



GOOD GOVERNANCE AND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

In Nigeria, the competing need to effectively regulate human activities using good governance becomes imperative as these activities are having overreaching effects on biodiversity. Biodiversity encompasses all species and genes cohabiting in an ecosystem, while good governance connotes effective regulation of human activities under the rule of law. Nigeria, being a nation rich in biodiversity, has become a subject of discussion in recent times. The possibility of realising biodiversity conservation through good governance was, therefore, the focus of this study. In actualising this, the interconnectedness between good governance and biodiversity was appraised and drawn from an adapted conceptual framework. The poor state of governance, as depicted by the outcomes of the components of good governance, also impacted negatively on the nation's biodiversity conservation efforts as reflected in the ecosystem (planted forests, total forest areas, and wood charcoal production). Some of the challenges are corruption, poverty, illiteracy, and poor enforcement of the laws on the conservation of biodiversity. Measures needed to address this are adhering to the tenets of good governance, law enforcement, provision of social services, and enlightenment campaigns.

Keywords: Biodiversity, Corruption, Conservation, Enforcement, Good Governance, Nigeria

1. INTRODUCTION

Nigeria has some of the richest floral and faunal biodiversity in Africa. As of 2022, Nigeria was home to about 864 species of birds, 119 amphibians, 207 reptiles,

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775 species of fish, 294 mammals, 4 and 378 vascular plants. At the global level, the country was ranked 35 out of 201 countries and 10th in Africa¹. Despite all this, biodiversity has been under a series of threats in Nigeria, especially due to the unabated activities of humans such as farming, fishing, wildlife trafficking and poaching, logging, and mining. Considering that these activities cannot be halted at the expense of conserving biodiversity, the reason being that they provide a substantial number of Nigerians with food, fresh air and water, shelter, medicine, aesthetics, ecotourism opportunities, employment, income, clean and healthy environment in which to live. To the government, it also serves as a source of revenue despite the conventions/legal frameworks formulated to regulate these activities with the view of sustaining biodiversity. These conventions/frameworks include the United Nations (UN) 20 Aichi targets on biological diversity adopted during the 2010 U.N.

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) summit in Nagoya, located in Japan's Aichi prefecture. In connection with the UN's 20 Aichi targets is also the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) formulated by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and domesticated by most countries of the world, including Nigeria, for the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Despite the presence of these conventions and frameworks, biodiversity loss in Nigeria continues to escalate, primarily due to factors such as rapid population growth and urbanization, poverty leading to a lack of alternative livelihoods, inadequate management capacity, insufficient data collection and transparency, conflicts, insecurity, low environmental and biodiversity awareness, international demands for natural resource products, and issues related to corruption and poor governance².

The most critical of these challenges is governance, which was the reason the European Union (EU), having failed to meet its Aichi's targets, launched the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030. A notable takeaway from the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 is the paradigm shift to good governance as a measure of biodiversity conservation³. The new governance framework guarantees shared responsibility and

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1. UNEP "Convention on Biological Diversity" (2024), *available at*: <https://www.cbd.int/convention> (last visited on September 15, 2024)
 2. Interactive Country Fiches, "Biodiversity in Nigeria" (2023), *available at*: <https://dicf.unepgrid.ch/nigeria/biodiversity> (last visited on September 15, 2024)
 3. European Regional Development Fund, "A Policy Brief from the Policy Learning Platform on Environment and Resource Efficiency", (2020), *Available at*: https://www.interreurope.eu/sites/default/files/inline/2018-10-16_PB_on_Food_waste.pdf&ved (last visited on September 18, 2024).

ownership among all pertinent stakeholders in fulfilling the European Union's biodiversity commitments. It promotes the enhancement of administrative capacities, transparency, engagement in dialogue with stakeholders, and participatory governance at various levels. Having regard to the linkages between good governance and biodiversity, this study, therefore, advocates for good governance as one of the measures to addressing biodiversity loss in Nigeria. In achieving this, the nexus between good governance and biodiversity conservation in Nigeria was accentuated. In addition, the bottlenecks in achieving good governance and its effect on biodiversity conservation were explored. The study is divided into five sections.

