



## Non-Governmental Organization Struggle in Nigerian Democratic System

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### Abstract

Democracy is fundamental to any nation's growth, stability, and harmony. Nigeria's path to democratic governance has been complex and challenging, marked by corruption, military interventions, and persistent political instability. In this context, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have emerged as vital actors in promoting social justice, human rights, and good governance. This study evaluates the role and struggles of NGOs within Nigeria's democratic system, with a specific focus on Ilorin metropolis in Kwara State. Using a survey research design and a sample size of 155 respondents determined through Taro Yamane's formula, the study gathered data from residents to assess perceptions of NGO effectiveness and engagement. Findings reveal that NGOs must proactively engage policymakers and governmental institutions to influence policy formulation and implementation. However, a minority of respondents (10) strongly disagreed with the proposition that increased funding from government and international donors is necessary for NGOs to function effectively. The study recommends enhanced collaboration between NGOs and public officials to strengthen democratic governance through improved communication, policy advocacy, and institutional partnerships.

**Keywords:** *Democracy, NGOs, Governance, Participation*

### 1. Introduction

In any country, the democratic system is essential to growth, stability, and harmony. Nigeria's journey to a democratic government has been challenging and harrowing, characterized by corruption, military interventions, and political instability. In advancing a democratic system, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have become essential for advancing social justice, human rights, and good governance.

It is impossible to overestimate the importance of NGOs' initiatives in advancing Nigeria's democratic system. By encouraging policy reforms, holding public officials responsible, and

increasing citizen participation in political activities, they aid in the democratic process.<sup>1</sup> In a nation where corruption and a lack of transparency have hampered the growth of democracy, their role is crucial.

NGOs in Nigeria currently carry out a wide range of initiatives to fortify the democratic system. These include promoting human rights, advocating for electoral reforms, educating the public, and enhancing citizens' ability to engage in governance processes.<sup>2</sup> For example, groups like the Nigerian Network of NGOs (NNNGO) and the Transition Monitoring Group (TMG) have been essential in promoting electoral integrity and monitoring elections.<sup>3</sup> Their work has helped raise public awareness of the value of free and fair elections and the necessity of open government.

To improve democratic accountability and guarantee that government policies represent the needs and aspirations of the people, NGOs have played a crucial role in promoting communication between citizens and government representatives by providing forums for public debates and consultations on governance-related topics.<sup>4</sup> By establishing civic engagement spaces, NGOs enable citizens to express their concerns and actively engage in the democratic process.

The Nigerian government has occasionally used repressive measures to stifle the activities of NGOs, especially those that expose corruption or criticize government policies.<sup>5</sup> These issues can limit the effectiveness of NGOs in advocating for a democratic system. Despite the positive contributions of NGOs to the democratic system, NGOs in Nigeria face several obstacles, including a hostile regulatory environment, inadequate funding, and government hostility towards dissenting voices.<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, how well NGOs promote democratic governance may depend on their capacity and financial resources. Many organizations struggle with funding, which may limit their ability to carry out impactful ideas and activities<sup>7</sup>. Notwithstanding these challenges, it is critical to develop and adjust to discover novel strategies for engaging people and furthering democratic values.

Non-governmental organizations in Nigeria face a complex and vital battle in the democratic process of the nation. They act as defenders of human rights, promoters of public participation, and watchdogs of public accountability. Nonetheless, NGOs require a supportive environment that permits their unimpeded functioning to carry out their functions efficiently. This study aims to investigate the extent of NGOs' struggles in the Nigerian democratic system, their challenges, and their strategies to navigate these challenges.

## 2. Literature Review

The democratic system describes a form of government where the people hold power and can use it directly or through elected representatives. Principles like responsibility, openness, the rule

<sup>1</sup> Olowu, D. (2020). The Role of Non-Governmental Organization in Promoting Good Governance in Nigeria. *Journal of Public Administration*, 18(3), 44-62.

<sup>2</sup> Ademola, A. (2022). The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations in Nigerian Democracy. *Journal of African Political Economy*, 27(2), 45-60.

<sup>3</sup> Ayo, S. (2020). Monitoring Elections: The Role non-governmental organization in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Politics*, 15(4), 99-115.

<sup>4</sup> Eze, C. (2023). Enhancing Democratic Governance through Civic Engagement. *Nigerian Journal of Social Research*, 12(1), 77-92.

<sup>5</sup> Udo, R. (2021). The Impact of Government Policies on Non-Governmental Organizations in Nigeria. *African Journal of Law and Policy*, 9(2), 65-81.

<sup>6</sup> Nwankwo, A. (2019). Challenges of Non-Governmental Organizations in Nigeria: A Critical Analysis. *African Review of Political Economy*, 16(3), 12-28.

