1999-2007) attempted to insert an elongation clause in the constitution to ensure his continuous stay in office. This issue is however controversial due to the fact that the President did not make any categorical statement on his willingness or otherwise to go for another term, but actions and utterances of his aides without rebuff from him indicated his willingness to have an extension (Saliu and Muhammad, 2007). These included the purported circulation of a strange document by Prof. Jerry Gana, the then special adviser on Political Affairs to the President, at the NPRC (National Political Reform Conference); open support for third term by the PDP national chairman, Dr. Ahmadu Ali and other party stalwart; sharp reactions to opponents of third term by the

government; purported attempt to bribe the National Assembly over the issue among others (See Anifowoshe, 2006, Idowu, 2006, Archibong, 2005). The disclosure by the Vice President Atiku Abubakar at an anti third term forum in Abuja eloquently gave insight into what the President's mindset was (Saturday Sun, April 8, 2006). Largely, antagonists of the third term bid cuts across different facets of the Nigerian society. These included prominent political actors including the Vice President, Atiku Abubakar, some members of the PDP, other political parties and civil society organizations (Saliu & Muhammad, 2007) of such protest against the tenure elongation bid by the civil society is the one championed by the National Civil Society Coalition against Third Term (NACATT). Bamidele Aturu, the Steering Committee Chairman of NACATT, challenged President Obasanjo that the "third term agenda is immoral, corrupt, divisive, insulting, an evidence of failure, capable of creating a political uncertainty and, of course, it is unconstitutional "(Vanguard, January 05, 2006). Other civil society organizations that participated in this protest are; People Problems and Solutions (PPS) organization, catholic Bishops conference of Nigeria and individuals like Prof. Wole Soyink, former governor and factional chairman of the Alliance for Democracy (AD), Chief Bisi Akande, Prof. Ropo Sekoni, Dr. Joseph Oladokun, Solomon Olufelo and Adeola Odusanya among other (The PUNCH, March 12, 2006).

The centre for Legislative Studies (CLS), a non-governmental organization, invited stakeholders on March 26, 2006 at the International Press Centre in Ogba, Lagos to analyse the propriety of the agenda in line with the public hearing of the National Assembly Joint Committee on the Review of the 1999 Constitution, this afforded Nigerians another opportunity to X-ray the issue once more. The stakeholders, who came from the media, human rights community and politics, concluded that the third term agenda is an ill wind that will blow nobody any good and that the public hearing on the constitution amendment was a sham (The Punch, April 7, 2006). All these and many more protests from the civil society groups paved way for the senate arm of the National Assembly on

Wednesday May 16, 2006 to threw out, in its entirely, a bill seeking 116 amendments/alterations of the 1999 constitution of Nigeria which sought a three term maximum of 4 years each for the President and the Governors as opposed to a two term of 4 years each prescribed by the constitution.

b. **Fuel Subsidy Removal**

A decision by the Nigerian government to halt a hefty fuel subsidy on January 1, 2012 prompted one of the largest and most coordinated protests in Nigeria's history. The removal of the fuel subsidy with the claim that Government was spending more than 25 percent of her annual budget on the fuel subsidy and disregarded of the negotiations with the labour unions and civil society erupted National Commotion witnessed by immediate increase in the price of fuel, transportation and food. The abrupt nature of the removal of the subsidy which was seen by some as act of insensitivity by a government that is out of touch with the economic struggles of the majority of the Nigerian people was welcomed by tens of thousands of Nigerians with protest against the removal of the subsidy. Even before the removal of the subsidy, activists like Femi Falana, Olisa Agbakoba, Festus Okoye and several other activists, held a meeting with President Jonathan and his aides, which resoundingly rejected the planned removal of fuel subsidy on Saturday 10th December 2011 (Sahara Reporters, 2011).

In Lagos, protesters massed at Ojota for a rally that was convened by the Save Nigeria Group. Musicians, movie starts and leaders of civil society groups all addressed the huge crowd as they denounced the government's attempt at creating hardship for the people. Part of the plan, as explained by Femi Falana, a lawyer, is to occupy the Gani Fawehinmi Park, venue of the protest, until the government backs down on the policy. In Abuja, the Federal Capital, Abdulwaheed Omar, President of the Nigeria Labour Congress, NLC led a rainbow coalition of civil society groups and trade unions to defy official ban on the protest (Adewuyi, 2012). This action on the part of the civil society in the removal of the fuel subsidy was not limited to the shore of the country, the protests by Nigerian in Diaspora were held in major cities around the world such as UK,

Canada, USA, Ghana, South Africa and other countries (Social Development Integrated Centre (SDIC) 2012.