Section 1 is the introduction. **Section 2** examined the link between good governance and biodiversity conservation drawn from the conceptual framework. **Section 3** discusses the usefulness of good governance in biodiversity conservation in Nigeria. **Section 4** examined the challenges of good governance and its effects on biodiversity conservation in Nigeria. The concluding remarks are contained in the last section.

2. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOOD GOVERNANCE AND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

The term biodiversity, or biological diversity, typically encompasses the comprehensive range of living organisms present in an ecosystem. In essence, it serves as a descriptor for the vast array of life on Earth, encompassing all species within a particular region or ecosystem. This includes a diverse spectrum of living entities such as plants, bacteria, animals, and humans, collectively representing the richness and variety of life forms on our planet.⁵

Biodiversity encompasses three fundamental types, each contributing to the intricate tapestry of life on Earth. Firstly, there is Genetic Diversity, a phenomenon expressed at the genetic level within each member of a species. This means that no two individuals within a species are precisely alike. A striking illustration of this diversity is evident in humans, where substantial variations exist among individuals residing in different geographical locations. Secondly, we encounter Species Diversity observed within a community, reflecting the number and distribution of distinct species. The number of species in a given area fluctuates significantly based on

4. United Nations, "EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030: Bringing Nature Back into our Lives", (2023), *available at*: [www.https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/eu-biodiversity-strategy-2030-bringing-nature-back-our-lives](https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/eu-biodiversity-strategy-2030-bringing-nature-back-our-lives) (last visited on September 18, 2024).

5. National Geographic, "Biodiversity," (2019), *available at*: <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/biodiversity/> (last visited on September 18, 2024).

environmental conditions. Notably, human societies situated near water bodies often exhibit a richer variety of species compared to those in regions distant from such aquatic environments. Lastly, there is Ecological Diversity, which manifests in the distinctions between ecosystems within a specific region. Diverse ecosystems, such as rainforests, deserts, and mangroves, showcase a remarkable array of life forms coexisting within their unique environments. These three facets of biodiversity collectively contribute to the richness and complexity of life across the planet.⁶

Governance, in contrast, is frequently defined by key attributes such as participation, consensus orientation, accountability, transparency, responsiveness, effectiveness, efficiency, equity, inclusiveness, and adherence to the rule of law. The hallmark of good governance lies in its ability to minimize corruption, consider the perspectives of minorities, and ensure that the voices of the most vulnerable members of society are heard and integrated into the decision-making processes.⁶ The outcomes of governance are determined by the following: voice and accountability, openness and transparency, political stability, control of corruption, government effectiveness and efficiency, regulatory quality, rule of law, civil and economic liberty, peoples' participation, and government responsibility and responsiveness⁷ Drawn from above, it is pertinent to note that the overall objective of a government is to guarantee the well-being of its citizens. This objective can be achieved through various means, which are not limited to providing adequate security facilities, ensuring the existence of requisite infrastructure, guaranteeing the medical needs of the citizens, and generating revenues to fuel its budget. Some of the highlighted means through which the well-being of citizens can be guaranteed by their government are also the corresponding duties of the government. It is worth noting that citizens are, by being human, entitled to accessing these duties of the government by their right to life, the principle of all rights.

As outlined in the conceptual framework (see Figure 1), the governance of a Democratic Nation like- Nigeria is shaped by several institutions: the Executive/ Bureaucracy, Legislature, Judiciary, Policymakers and Civil Society. The legislature creates laws, policymakers develop policies to support those laws, and the executive implements them. The judiciary interprets laws to resolve conflicts, while civil society monitors and evaluates legal and policy frameworks. Although each

6. Adapted from G.T. Ijaiya, T.A. Ijaiya, et.al, "Peace and Good Governance in Nigeria: An Analytical Framework for Policymaking"⁵¹ *Journal of Peace, Security, and Development* 55 – 70 (2019).