<sup>7</sup> Adebayo, O. (2020). Funding Challenges for Non-Governmental Organizations in Nigeria. *International Journal of Not-for-Profit Law*, 22(3), 56-73.

of law, and respect for human rights define it.<sup>8</sup> Since gaining independence in 1960, Nigeria has had several difficulties with democratic government, such as military takeovers, corruption, and weakened institutions, all of which have made it more challenging to apply democratic principles successfully.<sup>9</sup> An important turning point for Nigeria was the return to civilian government in 1999, which brought a new period of democratic governance that has attempted to solve some of these enduring problems.

Encouraging public involvement in the political process is one of the most critical aspects of the democratic system. Active participation in civic affairs, the ability to compete for public office, and the right to vote are all included in this.<sup>10</sup> Notwithstanding the constitutional provisions that ensure these rights, Nigeria continues to experience widespread voter apathy, disenfranchisement, and election malpractice, all of which threaten the democratic process.<sup>11</sup> In this regard, encouraging democratic values, keeping an eye on governmental operations, and enabling citizens to engage in active governance are all made possible by non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Since Nigeria's democratic system promotes equality, social justice, and the defense of fundamental liberties, its significance cannot be emphasized. Good administration helps the nation grow overall and improves the socioeconomic circumstances of its citizens.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, democratic governance lessens the possibility of corruption and power abuse by encouraging public officials to be responsive and accountable.<sup>13</sup> Thus, Nigeria's political stability and long-term prosperity depend on forming a strong democratic framework.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) function as a conduit between the public and the government, operating independently of the market and the state. By supporting policy changes, holding governments responsible, and encouraging civic involvement, NGOs play a critical role in advancing democratic governance.<sup>14</sup>

The foundation of NGOs is the notion of collective action, in which people band together to work for shared goals and ideals. They frequently discuss topics like public health, environmental preservation, human rights, and social justice. NGOs support the growth of a thriving civil society, which is necessary for democracy to function.

NGOs have been crucial to the struggle for democracy and human rights in Nigeria, especially during times of military administration. They have played a significant role in promoting the preservation of civil freedoms and galvanizing public support for democratic reforms.<sup>15</sup> As a result,

<sup>8</sup> Bello, M. (2018). *Advocacy and civil society organizations: Role in promoting democratic governance in Nigeria*. Journal of Political Science and Public Affairs, 6(4), 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.4172/2332-0761.1000310>

<sup>9</sup> Orji, E. (2020). *Non-governmental organizations and social justice in Nigeria*. Journal of African Studies, 22(3), 112-128. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23322039.2020.1741750>

<sup>10</sup> Garuba, H. (2020). *Non-governmental organization and governance in Nigeria: A critical analysis*. African Journal of Political Science, 5(2), 56-70. <https://doi.org/10.5897/ajps2020.0364>

<sup>11</sup> Sulaiman, L. (2020). *The effectiveness of non-governmental organizations in Nigeria: A focus on governance and accountability*. Journal of Public Policy, 12(3), 11-28. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41280-020-00143-4>

<sup>12</sup> Akinwunmi, O., & Alabi, O. (2018). *Non-governmental organizations as drivers of democratic governance in Nigeria: A review of literature*. African Journal of Political Science, 12(3), 50-67. <https://doi.org/10.4314/ajps.v12i3.5>

<sup>13</sup> Uche, U. (2021). *Non-governmental organizations and the struggle for democracy in Nigeria: Lessons learned and prospects*. African Journal of Political Science, 14(2), 101-115. <https://doi.org/10.4314/ajps.v14i2.8>

<sup>14</sup> Oluwasola, O. (2020). *Civic participation and the role of non-governmental organizations in Nigeria*. Journal of Community Development, 9(2), 33-48. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11628-020-00405-3>

<sup>15</sup> Abubakar, A. (2020). *Non-governmental organizations and democratic governance in Nigeria: A historical perspective*. Journal of African Political Economy & Development, 5(1), 65-82. <https://doi.org/10.14660/japed.2020.01.005>

NGOs are now essential political actors, influencing public opinion on governance issues and policy decisions.

NGOs' autonomy, dedication to the public interest, and voluntary nature define them. They usually function without interference from the government and are founded by people with similar objectives and passions.<sup>16</sup> Because of their independence, NGOs can speak up for underrepresented groups, oppose governmental policies, and promote social change.

NGOs do a wide range of complex tasks. To affect public policy and advance democratic governance, they participate in lobbying and advocacy activities.<sup>17</sup> NGOs also help communities by offering services and assistance. They frequently deal with environmental preservation, health care, education, and poverty reduction.<sup>18</sup> NGOs improve community well-being and give people the tools they need to control their lives by providing necessary services.

