

The State of Democratic Development and Challenges of Nation-Building in Post-Colonial Nigeria

Vincent Onykwelu Sunday Okeke

Department of Political Science Faculty of Social Sciences Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Anambra State, Nigeria.

ABSTRACT

In Nigeria, there are some people who represent our national importance by calling us the 'Giant of Africa'. In today's world, skills, industriousness, productivity, and competitiveness are the determinant factors of national greatness. Not even the possession of the nuclear bomb is enough to make a nation great without reference to the industriousness and creativity of its citizens. In many other developing nations, democracy comes with a baggage of demands in openness, individual rights and transparency, which often generate their myriads of other challenges. That is why in Nigeria, we have made strong commitments to democracy, but are yet to adopt the ethos and values that guide democratic principles, beyond conducting elections into government offices, - that is 'a government by the people' to a large extent. But we have not fully come to grips with the other important arm of the democratic principle - which is 'the government for the people'. To put it another way, our democracy has not fully appreciated the unique role that 'the people' play for governance to emerge, and the return role owed to 'the people' through that singular action. Any attempt to understand this disparaging trend in our democratic experience, has been quick in laying the blame on the nation's historical antecedents, the intervening problems that these generate, and the consequent major challenges, especially violent conflicts that often dominate the environment and impede performance of governments at all levels. For us in Nigeria, we continue to see democracy as a great idea that has won our fancy, despite its capacity to generate new demands with difficult challenges- such as our nation now faces in the upsurge of Boko Haram terrorism. Some see it partly a creation of democratic demands occasioned by recent global enlightenment, and openness in public issues, especially new in many Northern states of Nigeria. But in our best interests, we have no other choice than to continue to build on the institutional foundations that improve the performance of governments in our nation. Democracy is a vital instrument that propels political proficiency, economic development and social stability of any nation state. The Nigerian democracy is gasping for breath not only because of the poor performance by the political leaders but also because the people have been compromised. Democracy in Nigeria has been a mere political desideratum hanging on a limping utopia . A true democracy is a sine qua non for the development of all sectors of any country's economy. The general success of any practicing democracy is deeply incumbent upon three major challenges. First, the challenge of legislative efficiency, in which the activities of the national assembly ought to reflect and reform positively the socio-economic and political lacuna that has evaded the country for some reasonable length of time. Second, is the challenge of the executive and management of the nation's economy. Lastly, the willingness of the legislative powers-that-be, to grant much revered policy of inclusiveness to the hoi polloi to participate vibrantly in the daily governance of the country. In this paper , the researcher was able to make the following principal findings that, one, democratic governance has not enhanced nation-building in Nigeria in the post-colonial era. Two, that democratic pluralism has not facilitated national development in Nigeria in the post-colonial era. On the basis of this, the researcher recommend, one, that there is need to reconstitute the Nigerian state in such a way as to increase its autonomy in order to float above class struggles necessary for facilitating good governance as well as enhancing nation-building. Two, that there is need to set up sovereign national conference to redefine the basis for our co-existence so as to strengthen democratic pluralism and facilitate national development in Nigeria.

Keywords: state, Democratic Development, Nation building and Post-Colonial Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

For the first time in Nigeria's history, an elected president is handed over power to another elected president following an election that was, by and large, free, fair and comparatively peaceful. President Goodluck Jonathan, in particular, deserves much credit for conceding defeat promptly and elegantly [1,2,3]. Regrettably, the practice of the so-called democracy in the 21st century Nigeria is intrinsically characterized by political instability, social dislocation, cultural balderdash and economic quagmire, resulting in unemployment of all forms, leading to abject hunger and indescribable poverty. The attendant implications of this misnomer are practical existence of all manner of crimes such as kidnapping, armed robbery, prostitution, sexual slavery, pen-robbery, and electioneering bickering and hooliganism [4,5,6]. Stemming from the foregoing, the principal objective of this paper is to assess the state of democratization vis-à-vis development in Nigeria. Thus, over the years, the Nigerian government has failed to harness the vast human and material resources at its disposal to break the cycle of poverty and autocracy that has characterized it since independence in 1960. Thus, the Nigerian state has been constantly struggling between the forces of democracy and authoritarianism, and characterized by "the push for development and the pull for underdevelopment, the burden of public corruption and the pressure of accountability" [7,8,9]. And, it has 'deviated from the known curve of consolidation to de-consolidation' [10,11,12]. This is traceable to the fact that Nigeria is one of the colonial legacies in the African continent. As an offshoot of the colonial praetors, the Nigerian state retains parts of the authoritarian ethos. Rather than being at the service of the people, it is in the service of the ruling oligarchy [13,14,15].