7. A. Thiessen. "What is Biodiversity", (2022), *available at:* <https://www.worldwildlife.org/pages/what-is-biodiversity> (last visited on September 22, 2024)

institution is independent, its functioning is interdependent, ensuring that no single institution exceeds its authority. This system of checks and balances helps maintain order and accountability in governance, promoting a collaborative approach to oversight.

Institutions significantly impact good governance components such as accountability, transparency, political stability, and corruption control. An authoritarian regime typically restricts public expression and fails to be transparent, which can lead to negative environmental consequences. Conversely, a responsible government committed to good governance principles is less likely to harm the ecosystem. Moreover, the framework suggests a feedback loop where biodiversity gains, such as ecosystem conservation, poverty reduction, and job creation, enhance governance dimensions. This interconnection highlights how effective governance can promote sustainability within ecosystems, ensuring that both environmental health and governance practices reinforce each other positively.

Good governance is intrinsically linked to the people governed, who coexist within a broader ecosystem. This interconnectedness involves various species and organisms working together to sustain life, emphasising the importance of biodiversity.⁷ Recognising the diversity of species, genes, and ecosystems in a region is essential for maintaining ecological balance.

Good governance hinges on meeting basic human needs, which requires considering the interdependence of humans and other species in their environment. The sustenance of humanity relies on effectively utilizing these species, emphasizing the importance of ecological balance in leadership and resource management. Since ancient times, humans have relied on various resources for sustenance. They utilized animals not just for food but also for materials like leather. Additionally, plants were harvested for medicinal herbs, while oceans provided fish, and land was exploited for mining minerals, all crucial for human survival and development.

Biodiversity, though naturally created, needs active maintenance to prevent extinction. Due to climate change and erosion from deforestation, humans have planted new trees to replace those cut down for wood⁸. Polluted waters, primarily from mineral extraction and human activities, are being cleansed to ensure access to clean drinking water. Biodiversity is typically preserved for nature-based tourism,

8. T. Langen. "Do Humans Really Need Other Species" (The Conversation 2022), available at: <https://theconversation.com/do-humans-really-need-other-species-185171> (last visited on September 22, 2024)

9. L. Olagunju. "Fact Check: Does Tree Planting Reduce the Effect of Climate Change," The Cable Newspaper, Sept. 22, 2023), available at: <https://www.thecable.g/fact-check-does-tree-planting-reduce-the-effect-of-climatechange/> amp (last visited on September 22, 2024).

including wildlife watching, scuba diving, and attractions in protected areas¹⁰ The relationship between biodiversity and good governance is crucial for ensuring people's well-being. Good governance aims to create job opportunities and infrastructure and generate revenue. It leverages biodiversity by providing jobs in mining, hunting, agriculture, and tourism. Additionally, various species are essential for building infrastructure, as materials like wood and paper are sourced from trees. Furthermore, the conservation of wildlife boosts revenue through tourism, showcasing how biodiversity not only supports economic development but also enhances governance effectiveness.

Biodiversity significantly contributes to effective governance, highlighting the importance of its preservation. Section 3 examines the feasibility of conserving biodiversity through good governance in Nigeria while acknowledging the challenges that may hinder fully achieving this goal.