The Theory of Participatory Governance has emerged as a significant framework within the broader discourse on democratic governance, emphasizing the struggle of citizen engagement and the importance of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in shaping public policy and promoting democratic principles. This theory finds its roots in the political thought of philosophers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who advocated for popular sovereignty, wherein the government's authority is derived from the people's will.<sup>19</sup>

The modern articulation of this theory has evolved from the experiences of various social movements in the late 20th century, particularly in the context of democratization in developing countries. In many nations, civil society has emerged as a vital force for democratic change, advocating for political accountability, social justice, and human rights.<sup>20</sup> The rise of NGOs has been instrumental in pushing back against authoritarianism and fostering participatory governance, which emphasizes collaboration between the government and non-governmental organization actors.<sup>21</sup>

The Theory of Participatory Governance is employed in various contexts to analyze how citizen involvement and non-governmental organizations influence policy-making processes. This theory is particularly relevant in Nigeria, as NGOs have played a crucial role in promoting democratic governance since the return to civilian rule in 1999. The theory posits that for democracy to be effective, citizens must actively participate in governance processes, and NGOs serve as a conduit for facilitating this engagement.<sup>22</sup>

NGOs in Nigeria have been involved in numerous initiatives to promote democratic principles, including voter education, advocacy for electoral reforms, and monitoring government actions. By organizing citizens and providing them with the tools and knowledge necessary to engage in political

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<sup>16</sup> Opara, M. (2019). *The challenges of non-governmental organizations in Nigeria: A governance perspective*. *Journal of Governance and Public Policy*, 11(2), 71-89. <https://doi.org/10.20940/jgpp.2019.v11i2.5>

<sup>17</sup> Iroha, E. (2020). *Challenges facing non-governmental organizations in Nigeria: Implications for governance*. *African Journal of Public Administration*, 9(2), 12-28. <https://doi.org/10.5897/ajpa2020.0298>.

<sup>18</sup> Chukwu, E. (2021). *Examining the role of non-governmental in Nigeria's democratic governance: Opportunities and challenges*. *Nigerian Journal of Political Science*, 14(2), 40-58. <https://doi.org/10.4314/njps.v14i2.3>

<sup>19</sup> Otu, A. (2019). *Advancing democratic governance through non-governmental organizations in Nigeria*. *International Journal of Governance*, 9(4), 55-70. <https://doi.org/10.4018/IJG.2019100104>.

<sup>20</sup> Awofeso, O. (2019). *Civic engagement and the role of non-governmental organization in democratic governance in Nigeria*. *Nigerian Journal of Sociology*, 15(1), 75-90. <https://doi.org/10.1111/njs.12103>

<sup>21</sup> Ibidapo, S. (2019). *Non-governmental organization and democratic governance in Nigeria: The missing link*. *Journal of Politics and Governance*, 10(3), 66-81. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3369820>

<sup>22</sup> Wogu, E. (2019). *Non-governmental organization and democratic governance: The Nigerian experience*. *Journal of Political Science Research*, 13(1), 24-39. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244019836582>

processes, these organizations empower individuals to assert their rights and hold government officials accountable.<sup>23</sup> For instance, organizations like the Non-Governmental Organization Coalition for Electoral Reform have mobilized citizens to demand transparency and integrity in electoral processes, reinforcing the tenets of participatory governance.

Applying the Theory of Participatory Governance offers a robust framework for understanding the role of NGOs in promoting democratic governance in Nigeria. This theory provides insights into how these organizations enhance citizen participation, promote accountability, and contribute to the overall health of democracy.

At the core of the Theory of Participatory Governance is the belief that citizen participation is essential for effective governance. NGOs in Nigeria work tirelessly to engage citizens in the political process, ensuring that they are informed about their rights and the importance of their participation. For instance, grassroots organizations conduct workshops and community meetings to educate citizens about electoral processes, increasing voter turnout, and political engagement<sup>24</sup>. This engagement is critical in a country where political apathy has historically hindered democratic development.

Moreover, NGOs advocate for marginalized groups, ensuring their voices are heard in the decision-making process. By focusing on inclusivity, these organizations help to create a more representative democracy, which is a fundamental aspect of the participatory governance theory.<sup>25</sup> The work of organizations such as Women Advocates Research and Documentation Centre highlights how NGOs can empower women and other marginalized communities to participate actively in governance.

The theory also underscores the role of NGOs in promoting government accountability. In Nigeria, where corruption and mismanagement are pervasive issues, civil society is critical in holding government officials accountable for their actions.<sup>26</sup> NGOs can expose corrupt practices through monitoring and advocacy efforts and demand transparency in government operations.

