

Accountability: A determinant for strong institutions



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Accountability, in terms of ethics and governance, as defined by Wikipedia, is equated with answerability, blameworthiness, liability, and the expectation of account-giving. This is one concept that is demanded from not just the government, but institutions and individuals alike.

Accountability is made possible by the institutions one has and, accountability plays a major role in establishing strong institutions. If we do not have something that gives us a valued system within our society, our individuals will not be accountable to the institutions set up.

Here in Nigeria, almost every day, somebody in his or her walk of life is blaming the government for this issue or that issue. We call the governor and the president but never really call ourselves. Accountability starts from the individual. We want a society that is organised, orderly and accountable and yet a question we should ask ourselves is if we are accountable.

Something funny I have been seeing in the local government office is a stack of chairs that were donated for use by an entrepreneur. Now these chairs are kept chained and padlocked and when individuals come to get the services from this office, they are made to stand for hours and hours not wanting to “use” the new chairs which were precisely donated for use.

In this case, we cannot look to the Federal Government for misappropriation of funds or transparency when an officer in the local government wants the sun and rain to sit on the chairs provided instead of human beings.

We demand accountability from the institutions we have. These institutions refer to the family, educational sector, civic society, religious bodies, the government, etc. All these institutions need to work together to integrate the individuals, organisations and the nation at large. Accountability is in the hands of everybody, especially parents to children. We know the family is the basic cell of society and from there, we as individuals get the values and principles we live by.

Once the family is threatened, order in society is threatened and this is a fact. Since the family is an institution, there should be a work- life balance for workers, especially parents who need to go to their homes in time to be with their child(ren) and transmit the right values to them.

This work-life balance does not apply to just parents but everybody that is employed in one way or the other. Rest is what fuels the body up for another day of work and if we don't get the necessary amount of rest, output at work will be low. If we are wondering what this has to do with accountability, it is very closely related.