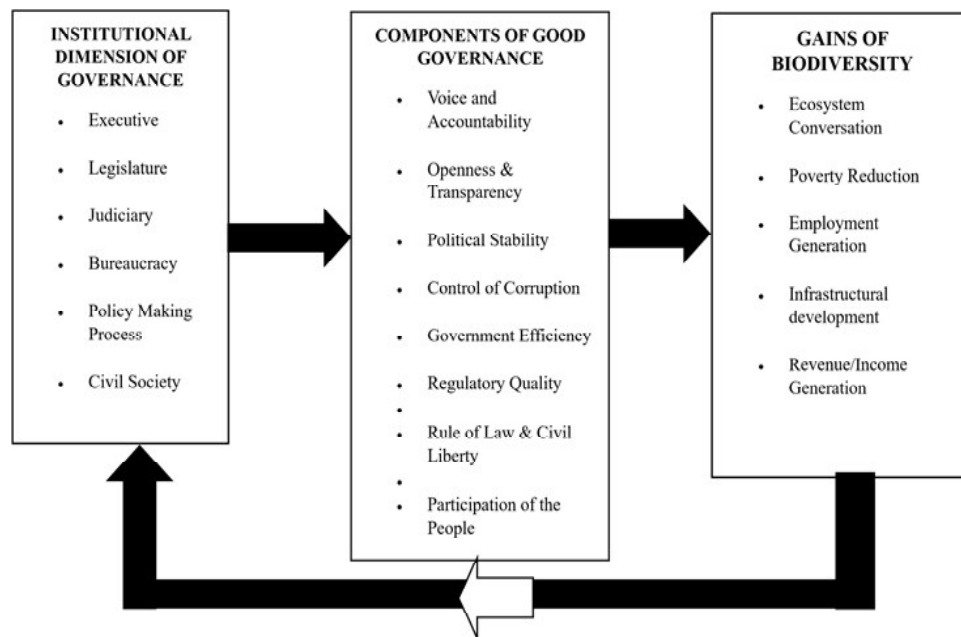


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Relationship between Good Governance and Biodiversity in Nigeria Source: Adapted with modification from Ijaiya et al, 2019.

10. World Tourism Organization of UN, "Biodiversity" (2023), Available at: <<https://www.unwto.org/sustainabledevelopment/biodiversity>> (visited on September 22, 2024)

3. GOOD GOVERNANCE AND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION IN NIGERIA

An underpinning factor of every good government is its legitimacy (*i.e.*, the overarching support it receives from its people). In the absence of legitimacy, a government is fraught with disobedience to its policies and regulations. One of the major banes to effective biodiversity conservation in Nigeria is the failure attributed to the implementation of the extant legal frameworks on biodiversity conservation. It is observed that the throttle associated with Nigerian legislation on biodiversity conservation is also ubiquitous in international legislation. An identifiable cause of the failings of legislation intended to protect biodiversity is its vagueness. Many legislations lack preciseness, and their intendment is unascertainable until a painstaking review by experts is done before the intent of the legislators is discerned. This conundrum brought by the vagueness of legislation can be resolved through the involvement of people in the draft and formulation of legislation meant to protect biodiversity. Through this medium, knowledge of biodiversity regulations and policies will be vastly ingrained in the people it is meant to govern. Since good governance enjoys public support and respect, legislation intended to protect biodiversity will easily amass public followership.

In addition, through good governance, especially when a government is publicly seen to be protecting biodiversity, the people may be spurred to manage biodiversity in sustainable ways. In this sense, the positive effort of the government in protecting biodiversity will spur the people to ensure that considerable measures are taken to secure protection for biodiversity. This is prevalent in many Corporate Social Obligations (CSR) performed by businesses to address and resolve environmental deterioration caused by their operations.¹¹

Furthermore, it has been argued that governance is conducted by three distinct branches of government (Executive, Legislative, and Judicial): bureaucrats, policymakers, and civil society. The legislature is saddled with the responsibility of making the law. The executive, through the bureaucrats, implements the law. The judiciary interprets the law in case there is conflict as to the intendment of the legislators on a particular law. The civil society monitors and evaluates the laws and policies.

As good as these assertions are, the contrary is the case in Nigeria, given the state of governance and biodiversity, especially when compared with other countries.