Despite all the social and economic policies that have been implemented by successive administrations, Nigeria has remained a laggard in social, economic and political developments. Subsequently, political instability, abject poverty, acute youth unemployment, heightened crime rate, poor

health prospects, widespread malnourishment have been the main features of Nigeria's political economy. One of the major explanations for the failure of all development programmes in Nigeria has been the absence of democracy and the intermittent military intervention in politics. However, with the benefit of hindsight and as demonstrated by the current experience, even the periods of civil rule (1960-1966, 1979-1983 and 1999 to date) failed to produce any positive or better results. This shows that there is no automatic connection between democracy and development. Meanwhile, it is not an overstatement to contend that the return of the country to electoral democracy in 1999 has not made significant impact on the economic and social well-being of the people. Several other factors explain the development tragedy in Nigeria [16]. The focus of this study is to assess the impacts of democratic development in meeting challenges of nation-building in Nigeria the post-colonial era. This chapter titled "The State of Democratic Development and Challenges of Nation-building in the Post-colonial Nigeria" is divided into several compartments. The study is basically a historical research method relying mainly on secondary sources of data from internet sources, official documents and country websites as the method of data collection. This author made use of qualitative-descriptive analysis as his method of data analysis, that is, documentary studies of official document and other materials in analyzing the secondary data. The major purpose of this study is to assess the impacts of democratic development in confronting challenges of nation-building in the post-colonial Nigerian politics. Thus, the researcher able to make the following principal findings that, one, democratic governance has not enhanced nation-building in Nigeria in the post-colonial era. Two, that democratic pluralism has not facilitated national development in Nigeria in the post-colonial era. On the basis of this, he recommends, one, that there is need to reconstitute the Nigerian state in such a way as to increase its autonomy in order to float above class struggles necessary for facilitating good governance as well as enhancing nation-building. Two, that

there is need to set up sovereign national conference to redefine the basis for our co-existence so as to strengthen democratic pluralism and facilitate national development in Nigeria [17].

Theoretical Framework

This study is mainly anchored on the theory of relative autonomy of the state. The state relative autonomy theory is situated within the ambit of the neo-Marxist political economy paradigm. The theory of relative state autonomy depicts the level or degree of detachment or aloofness of the state in the discharge of its duties such as mediating inter-class and intra-class struggles. Thus, this theory presupposes that in any state or political society, there are two levels of contradiction, namely primary contradiction and secondary contradiction. Primary contradiction is inter-class struggle or depicts class struggle between two antagonistic classes such as the ruling class and the ruled class or the bourgeois class and the proletariat (i.e. the working class). Whilst, secondary contradiction is the intra-class struggle, denoting class conflicts within the ruling-class or between different segments of the ruling-class.

Marx and Engels demonstrate this intractable phenomenon of class struggle when they declare in the preface of their book, *The Communist Manifesto* that "the history of all the hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles" [18]. The exponents of the theory such as Claude Ake and others hold that a state can exhibit either low or high relative autonomy. A state exhibits high autonomy when there is high commodification of capital or excessive penetration of capital into the economy such that the bourgeois class indulges in accumulation of capital through direct exploitation of the working class or appropriation of surplus value when they enter into social relationships of production (i.e. private capitalism). Here, the state is not interventionist, in other words, it does not intervene in the domestic economy like participating in the productive activities (i.e. public/state enterprises) or controlling or nationalizing means of production. The role of state here, therefore, is to regulate. As such, the state is relatively an impartial umpire mediating inter-class and intra-class struggles through harmonization and reconciliation of class interests. The developed capitalist states

of the West are, therefore, considered to exemplify this high relative autonomy, and as a result, exhibit high level of human rights observance and protection.

Conversely, a state exhibits low autonomy when there is low commodification of capital or low penetration of (private) capital into the economy in such a way that the ruling class is constantly engage in primitive accumulation of capital through embezzlement of public fund. The state becomes the only avenue for capital accumulation. The state is thus, interventionist for engaging in productive activities of means of productive activities (i.e. public corporation) by nationalization of major means of production. This state does not limit itself to regulatory rule and is hence compromised, such that instead of rising above class struggle it is deeply immersed in it [19,20,21].

The Nigerian state like other developing state exhibits a low level of the autonomy of the state as a result of low commodification of capital. Under the eclectic mixture of mixed economy, Nigeria experiences the phenomenon of lack of penetration of (private) capital into the economy creating a parasitic petty bourgeois class whose major source of accumulation of capital is the state. Hence, the Nigerian state becomes the only avenue for (primitive) accumulation of capital through which the governing class (i.e. petty bourgeoisie) produce and reproduce their dominance. Then, the political contest or the struggle for state becomes so intense that as the Nigerian state immersed itself in inter-class and intra-class conflicts, the ruling class from different ethnic groups play the ethnic card in their desperate bid or struggle to capture the state power [20].