For example, Transparency International Nigeria has been at the forefront of efforts to combat corruption, conducting research and advocating for policy changes that enhance accountability.<sup>27</sup> By utilizing tools such as public awareness campaigns and strategic litigation, these organizations reinforce the principle that citizens have a right to demand accountability from their leaders. This aligns closely with the participatory governance theory, which posits that an engaged citizenry is essential for ensuring that government officials are answerable to the public.

The Theory of Participatory Governance also emphasizes fostering democratic norms and values within society. NGOs contribute to this by promoting civic education and encouraging public discourse on governance issues.<sup>28</sup> By creating spaces for dialogue and discussion, these organizations

<sup>23</sup> Akintoye, O. (2021). *Non-governmental organization and the challenges of democratic governance in Nigeria*. *Journal of Governance and Political Studies*, 7(2), 44-61. <https://doi.org/10.4314/jgps.v7i2.4>

<sup>24</sup> Alabi, A. (2020). *Democratic governance and the role of non-governmental organization in Nigeria: A qualitative analysis*. *Journal of Law, Policy and Globalization*, 102, 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.7176/jlpg/102-01>

<sup>25</sup> Osundare, O. (2021). *Non-governmental organizations in Nigeria: A force for good governance*. *Journal of Political Science and Policy Analysis*, 14(2), 20-35. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244021994785>

<sup>26</sup> Bassey, E. (2019). *Non-governmental organizations and their impact on democracy in Nigeria: An empirical study*. *International Journal of Politics and Good Governance*, 10(1), 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3371231>.

<sup>27</sup> James, O. (2021). *Non-governmental organizations and their role in electoral processes in Nigeria*. *Journal of African Studies*, 24(2), 45-62. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23322039.2021.1903342>

<sup>28</sup> Adejumbi, S. (2019). *The role of non-governmental organization in the democratization process in Nigeria*. *Nigerian Journal of Political Science*, 14(1), 12-29. <https://doi.org/10.4314/njps.v14i1.2>

help cultivate a culture of democracy that values participation, inclusivity, and respect for human rights.

In Nigeria, NGOs have initiated various programs to educate citizens about their democratic rights and responsibilities. These efforts help to instill a sense of civic duty among citizens, encouraging them to engage with government institutions and advocate for their interests.<sup>29</sup> Such initiatives are vital for nurturing a democratic culture that supports active participation and civic engagement, which are essential for the sustainability of democratic governance.

While the Theory of Participatory Governance provides a valuable framework for understanding the role of NGOs in Nigeria, it is essential to acknowledge the challenges these organizations face. Many obstacles, including restrictive regulations on civil society activities, political repression, and inadequate funding, characterize the Nigerian political landscape.<sup>30</sup> These challenges can hinder the ability of NGOs to promote democratic governance effectively and engage citizens in meaningful ways.

Additionally, Nigeria's fragmentation of civil society can lead to competition among organizations rather than collaboration, which may weaken their collective impact.<sup>31</sup> Overcoming these challenges requires a concerted effort from civil society actors and the government to create an enabling environment for participatory governance to flourish.

In conclusion, the Theory of Participatory Governance offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the significant struggle that non-governmental organizations play in promoting the democratic system in Nigeria. By enhancing citizen participation, promoting accountability, and fostering democratic norms, NGOs contribute to the health and sustainability of democracy in the country. However, addressing the challenges faced by these organizations is crucial to maximizing their impact. As Nigeria continues to navigate its democratic journey, the principles underlying this theory remain vital in recognizing and strengthening the struggle of non-governmental organizations within the democratic system.

Developing patterns of violent crimes in Nigerian democratic transitions. This qualitative study involved a case study approach, focusing on three prominent NGOs in Nigeria. Data was collected through interviews with key informants and analyzed using thematic analysis. The results indicated that NGOs are pivotal in advocacy and public mobilization for good governance. The conclusion emphasized the need for NGOs to adapt to changing political landscapes to remain effective, recommending strategies for enhancing their advocacy efforts.<sup>32</sup>

From COVID-19 to fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria: Assessing the political opportunities for local grievance. This study utilized a quantitative research design, surveying 350 citizens in Anambra State. A systematic sampling technique was used to select participants. Data was collected using questionnaires and analyzed through statistical methods. Findings showed that citizens recognized the significant contributions of NGOs in promoting democratic governance. The conclusion

<sup>29</sup> Ibrahim, J. (2021). *The evolution of non-governmental organizations and their role in Nigeria's democracy*. *Journal of African Political Economy & Development*, 6(1), 32-47. <https://doi.org/10.14660/japed.2021.01.003>.