11. N. Mirzayev, "Corporate Social Responsibility in the Oil and Gas Industry," *Network Intelligence Studies*, (20), 101

For instance, as shown in Table 1, none of the components of governance (control of corruption, government effectiveness, political stability and absence of violence, regulatory quality, rule of law, voice, and accountability) falls within the 90 percent level often referred to as the limit value that guarantees good governance in any country. This, therefore, implies that the state of governance in Nigeria is poor despite the years of Democratic (Civilian) Rules.¹⁶

TABLE 1
The Outcomes of the components of Good Governance in
Nigerian 2013 - 2022

<i>Year</i>	<i>Control of Corruption</i>	<i>Government Effectiveness</i>	<i>Political Stability</i>	<i>Regulatory Quality</i>	<i>Rule of Law</i>	<i>Voice and Accountability and Absence of Violence</i>
2013	9.47	15.63	3.79	26.54	12.6	27.69
2014	7.69	11.53	5.23	23.07	12.5	29.55
2015	12.85	15.23	6.19	20.0	14.76	34.97
2016	13.33	13.42	6.19	17.4	14.76	34.97
2017	12.38	13.80	4.76	16.19	19.04	35.46
2018	12.38	11.90	4.24	16.66	18.57	33.00
2019	12.38	9.52	4.71	14.76	18.57	34.29
2020	13.80	11.90	4.71	13.33	20.95	31.88
2021	14.28	13.33	6.13	15.71	20.95	30.43
2022	<u>14.62</u>	<u>14.15</u>	<u>7.54</u>	<u>12.26</u>	<u>19.81</u>	<u>32.36</u>

Source: World Bank (2022) ¹⁷

The same thing applies to biodiversity in Nigeria, especially when compared to other countries in the world. For instance, as indicated in Table 2, Nigeria was ranked 11th in Africa in biodiversity conservation and about 35th out of 210 countries in the world, with its Global Biodiversity Index at 135.87. On the other hand, the nation's environmental performance index was 28.3 and ranked 162nd out of 180 countries in the world and 41st out of 46 in Africa in 2022.¹⁸

TABLE 2
Global Biodiversity and Environmental Index in selected
African Countries 2022

<i>Country</i>	<i>No. of Bird Species</i>	<i>No. of Amphibian Species</i>	<i>No. of Fish Mammal Species</i>	<i>No. of Reptile Vascular Species</i>	<i>No. of Biodiversity Species</i>	<i>No. of Performance Plants Species</i>	<i>Global Index</i>	<i>Environ- mental Index</i>
Congo DR	1110	227	1528	465	313	8860	214.4	36.9
Tanzania	1074	207	1773	412	346	10100	213.1	34.2
South Africa	762	132	2094	331	421	21250	207.9	37.2
Cameroon	888	226	1064	351	288	6883	172.4	30.2
Kenya	1057	115	1060	424	272	6506	179.7	30.8
Madagascar	248	377	1197	257	444	12000	162.2	28.0
Angola	920	106	988	331	310	6735	160.6	30.5
Guinea	635	80	807	241	648	4000	153.4	31.6
Mozambique	675	90	1780	265	225	5692	144.3	31.7
Uganda	998	62	271	362	174	4932	136.6	35.8
Nigeria	864	119	775	294	207	3378	135.8	28.3
Ethiopia	821	78	173	311	244	6603	128.2	36.8
<u>Sudan</u>	<u>917</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>485</u>	<u>255</u>	<u>279</u>	<u>3137</u>	<u>124.2</u>	<u>27.6</u>

Sources: The Swiftest (2022) ¹²; Yale Centre for Environmental Law & Policy, Yale University & Centre for International Earth Science Information Network, Columbia University (2022) ¹³

This study also depicts the state of environmental health, ecosystem vitality, and climate change in Nigeria. Accordingly, in the world, Nigeria had an index valued at 15.2, 33.3, and 29.6 and ranked 175, 150, and 133, respectively, in 2022. The outcomes of the link between governance and biodiversity in Nigeria, when viewed from the gains or otherwise in the conservation of the ecosystem, poverty reduction, employment generation, infrastructure development, and income generation are also reflected in the performance of some of the key environmental

12. *Suora* note 11

13. Yale Centre for Environmental Law & Policy, Yale University & Centre for International Earth Science Information Network, Columbia University, "Environmental Performance Index 2022 Report: Ranking Country Performance on Sustainability Issues," (2022), available at: <https://epi.yale.edu/epi-results/2022/component/epi> (last visited on September 22, 2024). 211*ibid*.