The problem is that a state constituted in this manner is no longer the state of all, but rather the state of the few, an instrument in the hands of the governing class (i.e. petty bourgeoisie) for producing and reproducing their dominance. Hence, in extreme case, it degenerates into a state of one man on whom everything revolves around and a personality cult that dispenses advantages/benefits to whoever it pleases him to. Sycophancy and blinded loyalty become order of the day as state power is privatized and personalized. The resultant forces (i.e. class conflicts) indeed could be very debilitating, exhausting and excruciating [21].

Historical Overview of Nigerian Democracy in the Post-colonial Era

Nigeria was granted full independence on October 1st, 1960, as a federation of three regions (northern, western, and eastern), under a constitution that provided for a parliamentary form of government. Under the constitution, each of the three regions retained a substantial measure of self-government. The federal government was given exclusive powers in defense and security, foreign relations, and commercial and fiscal policies. [1], affirms that in October 1963, Nigeria altered its relationship with the United Kingdom by proclaiming itself a federal republic and promulgating a new constitution. A fourth region (the Midwest) was established that year. From the outset, Nigeria's ethnic, regional, and religious tensions were magnified by the significant disparities in economic and educational development between the south and the north.

The First Republic (1960-1966) was based on the British parliamentary system, while in the Second Republic (1979-1983) the society fiddled with the United State's style of executive presidency. But as we are aware, the lives of the democracy experiments were cut short by military rule, which was characterized by looting, brutality, violence, stealing, Advanced Fee Fraud - "419," non-accountability, and autocracy, to the utter disappointment of the majority populace who agitated for democracy [22].

Consequently, on January 15, 1966, a small group of army officers, mostly southeastern Igbo, overthrew the government and assassinated the federal prime minister and the premiers of the northern and western regions, thereby changing the dynamics of politics in Nigeria. [23], opines that the federal military government that assumed power was unable to quiet ethnic tensions or produce a constitution acceptable to all sections of the country. In fact, its efforts to abolish the federal structure greatly raised tensions and led to another coup in July. According to him, the coup related massacre of thousands of Igbo in the north prompted hundreds of thousands of them to return to the southeast, where increasingly strong Igbo secessionist sentiment emerged. The second democratic exercise was also killed by a military coup in December 1983. The military again handed over power to a democratically constituted

government on May 29, 1999, after ruling Nigeria for 29 years of the 39 years since independence from Britain in 1960 [24].

A constituent assembly was elected in 1977 to draft a new constitution, which was published on September 21, 1978, when the ban on political activity, in effect since the advent of military rule, was lifted. According to [25], political parties were formed, and candidates were nominated for president and vice president, the two houses of the National Assembly, governorships, and state houses of assembly. In 1979, five political parties competed in a series of elections in which a northerner, Alhaji Shehu Shagari of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), was elected president. All five parties won representation in the National Assembly. In August 1983, Shagari and the NPN were returned to power in a landslide victory, with a majority of seats in the National Assembly and control of 12 state governments. But the elections were marred by violence and allegations of widespread vote rigging and electoral malfeasance led to legal battles over the results [26].

On December 31, 1983, the military overthrew the Second Republic. Maj. Gen. Muhammadu Buhari emerged as the leader of the Supreme Military Council (SMC), the country's new ruling body. He charged the civilian government with economic mismanagement, widespread corruption, election fraud, and a general lack of concern for the problems of Nigerians. He also pledged to restore prosperity to Nigeria and to return the government to civilian rule but proved unable to deal with Nigeria's severe economic problems. The Buhari government was peacefully overthrown by the SMC's third-ranking member, Army Chief of Staff Maj. Gen. Ibrahim Babangida, in August 1985 [27].

Babangida cited the misuse of power, violations of human rights by key officers of the SMC, and the government's failure to deal with the country's deepening economic crisis as justifications for the takeover. During his first few days in office, President Babangida moved to restore freedom of the press and to release political detainees being held without charge. As part of a 15-month economic emergency, he announced stringent pay cuts for the military, police, and civil servants and proceeded to enact similar cuts for the private sector. Imports of rice, maize, and later wheat were banned. [28], opines that President

Babangida demonstrated his intent to encourage public participation in government decision-making by opening a national debate on proposed economic reform and recovery measures. The public response convinced Babangida of intense opposition to an economic recovery package dependent on an International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan.