After one week of protests over the removal of fuel subsidy by the federal government, which crippled economic and social activities in Nigeria, the Nigeria Labour Congress, NLC, and Trade Union Congress, TUC, suspended the nationwide strike on Monday 23rd January 2012. The decision of the two main trade unions to suspend the strike came just a few hours after President Goodluck Jonathan announced an immediate reduction in the price of fuel from N1441 to N97 per litre. The labour leaders, however, explained that one of the major gains of the protest was that through the strikes, mass rallies, shutdown, debates and street protests, Nigerians demonstrated clearly that they cannot be taken for granted and that sovereignty belongs to them (Ajaero, 2012).

c. **Freedom of Information Act:** The passage of a freedom of Information law is a victory for Nigerian democracy. A law that stipulated that all institutions spending public funds will have to be open about their operations and expenditure while citizens will have the right to access information about such activities. The F.O.I bill was first submitted to Nigeria's 4th National Assembly in 1999 when the country returned to democracy but did not make much progress. It returned to the legislative chambers in the 5th National Assembly in 2003 and was passed in the first quarter of 2007 by both chambers. However, President Olusegun Obasanjo vetoed it. It returned to both chambers of the 6th National Assembly in 2007 and was finally passed on 24 May 2011. (Sunday Trust, 5th June 2011).

d. **Doctrine of Necessity Clause:** Civil Society Organizations also rose to the occasion to demand for the recognition of the then Vice President Goodluck Jonathan as the Acting President when late President Umaru Musa Yar'adua was indisposed and was away to Saudi Arabia on medical treatment between November 2009 and March 2010. Civil rights organizations such as the save Nigeria Group and Enough is Enough Group actually seized the initiative, mobilized and marched on the National Assembly to demand for a resolution that will give due recognition to vice President as acting president. This led to the adoption of the now popular doctrine of

Necessity by the National Assembly on February 9, 2010 (Ojo, 2011).

In doing so, we have as well maintained the sanctity of our Constitution as the ultimate law of the Land (Oyesina, 2010). It is uncontested that the history of Nigerian democracy with regard to the doctrine cannot be completed without recourse to the input of the Civil Society Organizations.

e. **Electoral Reforms:** One of the unforgettable efforts of the Civil Society Organizations in the consolidation of Nigeria's democracy was the unflinching support they gave to the Justice Uwais Electoral Reform Committee (ERC) inaugurated on August 28, 2007 by Late President Yar'adua. Civil Society Organizations submitted tones of memoranda to the ERC offering suggestions on how Nigeria can break the chain of her electoral debacle. Indeed, significant number of the 22 member ERC was drawn from the civil society groups.

Factors Affecting the Effectiveness of Civic Society Organization in Nigeria.

Civil Society Groups in Nigeria had over the years, been confronted with myriads of problems that have made it difficult for them to function effectively as agent of development. One of such a challenge is the issue of political instability that is characteristic of the Nigerian polity. Political instability and the frequent changes of government with its accompanied policy inconsistencies is a major hindrance to the government and growth of the civil society groups. To shed more light on this, Odeh (2012) identified eight problems and challenges of Civil Society Organization viz;

1. **Disconnection from Rural Organization:** Civil Society Organizations activities are mostly restricted to the federal government level. They lack national spread. Most of these organizations are concentrated in Lagos and a few other state capitals in the country. This makes it difficult for majority of the Nigerian population, which lie in rural areas to appreciate the role they play, imbibe their doctrines and through the process, develop political consciousness and confidence to resist inducement from politician.

2. **Lack of Unity:** Divisions among the Nigerian Civil Society along the ethnic and regional lines have not helped its democratic advocacy. This had led to disunity and disagreement among the Nigerian Civil Society Organization practitioners in term of decision making and unity of purpose. The internal contradictions within the membership make it difficult to agree on common positions during the period of engagement with the state. Such inherent divisiveness weakens efficiency and makes the associations vulnerable to penetration by government agents.