and socio-economic indicators, as shown in Table 3. For instance, because of the poor state of the nation's governance, the country has witnessed a progressive reduction in the share of agriculture in total employment from 49.3 percent in 2000 to 36.3 percent in 2021. Planted forests had reduced from 249,000ha in 2000 to 216,000ha in 2020. The total forest area had also reduced from 24,893,000ha in 2000 to 21,627,000ha in 2020. Wood charcoal production had increased from 3,085,000 tonnes in 2000 to 4,829,000 tonnes in 2021. All these are clear evidence of diversity loss because of human activities that governance and other factors have failed to be addressed in Nigeria.

TABLE 3
Outcomes of Biodiversity in Nigeria 2014-2021

Year	Share of Poverty	Planted Total Wood Hydro- Total Agriculture in Reduction Forest Forest
	Charcoal Electricity Revenue (in	
	Total (%)	Area ProductionProductionEmployment
	(000 ha)	Millions \$) (000 ha) (1000) (Gwh) (%) tonnes)
2014	37.5	54.6 226 22,607 4281 5,346 10,068,800
2015	37.0	- 224 22443 4371 5118 7224000
2016	36.6	- 223 22280 4445 5582 5680000
2017	36.3	- 221 22117 4519 5933 7084000
2018	35.9	59.9 220 21954 4595 6305 10321000
2019	35.6	- 218 21790 4672 6700 4459000
2020	35.8	- 216 21627 4772 - 3509000
2021	<u>36.3</u>	= = = <u>4829</u> = =

Sources: AfDB, (2021) ¹⁴; AfDB (2022) ¹⁵

4. CHALLENGES TO GOOD GOVERNANCE AND THEIR EFFECTS ON BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION IN NIGERIA

An infamous challenge sabotaging good governance which is prevalent in Nigeria and most other African countries are corruption. Although Nigeria placed 150th in Transparency International's 2022 Report (an improvement on the 2021 Report, which ranked the country 154th), this does not mean that the country's

14. African Development Bank (AfDB), *African Statistical Year Book*, (AfDB, Abidjan 2021).

15. African Development Bank (AfDB), *Indicators on Gender, Poverty, the Environment and Progress Towards the Sustainable Development Goals in African Countries*, (AfDB, Abidjan 2022).

administration is not jeopardized by corruption.¹⁶ Myint¹⁷ espoused corruption as the use of public office for private gain or the use of official position, status, or rank by an office bearer for his/her benefit. Vito Tanzi, on his part, defined corruption as the abuse of public power for private gain.¹⁸ In summation, corruption takes place when a public office is utilised for private purposes. The gain elicited from such use of public office need not yield directly to one's benefit. It will still amount to corruption if such use coveted some gains to one's family, friends, a party, class, and so on. The heinous effect of corruption on good governance needs not to be overstated. Aside from robbing the state development owed to the private gain coveted by a public official, it deprives the citizens of the infrastructure tied to such gain and soils their trust in the government.

The catastrophe meted out by corruption on good governance equally affects biodiversity. Aside from giving room for the exploitation of natural resources, it provides a hotbed for having no regard for biodiversity in the execution of licenses corruptly secured. For example, in 2003, oil blocks were jointly awarded to oil corporations that not only lacked experience, technical expertise, and track records but were also unfamiliar with the Nigerian Oil and Gas business. This resulted in a loss of billions of naira for Nigeria because the signing bonuses given by these corporations were pitiful in comparison to the assessed charge.¹⁹ Discernible from this report is the loss of finance ought to be tapped from natural resources. Consequently, oil spills became the order of the day, with little or no attention paid to remedying its effect on biodiversity. The National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency of Nigeria documented a total of 882 oil spills, totalling 28,003 barrels of oil blasted into the environment.²⁰