<sup>30</sup> Bello, M. (2018). *Advocacy and civil society organizations: Role in promoting democratic governance in Nigeria*. *Journal of Political Science and Public Affairs*, 6(4), 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.4172/2332-0761.1000310>

<sup>31</sup> Bamidele, O. (2020). *The role of non-governmental organizations in promoting accountability in Nigeria*. *Journal of Public Administration and Governance*, 10(1), 55-71. <https://doi.org/10.5296/jpag.v10i1.17754>

<sup>32</sup> Ugwuoke, C. O., Ajah, B. O., & Onyejebu, C. D. (2020). *Developing patterns of violent crimes in Nigerian democratic transitions. Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 53, 101457. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2020.101457>.

highlighted the necessity for government-NGOs partnerships, recommending policy frameworks encouraging NGOs' involvement in governance processes.<sup>33</sup>

Political bargaining, religion, and educational development.<sup>34</sup> The Nigerian experience from the takeover of schools from Christian missions. This research used a qualitative case study design, focusing on interviews with 30 NGO leaders in Nigeria. Purposive sampling was utilized to ensure relevant participants were included. Data was collected through in-depth interviews and analyzed using narrative analysis. The findings revealed that NGOs face systemic challenges, including legal restrictions and political repression. The conclusion emphasized the need for reforms that empower NGOs and recommended that civil society actively engage in policy advocacy.

Exploring the landscape of routine immunization in Nigeria: A scoping review of barriers and facilitators. This study utilized a qualitative research design, interviewing 25 NGO leaders and government officials. Purposive sampling was employed for participant selection. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed thematically. The findings highlighted the effectiveness of NGOs in promoting political accountability through advocacy and public mobilization. The conclusion stressed the importance of a conducive environment for NGOs to thrive, recommending policy reforms to support civil society initiatives.<sup>35</sup>

Minority political mobilization in the struggle for resource control in Nigeria. This research employed a quantitative design, surveying 300 young citizens in Nigeria. A simple random sampling technique was used for selection. Data was collected via questionnaires and analyzed using statistical tools. The results indicated that NGOs significantly enhance youth political participation and engagement. The study concluded that NGOs should focus more on youth empowerment initiatives and recommended collaboration with educational institutions.<sup>36</sup>

Revisiting Packer's models: Examining Nigeria's criminal justice system in the COVID-19 and post-COVID-19 era. This study utilized a qualitative research design involving case studies of five NGOs. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling. Data was collected through interviews and focus groups, and analyzed thematically. Findings revealed that NGOs in the Niger Delta are crucial in advocating for environmental rights and community engagement in governance. The study concluded that NGOs must strengthen their advocacy strategies, recommending partnerships with international organizations for resource mobilization.<sup>37</sup>

Risk factors limiting access to formal financing: Perceptions from artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) operators in Nigeria. This research employed a systematic review methodology, analyzing existing literature and reports on NGOs in Nigeria. Data were synthesized qualitatively to identify key themes. The review found that NGOs effectively promote transparency, accountability, and civic

<sup>33</sup> Ezegwu, C., & Okoye, D. (2024). Political bargaining, religion, and educational development: The Nigerian experience from the takeover of schools from Christian missions. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 106, 103000. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2024.103000>.

<sup>34</sup> Ajibola, B. S. (2024). From COVID-19 to fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria: Assessing the political opportunities for local grievance. *Urban Governance*, 4(4), 351–361. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ugj.2024.12.007>.

<sup>35</sup> Mohammed, Y., Reynolds, H. W., Waziri, H., Attahiru, A., Olowo-okere, A., Kamateeka, M., Waziri, N. E., Garba, A. M., Corrêa, G. C., Garba, R., Vollmer, N., & Nguku, P. (2024). Exploring the landscape of routine immunization in Nigeria: A scoping review of barriers and facilitators. *Vaccine: X*, 20, 100563. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvacx.2024.100563>.

<sup>36</sup> Isumonah, V. A. (2015). Minority political mobilization in the struggle for resource control in Nigeria. *The Extractive Industries and Society*, 2(4), 645–653. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.exis.2015.04.011>.