In the historic June 12, 1993 presidential elections, which most observers deemed to be Nigeria's fairest, early returns indicated that M.K.O. Abiola had won a decisive victory. However, on June 23, Babangida, using several pending lawsuits as a pretense, annulled the election, throwing Nigeria into turmoil. [29], emphasizes that more than 100 persons were killed in riots before Babangida agreed to hand power to an "interim government" on August 27, 1993. Babangida then attempted to renege on his decision. Without popular and military support, he was forced to hand over to Ernest Shonekan, a prominent nonpartisan businessman. Shonekan was to rule until new elections, scheduled for February 1994. Although he had led Babangida's Transitional Council since early 1993, Shonekan was unable to reverse Nigeria's ever growing economic problems or to defuse lingering political tension.

With the country sliding into chaos, Defense Minister Sani Abacha quickly assumed power and forced Shonekan's 'resignation' on November 17, 1993. Abacha dissolved all democratic political institutions and replaced elected governors with military officers. Abacha promised to return the government to civilian rule but refused to announce a timetable until his October 1, 1995 Independence Day address [30]. According to him, Abacha's take-over was initially welcomed by many Nigerians, disenchantment grew rapidly. A number of opposition figures united to form a new organization, the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO), which campaigned for an immediate return to civilian rule. The government arrested NADECO members who attempted to reconvene the Senate and other disbanded democratic institutions. Most Nigerians boycotted the elections held from May 23-28, 1994, for delegates to the government-sponsored Constitutional Conference. On June 11, 1994, using the groundwork laid by NADECO, Abiola declared himself president and went into hiding. He reemerged and was

promptly arrested on June 23. With Abiola in prison and tempers rising, Abacha convened the Constitutional Conference June 27, but it almost immediately went into recess and did not reconvene until July 11, 1994 [4].

During the Abacha regime, the government continued to enforce its arbitrary authority through the federal security system which is the military, the state security service, and the courts. Under Abacha, all branches of the security forces committed serious human rights abuses. After Abubakar's assumption of power and consolidation of support within the PRC, human rights abuses decreased. According to [17] other human rights problems, included infringements on freedom of speech, press, assembly, association, and travel; violence and discrimination against women; and female genital mutilation. Worker rights suffered as the government continued to interfere with organized labour by restricting the fundamental rights of association and the independence of the labour movement. After it came to power in June 1998, then Abubakar government took several important steps toward restoring worker rights and freedom of association for trade unions, which had deteriorated seriously between 1993 and June 1998 under the Abacha regime.

During both the Abacha and Abubakar eras, Nigeria's main decision-making organ was the military Provisional Ruling Council (PRC) which governed by decree. The PRC oversaw the 32-member Federal Executive Council composed of civilians and military officers. [18], postulates that pending the promulgation of the constitution written by the constitutional conference in 1995, the government observed some provisions of the 1979 and 1989 constitutions. Neither Abacha nor Abubakar lifted the decree suspending the 1979 constitution, and the 1989 constitution was not implemented. The judiciary's authority and independence was significantly impaired during the Abacha era by the military regime's arrogation of judicial power and prohibition of court review of its action. The court system continued to be hampered by corruption and lack of resources after Abacha's death.

In August 1998, the Abubakar government appointed the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to conduct elections for local government councils, state legislatures

and governors, the national assembly, and president. INEC successfully held these elections. The PRC promulgated a new constitution based largely on the suspended 1979 constitution, before the May 29, 1999 inauguration of the new civilian president. The constitution includes provisions for a bicameral legislature, the National Assembly, consisting of a 360-member House of Representatives and a 109-member Senate. The executive branch and the office of the president retain strong federal powers. The legislature and judiciary, having suffered from years of neglect, must be rebuilt as institutions [19].

Following the death of military dictator and de facto ruler of Nigeria, General Sani Abacha in 1998, his successor General Abdusalami Abubakar initiated the transition which heralded Nigeria's return to democratic rule in 1999. The ban on political activities according to [23], was lifted, and political prisoners were released from detention facilities. Political parties (People's Democratic Party (PDP), All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), and Alliance for Democracy (AD) were formed and elections were set for April 1999. The nature of the transition to civil rule in Nigeria has been one where the governments creates parties for the people, designs and plan their manifestoes for them, funds them, foist certain candidates on these organization and invites the people to join them so as to Crystallize their democratic quest. Thus, a climate of political exclusion, alienation and robbery of the fundamental rights of the Nigerian peoples are evidenced [5].

In the widely monitored 1999 election, former military ruler Olusegun Obasanjo was elected on the PDP platform. On 29 May 1999, Obasanjo was sworn in as President and Commander-in-Chief of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. In the controversial general election on April 21, 2007, Umaru Yar'Adua of the PDP was elected President. Following the death of Umaru Yar'Adua on May 5, 2010, Goodluck Jonathan became the third president of the 4th Republic and was eventually re-elected as incumbent, following the general elections held in April 2011 [7]. He however lost to President Muhammadu Buhari who is currently the fourth president in the 4th republic.