16. Kunle Sani, "Nigeria Improves in Corruption Ranking Despite Having Same Point" *Premium Times NG*, May 6, 2023, *available at*: <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/578920-updated-nigeria-improvesincorruption-ranking-despite-having-same-points.html> (last visited on September 22, 2024)
17. U. Myint, "Corruption; Causes, Consequences and Cures," *Asia Pacific Development Journal*. (APDJ) 7(2) 31 – 58, (2000), *available at*: <https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/apdj-7-2-2-Myint.pdf> (last visited on September 22, 2024).
18. V. Tanzi, "Corruption Around the World: Causes, Consequences, Scope and Cures," *International Monetary Fund Working Paper No. 45*. (1998).
19. B. Ezeamalu, "Special Report: How Corruption Fuelled Allocation of Nigeria's Oil Blocks", *Premium times NG*, July 23, 2018, *available at*: <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/254760-special-reportcorruptionfuelled-allocation-nigerias-oil-blocks.html?tc=1> (last visited on September 27, 2024)
20. E. Sain, "Timeline: Half a Century of Oil Spills in Nigeria's Ogoniland", *Aljazeera* (2022), *available at*: <https://www.aljazeera.com/amp/features/2022/12/21/timeline-oil-spills-in-nigerias-ogoniland> (last visited on September 27, 2024)

Oil spills have a significant impact on farmlands and rivers. It was found that crude oil spillage reduces the soil quality of affected lands²¹. Thereby causing loss of farm produce existing on the land or turning fertile land to barren. Furthermore, the frequent oil spilling has an impact on species' habitats in rivers.

However, the harmful impact of corruption pervades all domains of governance, putting biodiversity at risk. It is imperative to note that corruption seldom acts as a catalyst to forestall biodiversity loss²². Attempts by public officials to utilise their office for their own private gain often scare companies away from engaging in certain activities that might lead to biodiversity. For example, it was claimed that Brunel, a Dutch company, avoided doing business in Nigeria due to the country's corruption.²³ Even though corruption protects biodiversity by discouraging oil exploration corporations, effective governance will promote biodiversity protection in the absence of corruption.

Apart from corruption, another phenomenon that exacerbates good governance, which in turn affects biodiversity conservation, is poverty. Punch Newspaper reported that 71 million Nigerians are extremely poor.²⁴ The means of survival mostly available to the poor is to engage in direct use of biodiversity. This is achieved through the consumption of crops, exploiting different species of animals for cash income, and utilising minerals found underground for daily use. Regardless, these activities spur poverty reduction²⁵, which, in turn, leads to biodiversity loss. Constant hunting of a breed of animal might lead to its extinction. More so, uncensored extractions of mineral resources portend a series of threats to biodiversity. Poverty

21. N.O Digha, B. Ambah and E.N Jacob, "The Effects of Crude Oil Spillage on Farm Land in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State". *European Journal for Basic and Applied Sciences*, 4 (1), 76 – 96, (2017), available at: <https://www.idpublications.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Full-Paper-THE-EFFECTS-OF-CRUDEOILSPILLAGE-ON-FARMLAND-IN-GOKANA-LOCAL-GOVERNMENT.pdf> (last visited on September 27, 2024).

22. *Ibid.*

23. U. Idris, "Nigeria: Companies Scared Off" *Deutsche Welle*, (2015), available at: <https://www.google.com/amp/s/amp.dw.com/en/nigeria-corruption-scares-off-companies/a-18710146> (last visited on September 27, 2024).

24. M Ubanagu, "71 million Nigerians Extremely Poor", *Punch Newspaper* August 13, 2023.

25. International Institute for Environment and Development, "Poverty and Biodiversity: Evidence About Nature and the Nature of Evidence" *IIED* (2014), available at: <https://pubs.iied.org/17213IIED> (last visited on September 27, 2024).

was blamed for the continued oil theft in the Delta region.²⁶ The poisoning of water used for sustenance by many villages as a result of this oil theft has resulted in the death of water inhabitants.