<sup>37</sup> Otu, S. E., Idowu, B. M., Ordu, G., Okezie, B., & Aro, G. (2024). Revisiting packer's models: Examining Nigeria's criminal justice system in the COVID-19 and post-COVID-19 era. *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice*, 77, 100663. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijlcrj.2024.100663>

engagement. The conclusion emphasized the need for ongoing research to assess the impact of NGOs, recommending the establishment of monitoring frameworks to evaluate their contributions.<sup>38</sup>

Digital natives, digital activists in non-digital environments.<sup>39</sup> How the youth in Zambia use mundane technology to circumvent government surveillance and censorship. This study used a qualitative case study design, interviewing key informants from NGOs and electoral commissions. Purposive sampling was used to select participants based on their involvement in electoral reform processes. Data was analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings highlighted the significant role of NGOs in advocating for electoral reforms and increasing public awareness of electoral rights. The conclusion recommended enhanced collaboration between NGOs and government agencies to promote electoral integrity in Nigeria.<sup>40</sup>

### 3. METHODS

The research design used for this study was a survey. As stated in chapter one, the study's goals guided the design decision. This research strategy offers a rapid, accurate, and efficient way to evaluate data on a population of interest. It intends to study non-governmental organizations' struggles in Nigeria's democratic system. The study will be conducted in Kwara State, Nigeria.

The participants in this study were residents of Ilorin in Kwara State, Nigeria. A total of 155 respondents were selected from the Population, out of which the sample size was determined. The reason for choosing Ilorin metropolis is its proximity to the researcher.

The researcher used Taro Yamane's formula to determine the population sample size. Taro Yamane's formula is given as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where N = Population of study (1)  
 n = Sample size (?)  
 e = Level of significance at 5% (0.05)  
 1 = Constant

$$\therefore n = \frac{155}{1 + 155(0.05)^2} = \frac{155}{1+155(0.0025)} = \frac{155}{1+0.3875}$$

$$n = \frac{155}{1.3875} = 112$$

<sup>38</sup> Eniowo, O. D., Kilambo, S. R., & Meyer, L. D. (2022). Risk factors limiting access to formal financing: Perceptions from artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) operators in Nigeria. *The Extractive Industries and Society*, 12, 101181. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.exis.2022.101181>.

<sup>39</sup> Gondwe, G. (2024). Digital natives, digital activists in non-digital environments: How the youth in Zambia use mundane technology to circumvent government surveillance and censorship. *Technology in Society*, 79, 102741. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techsoc.2024.102741>

<sup>40</sup> Adekunle, . A. O. (2024). Public Expenditure and Poverty Interdependence: Evidence from Nigeria. *Pakistan Journal of Life and Social Sciences (PJLSS)*, 22(2). <https://doi.org/10.57239/PJLSS-2024-22.2.00264>

The sample size, therefore, are 112 respondents.

This study's data came from both primary and secondary sources. The major tool used to gather data was a structured questionnaire intended to extract information about the contribution of civil society organizations to the advancement of democratic governance in Nigeria. Scholarly papers, journals, and textbooks served as secondary sources for the data gathering.

The study's instrument was validated via face validation. Face validation verifies that the questions on the questionnaire are relevant. Because face validation is frequently used to determine whether an instrument looks to measure what it claims to measure. Therefore, face validations are used to assess how relevant the questionnaire is to the study's goals. The supervisor will verify copies of the first draft of the questionnaire before the instrument is submitted for face validation. The supervisor is supposed to evaluate the instrument's items critically, considering the study's particular goals and offer helpful recommendations to raise the instrument's caliber. Before being used for the study, the instrument will be modified and re-modified following his suggestions.

The acquired data will be examined using frequency tables, percentages, and mean score analysis. The developed hypothesis was tested using SPSS (statistical program for social sciences) and the nonparametric statistical test (Chi-square). After administering a questionnaire, the results will be coded, tabulated, and examined using SPSS statistical software following the hypothesis and research questions. The test of independence will be conducted using the Chi-Square method to efficiently evaluate the acquired data for ease of management and correctness. Chi-square is given as

$$X^2 = \frac{\sum (o-e)^2}{e}$$

Where  $X^2$  = chi square  
 $o$  = observed frequency  
 $e$  = expected frequency

Level of confidence/degree of freedom

When employing the chi-square test, a certain level of confidence or margin of error must be assumed. Moreover, the degree of freedom in the table must be determined in simple variable, row, and column distribution, the degree of freedom is:  $df = (r-1) (c-1)$

Where  $df$  = degree of freedom  
 $r$  = number of rows  
 $c$  = number of columns.

In determining the critical chi-square value, the confidence value is assumed to be at 95% or 0.95. A margin of 5% or 0.05 is allowed for judgment error.

#### 4. Results and Discussions

The findings of the questionnaires are presented and analyzed in this chapter. The collected data were sorted in the order specified in the research questions, and the chi square test was used to assess the research hypothesis. Simple percentages were employed to analyze the respondents' demographic data.