Democratization, Democratic Experiment and Political Life in Nigeria

The emergence of a democratic Nigeria in May 1999, ended 16 years of consecutive military rule. Obasanjo, a former general, took over the leadership of the country as a president that faced many problems, including a dysfunctional bureaucracy, collapsed infrastructure, and a military that wanted a reward for returning quietly to the barracks. The President moved quickly and retired hundreds of military officers who held political positions, established a blue-ribbon panel to investigate human rights violations, ordered the release of scores of persons held without charge, and rescinded a number of questionable licenses and contracts let by the previous military regimes. The government also moved to recover millions of dollars in funds secreted in overseas accounts by corrupt government officials, particularly the former military dictator, Gen. Sani Abacha [8].

Most civil society leaders and most Nigerians witnessed a marked improvement in human rights and democratic practice under Obasanjo. The press enjoyed greater freedom than under previous governments. As Nigeria works out representational democracy, there have been conflicts between the Executive and Legislative branches over major appropriations and other proposed legislation. A sign of federalism has been the growing visibility of state governors and the inherent friction between Abuja and the various state capitals over resource allocation [9,10].

However, problems of communal violence had confronted the Obasanjo government since its inception. Since May 29, 1999 when Nigeria began her current experiment on democracy (after many years of military rule), the nation has been bedeviled by a series of social crises. For instance, the rising religious disturbances brought about by the introduction of Sharia Law in some parts of the northern states, and the subsequent ethnic cleansing in Kaduna and other states [12]. All these political brouhaha have contributed in the continued deterioration in social relations, social disintegration, and the delay in ripping the dividends of the democracy experiment. It is appropriate to note that one good thing the present experiment on democracy has achieved, is that any person can criticize the leaders without fear of official reprisal. Perhaps, the real drawback in the process has

been the autocratic posture of President Olusegun Obasanjo, which did not allow him to give the National Assembly an unfettered hand to perform its constitutional duties. As long as our leaders fail to perform their duties appropriately and consider all Nigerians - (Hausa, Fulani, Yoruba, Igbo, Ibibio, Efik, Annang, Ijaw, Bonny, Opobo, Ogoni, Tiv, Kanuris, etc.) - as citizens endowed with the same right. [19], asserts that there would not emerge the trust which is indispensable for the unity and development of the nation. This will go a long way in making the democratic experiment yieldable.

Furthermore, since Nigeria independence; two of its numerous elections were described as been credible, free and fair by Nigerians and the international communities. The first was the 1992 general election which Chief M.K.O. Abiola reportedly won with 55 percent of the total vote cast. The same election was unreasonably annulled by General Ibrahim Babangida - the Military fascist of the time. The aftermath of that annulment is a different story, not intentioned in this article. The second free and fair election was concluded in April 2011 by Independent National Electoral Commission - INEC under the chairmanship of Prof. Attahiru Jega. The incumbent president, Jonathan Ebele Good Luck was declared the winner. He reportedly won 57 percent of the total vote cast [8].

Though the battle was considered lost and won, there were several needless sectarian and targeted violence in response to his victory, especially in the Northern part of Nigeria. While the people have the right to react to the result of the election, the acceptable corollary of democratic dictum is that the will of the majority prevails and respected in good faith. If anyone or political party feel cheated or disagree with the result that was declared by INEC, such individual or group can invoke their rights and seek redress in the court of law as opposed to arbitrariness or taking laws into their hands. People should understand that arson and murder are not integral part of democracy, and should not be considered a solution to political disagreement [11].

It is worrisome however, that almost two decades after the "third wave" of democracy has blown across the continent of Africa, democratization has not produced the expected result. Rather than engender development and good governance, it has led

to anarchy, civil wars, genocide and general political instabilities as have been seen in Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone and Nigeria. In Nigeria for instance, political assassinations, ethno-religious conflicts, abject poverty, acute youth unemployment and general economic and political decay have been the major dividends of democracy since 1999 when the country returned to democracy. All these suggest that there is no automatic connection between democracy and good governance but there is an intrinsic socio-cultural value that enhances democratic performance (Ekei, 2003).

It is clear that the form of democracy as it is practised in Africa today is an imposed one. Most African states are forced to democratize in order to be able to access foreign loans and aid. Therefore, the third wave was not a natural wave. Democracy is adopted to suit the desire of foreign donors and advanced capitalist democracies. The problem here is that liberal democracy does not evolve, as it was in the west, with the African societies. The argument here is that there is a serious need to 'domesticate' western liberal democracies in order to enhance its benefits in Africa. Therefore, Nigeria and the rest of Africa should, like [12] has argued, "find ingenious ways and means of hammering the autochthonous democratic element as well as elements inherited from alien sources into an acceptable and viable democratic form in the setting of the modern world".