Illiteracy, which has plagued Nigerian Society, has also affected good governance. A recent report reveals that only 31 percent of adults are illiterate in Nigeria.²⁷ Regardless of this credible development, considerable amounts of illiterates are still not aware of regulations and policies protecting biodiversity. It, therefore, implies that all regulations, no matter how robust, put in place by the government to protect biodiversity are ineffective (especially as it relates to the few illiterates). Thus, illiteracy becomes a plague to both governance and biodiversity.

Because of the high degree of corruption, the implementation of some biodiversity legislation and initiatives in Nigeria is impeded by weak law enforcement. For example, the Convention on International Trading in Endangered Species (CITES) now prohibits all international trading in African elephant ivory. Despite the absolute ban, ivory seizures in Nigeria totalled 12,211 kg between 2015 and 2017. In January 2021, a raid at Lagos' Apapa port found 2,772 elephant tusks weighing 4,752 kg. In addition, national parks that harbour much of Nigeria's biodiversity are still facing serious threats from poaching.²⁷

In summation, the unabated corruption, as well as poverty, illiteracy, and poor law enforcement, constitute a threat to good governance in Nigeria. In addition, this threat affects the possibility of attaining biodiversity conservation through good governance.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Good governance underscores the purpose of a democratic society. The people voluntarily undertake certain duties and consensually donate some powers to the government so that they can, in turn, enjoy some rights. The right to life, which has been established by courts to include the right to a clean environment and

26. Editorial: "Rivers Youth Blame Increased Oil Theft on Unemployment, Poverty" *Premium Times Newspaper*, February 24, 2013, available at: <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/142693-rivers-youth-blame-increased-oil-theft-on-unemployment-poverty.html> (last visited on September 27, 2024).

27. Q. Suleiman, "International Literacy Day: Adult Illiteracy in Nigeria now 31%", *Premium Times Newspaper*, September 20, 2022, available at: <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/552619-international-literacy-day-adult-illiteracy-in-nigeria-now-31-minister.html> (last visited on September 22, 2024).

access to health care facilities, is included among these rights possessed by the people. Domicile in the surroundings where man cohabitates are other species and genes, some of which are threats to human existence and others whose existence is pivotal to a comfortable living by man.

The aggregate of other species coexisting with man in this sphere is what is termed as biodiversity. Although biodiversity serves numerous advantages to man, such as providing employment and utilising it for man's use, the overreaching activities of man, which are not limited to farming, hunting, and mining, portends a series of threats to biodiversity. The need for good governance, therefore, sets in to strike a balance between human activities and biodiversity conservation. It is observed that biodiversity and good governance share certain interconnectedness, ranging from serving as a source of revenue to the government to relieving the government of its responsibility of employing its populace. The crucial link between good governance and Biodiversity ultimately spurred the assessment of the feasibility of actualising biodiversity conservation through good governance.

The legitimacy enjoyed through good governance and emulation of government techniques are highlighted as means through which good governance can be used to harness biodiversity conservation. In addition, each arm of government was also considered capable of playing a pivotal role in actualising biodiversity conservation.

Notwithstanding that, good governance has been exhibited as capable of realising biodiversity conservation, impediments to good governance, which also affect biodiversity conservation, cannot be overlooked. These impediments highlighted include corruption, poverty, and illiteracy.

Although, these impediments can be remedied through good governance.

To fully harness biodiversity conservation through good governance, it is hereby recommended that:

- People's participation in governance is guaranteed. This encompasses the active participation of the people of Nigeria in the formulation, drafting, and implementation of biodiversity regulations.
- Public opinion and enlightenment, particularly those at the grassroots, on how to prevent biodiversity loss should be called for and given adequate consideration in the drafting, formulation, monitoring, and evaluation of biodiversity regulations and policies.
- In addition, the enforcement agencies through the judiciary should be disposed to enforcing regulations circumscribing biodiversity conservation, and the enforcement of the law should be such that it would deplete corrupt practices in public offices.

- Finally, poverty reduction schemes and illiteracy eradication programmes such as the provision of social services, as well as free access to education through scholarships, should be given thorough consideration to promote regard for biodiversity conservation regulations.