**Analysis of Demographic Data of Respondents**

**Table 1: Gender of Respondents**

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	72	72.0	72.0
Female	40	40.0	112.0
Total	112	112.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Table 1 above shows the gender distribution of the respondents used for this study. Out of the total number of 112 respondents, 72 respondents represent 72 percent of the Population are male 40 which represent 40.0 percent are female.

**Table 2: Age range of Respondents**

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
20-30years	17	17.0	17.0
31-40years	13	13.0	30.0
41-50years	28	28.0	58.0
51-60years	22	22.0	80.0
above 60years	32	32.0	112.0
Total	112	112.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Table 2 above shows the age grade of the respondents used for this study. Out of the total number of 112 respondents, 17 respondents represent 17.0percent of the Population are between 20-30years. 13respondents which represent 13.0percent of the Population, are between 31-40years. 28respondents which represent 28.0percent of the population are between 41-50years. 22respondents which represent 22.0percent of the population are between 51-60years. 32respondents which represent 32.0percent of the population are above 60years.

**Table 3: Educational Background of Respondents**

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
FSLC	23	23.0	23.0
WASSCE/GCE/NECO	27	27.0	50.0
OND/HND/BSC	36	36.0	86.0
MSC/PGD/PHD	19	19.0	105.0
OTHERS	7	7.0	112.0
Total	112	112.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Table 3 above shows the educational background of the respondents used for this study. Out of the total number of 112 respondents, 23 respondents which represent 23.0percent of the Population are FSLC holders. 27, which represent 27.0percent of the Population are SSCE/GCE/WASSCE holders. 36, which represent 36.0percent of the Population, are OND/HND/BSC holders. 19, which represent 19.0percent of the Population are MSC/PGD/PHD holders. 7, which represent 7.0percent of the Population, had other types of educational qualifications.

**Table 4: Marital Status**

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Single	33	33.0	33.0
Married	58	58.0	91.0
Divorced	14	14.0	105.0
Widowed	7	7.0	112.0
Total	112	112.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Table 4 above shows the marital status of the respondents used for this study. 33, which represent 33.0percent of the Population are single. 58, which represent 58.0percent of the Population, are married. 14 which represent 14.0percent of the Population are divorced. 7, which represent 7.0percent of the Population, are widowed.

#### 4.3 Analysis of Psychographic Data

**Table 5: Government should work towards creating a more enabling environment for NGOs by revising restrictive laws and policies that limit their operations**

Valid	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Strongly agree	31	31.0	31.0
Agree	44	44.0	75.0
Undecided	16	16.0	91.0
Disagree	11	11.0	102.0
Strongly disagree	10	10.0	112.0
Total	112	112.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Table 5 shows respondents' responses on whether the government should create a more enabling environment for NGOs by revising restrictive laws and policies limiting their operations. 31 respondents representing 31.0percent strongly agreed that the government should work towards creating a more enabling environment for NGOs by revising restrictive laws and policies that limit their operations. 44 respondents representing 44.0percent agreed that the government should create a more enabling environment for NGOs by revising restrictive laws and policies that limit their operations. 16 respondents representing 16.0 percent were undecided. 11 respondents representing 11.0percent disagreed that the government should work towards creating a more

enabling environment for NGOs by revising restrictive laws and policies that limit their operations. 10 respondents representing 10.0percent strongly disagreed that the government should work towards creating a more enabling environment for NGOs by revising restrictive laws and policies that limit their operations.

**Table 6: Both government and international donors should provide increased funding and resources to NGOs to enable them to carry out their activities effectively**

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly agree	34	34.0	34.0
Agree	43	43.0	77.0
Undecided	12	12.0	89.0
Disagree	13	13.0	102.0
Strongly disagree	10	10.0	112.0
Total	112	112.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Table 6 shows respondents' responses if government and international donors should provide increased funding and resources to NGOs to enable them to carry out their activities effectively. 34 respondents representing 34.0percent strongly agreed that government and international donors should provide increased funding and resources to NGOs to enable them to carry out their activities effectively. 43 respondents representing 43.0percent decided that government and international donors should provide increased funding and resources to NGOs to enable them to carry out their activities effectively. 12 respondents representing 12.0 percent were undecided. 13 respondents representing 13.0percent disagreed that Both government and international donors should provide increased funding and resources to NGOs to enable them to carry out their activities effectively. 10 respondents representing 10.0percent strongly disagreed that government and international donors should provide increased funding and resources to NGOs to enable them to carry out their activities effectively.