Democratic Governance and Crisis of Nation-building in Nigeria since 1960

In Nigeria the formation of a sense of national identity has been an up-hill task because it involves the alteration of primordial loyalties and rapid development of political consciousness among a politically unconscious people. Often, this alteration creates ethnic cleavages between the various ethnic groups. This leads to national symbols to vie with local or tribal symbols. This also leads to divided loyalties and loyalty to sub-national unit becomes primary. This problem has become acute in Nigeria because ethnic or national boundaries are defined by historical, linguistic, religious and cultural boundaries. Since the creation of this sense of national identity is being championed by the ruling elites of the various groups in the country, the

sense of national identity by the members of the various groups becomes bi-focal. It focuses on the personalities of the charismatic leaders; and on emotionally charged symbols [30]. And when these happen, the sense of national identity thus created is fragile, rejected on the onset, and fades when the symbols and personalities are no longer there. Personality crises result from the vacuum thus created by the exit of the personalities and leadership crises ensue.

In Nigeria, since colonial days till date, this sense of national identity has been more or less focused on the personalities of the ruling elites of the various ethnic groups as they serve more or less as symbols of ethnic unity and integration for the particular ethnic group. This manifests in the decoration of any indigene that gets a national appointment with traditional titles and ethnic reception by his/her ethnic group. Finally the call for the development of a sense of national identity creates a feeling of lack of self-confidence or self-esteem on the people that have not developed and this makes issues that could have been settled by dialogue between people of different ethnic nationalities to be settled by the use of force which is usually out of proportion. They are uncertain of their national boundaries - who are part of them and who are not [14].

Let's send them out of our land" "Why can't they allow us to rule the country even once, let us secede". It is because the various ethnic groups in Nigeria do not have ready and convincing answers to these questions that the nation is still un-integrated and parts of the questions have come to the fore in the forms of: application of the Sharia law in the states of the northern region of the country which is being used against non-Muslims in the region; and which often ends in ethno-religious conflicts; the cry for resource control by the southern states that produce 80% of the nation's revenue which pitches the militants in the Niger-delta against the federal government; the call for sovereign national conference by various ethnic nationalities in the country to discuss the basis on which the country should remain as one united country which those within the corridors of power who are the ultimate beneficiaries of the status-quo object to vehemently; the inability of the governments to reduce poverty, unemployment, violent crimes and political

assassinations, kidnappings, terrorism, infrastructural decay and corruption among the citizens within the corridors of power [9].

Without this feeling of belonging to the nation, it would be extremely difficult for the government to effectively rule the country, maintain its authority and apply rules and regulations within the country. The legitimacy of the regimes would be questioned by some of the people and groups. This the militants in the Niger Delta did by blowing up oil pipe lines and oil rigs in the region, and the kidnapping of expatriate oil and construction workers, and oil theft. The Boko-Haram is doing so through its terrorist attacks all over the country seeking the establishment of an Islamic state across Nigeria. Under this condition no meaningful development would take place. The citizens of the country cannot unite for a common purpose, face a common enemy or solve a national problem collectively. Development programmes in the country would not be planned and coordinated because the citizens do not see themselves as a people with a common goal and destiny [17].

Ethnic sentiments will be strong in the country and there will always be the tendency for local groups to assert their local independence and exhibit secessionist tendencies as has been the case with the states in the South East region of the country - the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB); the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MASOP) in the south-south region; the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger-Delta (MEND) in the South-South region; the Afenifere and the Odua Peoples Congress (OPC) in the South-West; the Boko-Haram (BH) in the North-East, North-Central and North-West regions. These actions have reduced the level of direct foreign investment in the country and also the volume of internal trade due to violence that follow the actions of these ethnic militias [7].

As national identity is lacking, the attempts by the ruling groups to establish a strong central government often provokes ethnic sentiments that call to question the legitimacy and authority of the government just as MEND did by blowing up pipe lines and oil rigs; MASSOB did by introducing Biafran currency into circulation; and BH is doing by bombing and shooting innocent citizens with impunity. The absence of national identity weakens the

governmental structures and institutions thereby creating national crises and political instability. Because the national institutions are weak, the Federal Government cannot rule effectively, fight or check corruption effectively, initiate development programs and execute them successfully. Lack of national identity has caused some governments in the country (federal, state and local) to be detached from the people, acting by themselves and for themselves. Thus, government has become an avenue for personal enrichment because the people do not give the necessary supports to it, or question the rationale for certain national policies and actions. It is only when people have a sense of belonging to a nation that the survival of the political system is possible. It is only then that the country can survive any type of crisis. A sense of national identity restrains the emergence of totalitarian regimes because everyone is interested in the affairs of the state and the methods of their conduct [9]. Hence, we conclude that democratic governance rather than enhanced, actually impeded nation-building in Nigeria; and thus, engendered crisis of nation-building in the post-colonial era.