3. **Inadequate Funding:** Most Nigerian prodemocracy Civil Society Organizations are donor dependent and the focus of foreign donors on democracy in Nigeria have expanded from supporting pro-democracy organizations to include the support for democratic institutions like the legislature, judiciary and other democratic institutions. This fiscal factor has also reduced the activities and impacts of some prodemocracy Civil Society Organizations in contemporary Nigeria.

4. **Government Patronage:** Most often, the Nigerian private media, under the umbrella of the Nigerian Union of Journalist (NUJ), rely heavily on government patronage (advertisement) for survival and their independence has been seriously compromised for this reasons. There have also been claims that the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) leadership compromised with government in the recent 2012 strike/mass protests against the withdrawal of subsidy on petroleum products.

5. **Lack of internal democracy:** The lack of internal democracy in most of the Nigerian Civil Society Organizations makes it difficult for members of these organizations to learn democratic values/norms within their organization. Thus, they cannot adequately inculcate this principle to citizens.

6. **Lack of Skills for Civil Society Organizations:** The civil society organizations are also faced with lack of capacity in terms of knowledge, skills and method of advocacy. It is expected that any organizations that wish to engage the state must be well equipped with superior knowledge and articulation of stronger points. This

still absent in many of the civil society organizations in Nigeria (Ojo, 2011).

7. **Corruption and Personal Enrichment:** There have been accusations of corruption, ranging from lack of transparency in the utilization of donor funds to outright embezzlement/conversion of foreign donations to personal use. This tends to weaken the Civil Society Organizations moral right to engage the state. It also hinders people of integrity and value from associating with them. The impact of their advocacy for a change is also limited, because it is stated that he who comes to equity must come with clean hands.

8. **Lack of State Support and Partnership:** The relationship between Civil Society Organizations and the state is largely characterized by suspicion and tension. For the most part, state officials have viewed Civil Society Organizations as competitors of power, influence and legitimacy in the public sphere rather than as development partners.

Research Methodology

The paper adopted a survey research design and data were collected through primary and secondary sources. We administered questionnaires and personally interviews to some respondents to gather information while documentary about the activities of civil society groups were equally consulted in the course of carrying out this study. The paper adopted purposive random sampling techniques and selected 150 respondents across the various civil liberty groups existing in Kaduna state. 100 respondents belong to one civil society organizations or the other while 50 of the respondents are non-member of any civil liberty group. These selected populations were administered with questionnaire and 10 officials of the groups were interviewed to get revelation information about the subject matter, only 141 of the questionnaire were retrieved and analysed in this paper.

The data for this paper were analyzed using percentage table to express respondents' responses from the questionnaires administration. This data were both analysed quantitatively and qualitatively using the percentage means scores.

Data Analysis

At this juncture we presented and analysed the data gotten through the instrumentation of questionnaires distributed to the targeted sample size of the population. We distributed 150 questionnaires to the respondents across the area of study but only 141 of the questionnaires were properly completed and returned while 3 of the questionnaire properly fill and were rejected before our analysis. The analysis is base on the 141 questionnaires that were returned completed and the interviews conducted with the key officials of the civil society organizations in Kaduna and other states.

Table 1

Civil Society Organizations have been a voice for the voiceless majority Nigerians in matters affecting their life.

Responses	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Agree	83	56%
Disagree	46	33%
I don't know	12	11%
Total	141	100

Table 2

Civil Society Organizations have played critical role in the democratization process in Nigeria.

Responses	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Agree	94	67%
Disagree	33	23%
I don't know	14	10%
Total	141	100

Table 3

Civil Society Organizations helped in ensuring free and fair elections in Nigeria.

Responses	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Agree	71	50%
Disagree	54	38%
I don't know	16	12%
Total	141	100%

Table 4

Democracy cannot strive without Civil Society Organizations in Nigeria.

Responses	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Agree	**105**	**74%**
Disagree	**30**	**21%**
I don't know	**6**	**5%**
Total	141	100

Table 5

Civil Society Organizations usually influence public policies in Nigeria.

Responses	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Agree	**83**	**59%**
Disagree	**42**	**30%**
I don't know	**16**	**11%**
Total	141	100

Table 6

Civil Society Organizations influence Government to be responsive to the needs and aspirations of ordinary citizens in Nigeria.

Responses	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Agree	**89**	**63%**
Disagree	**34**	**24%**
I don't know	**18**	**13%**
Total	141	100

Table 7

Civil Society Organizations promote rule of law and due process in governance in Nigeria.