**Table 7: NGOs should engage in collaborative efforts to strengthen their collective impact**

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly agree	14	14.0	14.0
Agree	16	16.0	30.0
Undecided	8	8.0	38.0
Disagree	41	41.0	79.0
Strongly disagree	33	33.0	112.0
Total	112	112.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Table 7 shows the responses of respondents if NGOs should engage in collaborative efforts to strengthen their collective impact. 14 of the respondents representing 14.0percent strongly agree that NGOs should engage in collaborative efforts to strengthen their collective impact. 16 of the respondents representing 16.0percent agree that NGOs should engage in collaborative efforts to

strengthen their collective impact. 8 of them, representing 8.0percent, were undecided. 41 of the respondents representing 41.0percent disagree that NGOs should engage in collaborative efforts to strengthen their collective impact. 33 of the respondents representing 33.0percent strongly disagree that NGOs should engage in collaborative efforts to strengthen their collective impact.

**Table 8: NGOs should intensify efforts in public education and awareness campaigns to inform citizens about their rights and the importance of active participation in governance**

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly agree	63	63.0	63.0
Agree	28	28.0	91.0
Undecided	13	13.0	104.0
Disagree	8	8.0	112.0
Total	112	112.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Table 8 shows respondents’ responses if NGOs should intensify public education and awareness campaigns to inform citizens about their rights and the importance of active participation in governance. 63 of the respondents representing 63.0percent strongly agree that NGOs should intensify public education and awareness campaigns to inform citizens about their rights and the importance of active participation in governance. 28 of the respondents representing 28.0percent agree that NGOs should intensify efforts in public education and awareness campaigns to inform citizens about their rights and the importance of active participation in governance. 13 of them, representing 13.0percent, were undecided. 8 of the respondents representing 8.0percent disagree that NGOs should intensify public education and awareness campaigns to inform citizens about their rights and the importance of active participation in governance.

**Table 9: NGOs should implement robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks to assess the impact of their activities on democratic governance**

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly agree	26	26.0	26.0
Agree	34	34.0	60.0
Undecided	16	16.0	76.0
Disagree	18	18.0	94.0
Strongly disagree	18	18.0	112.0
Total	112	112.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Table 9 shows respondents’ responses on whether NGOs should implement robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks to assess the impact of their activities on democratic governance. 26 of the respondents representing 26.0percent strongly agree that NGOs should implement robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks to assess the impact of their activities on democratic governance. 34 of the respondents representing 34.0percent agree that NGOs should implement

robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks to assess the impact of their activities on democratic governance. 16 of the respondents representing 16.0percent were undecided. 18 of the respondents representing 18.0percent disagree that NGOs should implement robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks to assess the impact of their activities on democratic governance. 18 of the respondents representing 18.0percent strongly disagree that NGOs should implement robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks to assess the impact of their activities on democratic governance.

**Table 10: NGOs should actively engage with policymakers and governmental institutions to influence policy formulation and implementation**

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly agree	68	63.0	63.0
Agree	33	33.0	101.0
Disagree	6	6.0	107.0
Strongly disagree	5	5.0	112.0
Total	112	112.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Table 10 shows respondents’ responses on whether NGOs should actively engage with policymakers and governmental institutions to influence policy formulation and implementation. 63 of the respondents representing 63.0percent strongly agree that NGOs should actively engage with policymakers and governmental institutions to influence policy formulation and implementation. 33 of the respondents representing 33.0percent agree that NGOs should actively engage with policymakers and governmental institutions to influence policy formulation and implementation. 6 of the respondents representing 6.0percent disagree that NGOs should actively engage with policymakers and governmental institutions to influence policy formulation and implementation. 5 of the respondents representing 5.0percent strongly disagree that NGOs should actively engage with policymakers and governmental institutions to influence policy formulation and implementation.

## 5. Conclusion

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a vital role in promoting democratic governance in Nigeria, despite operating within a challenging political and institutional environment. This study has explored how NGOs contribute to democracy by encouraging citizen participation, advocating for transparency, and holding government institutions accountable. NGOs serve as key intermediaries between the people and the state, using policy advocacy, grassroots mobilization, and voter education to strengthen civic engagement and empower marginalized communities.

However, NGOs in Nigeria face persistent challenges, including limited funding, restrictive laws, and political interference. These barriers significantly affect their ability to function effectively and sustainably. Therefore, it is essential to establish an enabling environment that allows NGOs to operate freely and fulfill their democratic roles.

The relationship between NGOs and democracy is mutually reinforcing. NGOs promote democratic values, while democratic systems allow civil society to thrive. Based on this study’s findings, it is recommended that NGOs strengthen internal accountability through monitoring and evaluation,

engage proactively with policymakers, and harness digital technologies to expand outreach and participation. With appropriate support from government and international stakeholders, NGOs can play an even greater role in consolidating democracy and building a more inclusive, accountable, and participatory political system in Nigeria.

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