Background to Nigerian Democratic Pluralism and National Question in Nigeria

Opinions converged that democracy as is currently practised in Nigeria has produced unpalatable results. This is associated with the nature of the Nigerian state and the character of its elites. This has often times made it difficult for some scholars [11,12] to see Nigeria as a non-democratic state. [13], a decade ago critically pointed out that Nigeria had never experienced democracy. He argues instead of the return to civil rule, we Nigerian, find ourselves talking of return to democracy thus falling into presumption that a democracy had existed in Nigeria. The press, for instance, is incessantly drumming into our ears that “we are a democratic country” and bellowing that “in a democratic country like Nigeria”, this or that should not happen. It thus, seems completely unaware of the cardinal fact that neither during colonial rule nor since independence has Nigeria been a democratic country. In the far years of the Balewa’s and Shagari’s civilian interludes, Nigeria strove to be a democracy but was never.

This argument is still forceful today. In a similar vein, [18] contends that it would constitute a very difficult problem for political theorist to determine the classification of Nigeria’s type of governments. It is not a monarchy, even though there are so many monarchs in the policy making positions. It is definitely not an aristocracy, because by its very definition, aristocracy means government by the best. It is of course not democracy because at least in its modern understanding, democracy is government of the people by the people and for the people. If we go by St Augustine’s definition - government that Nigeria ever had could qualify as “Mafia Government”. The word “mafia” within the paper’s context means government infested with power-drunken, self-seeking, ideology-barren, orientationless operatives; usually selected by their kind and of course scarcely ever elected by the people. Even in the guise of multi-party election, those to rule are clearly predetermined and chosen even before elections takes place.

This assertion is still plausible today. The reason for Toyo and Nwigwe’s conclusion is not far-fetched. In terms of outcome, Nigerians have not significantly reaped the dividends of democracy. Secondly, Nigeria’s democracy has been violent ridden characterized with wanton destruction of lives and properties [19]. More importantly, the peoples’ vote seems not to count in determining who governs as elections are rigged or its outcome determined before the poll. Therefore, procedurally, democracy in Nigeria is lamed and in terms of its conceptual outcome has failed to meet the expectations of the people. Furthermore, Nigeria’s democracy (if it could be so described) has tended to promote inequality rather than equality. [17], comment is also instructive; there can be no genuine democracy in a country where citizens are grossly unequal in wealth and the poor who are invariably the majority, are dependent on the wealthy. Due to the fact that wealth is power, where such a cleavage and dependency exist, political power is inevitably in the hands of the wealthy. In this scenario, democracy ceases to be democracy in reality; in effect it is a plutocracy.

In essence, a responsible and accountable leadership that would characterize good governance in Nigeria is patently absent. Nigerian political elites, almost without

exception, have an insatiable capacity to steal from the commonwealth and leave the people more impoverished. Unrestrained by any real accountability to the electorate, many of those elected officials who came to power in fraudulent elections have committed abuses against their constituents and engaged in the large-scale looting of public resources [12]. Therefore, there is a very wide hiatus between the rich and the poor masses. In Nigeria today, what we have is democracy without social, economic and political development.

The legislative arm of government that would have provided adequate checks on abuses of power by the executive and recklessness of the opportunistic politicians is also inefficient and ineffective. Effective legislature contributes to good governance. This is done by the performance of legislative oversight over the finances of government, which serves as a catalyst for the sustainability of a democratic governance. It is also important to note that the responsibilities of the legislature in a democratic society have gone beyond mere rule making and representation. They are now involved in administrative and financial matters. Legislatures are now saddle with the role of keeping close watch and control over the executive arm of government and the control of public expenditures and taxation. In summary, a legislative house must not only be capable of making laws for the safety and general wellbeing of the people, but must also be able to manage funds in order to provide good life for the entire citizenry [8].