Responses	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Agree	**50**	**35%**
Disagree	**80**	**57%**
I don't know	**11**	**8%**
Total	141	100

Table 8

Civil Society Organizations are the engine room for good governance in Nigeria.

Responses	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Agree	**68**	**48%**
Disagree	**54**	**38%**
I don't know	**19**	**14%**
Total	141	100

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

From the table 1 above it shows that 56% of the respondents agreed that Civil Society Organizations have been a voice for the voiceless majority Nigerians in matters affecting their life and 33% disagreed to the issue while 11% of the respondent said they do not know.

The above table 2 indicates that 67% of the respondents agreed that Civil Society Organizations have played critical role in the democratization process in Nigeria, while 23% of the respondents disagreed to the assertion while 10% said they don't know.

In the table 3 above 50% of the respondent agreed that Civil Society Organizations helped in ensuring free and fair elections in Nigeria, and 38% of the respondents have contrary view, while 12% remained neutral.

Table 4 shows that 74% of the respondents were of opinion that democracy cannot strive without Civil Society Organizations in Nigeria, 21% disagreed with the assertion and 5% said they don't know.

The table 5 above indicates that 59% of the respondents agreed that Civil Society Organizations usually influence public policies in Nigeria, and 30% of the respondents disagreed to the assertion while 11% said they don't know.

The above table 6 depicts that 63% of the respondents were of the view that Civil Society Organizations influence Government to be responsive to the needs and aspirations of ordinary citizens in Nigeria and 24% have contrary view on issue while 13% said they don't know.

The table 7 above shows that 35% of the respondents opted for the assertion that Civil Society Organizations promote rule of law and due process in governance in Nigeria and 57% of the respondents disagreed to the issue, while 8% said they don't know.

Table 8 is the last shows that 48% of the respondents believed that Civil Society Organizations are the engine room for good governance in Nigeria and 38% of the respondents disagreed to the claim, while 14% said they don't know.

Analysis of the Responses Obtained from Questionnaires Distribution

S/N	Details/tables Number	Agreed (%) responses	Disagreed (%) responses	I don't know response %	Total
1	Table 1	83 (56%)	46 (33%)	12 (11%)	100
2	Table 2	94 (67%)	33 (23%)	14 (10%)	100
3	Table 3	71 (50%)	54 (38%)	16 (12%)	100
4	Table 4	105 (74%)	30 (21%)	6 (5%)	100
5	Table 5	83 (59%)	42 (30%)	16 (11%)	100
6	Table 6	89 (63%)	34 (24%)	18 (13%)	100
7	Table 7	50 (35%)	80 (57%)	11 (8%)	100
8	Table 8	68 (48%)	54 (38%)	19 (14%)	100
	Total	**452%**	**264**	**84**	**800**

Percentage for Agreed

$$\frac{452}{800} \times 100 = 56.5\%$$

Percentage for disagreed

$$\frac{264}{800} \times 100 = 33\%$$

Percentage for I don't know

$$\frac{84}{800} \times 100 = 10.5\%$$

Agreed   = 56.5% or 55%
Disagreed   = 33% or 33%
I don't know   = 10.5%
Total   = 100%

Major Findings

From the data analysed above we have the followings findings;

The paper proved that the Civil Society Organizations have played significant role in democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

The paper depicted that Civil Society Organizations are influencing government decisions/policies to a large extent in Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendations of the papers

The impact of civil society organizations as it relate to socio-political development have been a subject of discussion by various scholars. The civil society organizations have sacrificed their existence, goals and objectives to the course of the fight towards socio political development in Nigeria. To this effect, they have made relentless efforts and provoking steps to ensure that the goals and objectives are achieved to a considerable extent.

Recommendations

The followings recommendations were offered;

i. The civil society organizations should not relent in their efforts to instill consolidated democracy and good governance in Nigeria.

ii. The civil society organizations in Nigeria should continue to strive toward ensuring free and fair election in Nigeria; they should not compromise their objectives in that regard.

iii. They should continue to influence government decisions, policies and programmes that can improve the living standard of the citizens, irrespective of any pressure from unpatriotic Nigerians or the government in power.

iv. The government should respect the rights of the registered civil society organizations by allowing them to carry out their lawful acts without undue interference or threatening them; for that is the joy and dividend of democracy for the common people in Nigeria.

v. The civil society organizations should continue to monitor government's activities and flows out necessary information and fearlessly defend the interests and rights of the citizenry.

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