To perform its oversight function effectively, every legislature needs power to shape the budget and means of overseeing or checking the executive power beyond the ultimate power of impeachment. A legislature that is capable of oversight function is more likely to manage the available funds to achieve the objectives of the state with minimal or no wastages, and this engenders transparency, openness, accountability which represent the tripod of good governance. The failure of the legislature to perform this important function in Nigeria has denied the people the gains of democratic governance. Rather than enhance good governance through equity in the distribution of resources legislature in Nigeria have been preoccupied with how to amass wealth to them at the peril of Nigerian. The case of the 2009 budgetary allocation is a typical example. A breakdown of the 2009

national budget shows that members of the National Assembly and the personnel of a part of the Presidency will be paid 47.8 billion naira as emoluments during the year. The 360 members of the House of Representatives were to receive 26.67 billion naira while the 109 Senators were to get 16.3 billion naira. When provisions for legislative aides, the National Assembly Service Commission and the National Assembly Office are factored in, the total allocation to the federal legislature stands at 61.6 billion naira. In its analysis, the editorial comment in the Nigerian Tribune of December 11, 2008 notes that “an infinitesimal percentage of the citizenry will be pocketing 2.9% of the total provision made for the recurrent expenditure of Federal Government”. Hence, the National Assemblies have failed to provide selfless, purposeful and democratic legislative leadership [18].

This is so because Nigerian legislators are not qualitatively appointed through competitive, fair and free elections. The situation in Nigeria lends credence to [21] proposition that; when a few people control the governance of a polity and have the preponderance of force to continue to maintain such control, a national assembly that emerges from the dictation of such a group is likely to be more corrupt and subversive of democracy and democratization than the one that emerges from the dictates of the popular forces. It is incontrovertible that the States and the National Houses of Assembly in Nigeria are products of corrupt and undemocratic procedures and processes. Hence, it is not surprising that its activities subverts rather than promotes democracy and good governance. This is actually the dilemma of democracy in Nigeria [23].

Furthermore, the judicial arm, an indispensable complement to good governance is also lame. In the Nigerian context, it is no exaggeration that the notion of the judiciary as *primus inter pares* is one that is yet to be fully imbibed by the political elite, irrespective of the recent popular judgement over some contested gubernatorial seats in Edo, Imo and Rivers states. The judiciary in Nigeria is to a large extent subject to the whims and caprices of the executive arm. This is so because the judiciary is not only financially dependent on the executive but has also been excessively politicized. The upshot of this state of affairs has been the corruption of the judiciary. While judiciary corruption relates to unprofessional

or infamous conduct by judicial officers, it is also taken to mean attempts by extraneous bodies to undermine the judiciary either through inducement, cajoling, intimidation, or some other means [27].

Undoubtedly, a financially dependent judiciary cannot enjoy full autonomy neither can it dispense justice without fear or favour. Consequently, while the Nigerian masses might historically perceived the judiciary as 'the last hope of the common man', the political elite have sought to humiliate, exploit or marginalize the judiciary, almost totally oblivious of the class suicide potential of such attitudes. The situation is compounded by the country's economic wretchedness which makes an individual susceptible to corruption. In a society bedeviled by social insecurity, political instability and economic woes, it "require near superhuman guts to be upright and stand firm on the side of judicial integrity, independence, due process of the law and kindred virtues of democratic polity" [28].

Thus, the rule of law becomes the rule of the jungle and good governance is jeopardized. Aristotle maintained, "In all well attempted governments there is nothing which should be more jealously maintains than the spirit of obedience to law" [22]. All over the world the rule of law is inseparable from good governance, it invariably points to a government established by the will of the people; one in which there are laid down procedures for an orderly change of government and legal procedures for the settling of conflicts, etc. Therefore, a free and independent judiciary is a sine qua non for good governance. This is currently, a mirage in Nigeria. Another complement to good governance is a virile media and active civil society organizations. While the Nigerian press is considered to be one of the freest in the world, it is also observable that it is more amenable to control and manipulation by the political moneybags. Thus, mass media in Nigeria is to a large extent sycophantic. An obsequious and toadying media cannot provide the required supportive base for good governance. Another reason for the failure of the media as the fourth estate of the realm is the unwarranted protection of the public official by the constitution or the media limited access to information. A curtailed media is nothing but a dormant media which cannot actively protect the citizens when their

rights are infringed upon. By implication, rule of law cannot be preserved by a controllable or ingratiating media. The proposed freedom of information bill (FIB) which would have guaranteed citizen's access to information and rescued the media from the problem of access to official information has been frustrated by the refusal of the executive to endorse the bill and also the lack of political will on the part of the legislature to enforce executive endorsement. This is done to subject the media to further manipulation of the political class [26].

The idea that civil society is sacrosanct to good governance is incontestable. In Nigeria, the civil society has been central to the democratic struggles, more especially the human right groups. Surprisingly, the civil society on the whole has become moribund or less aggressive (except few foreign human right groups) after the country re-democratized in 1999. This seriously portends ills for good and responsible governance in the country. Consolidation of democracy via good governance rests primarily on a virile and agile civil society which is currently deficient in the country [29].

Problems of Democratization and National Integration in Nigeria since Independence

Nigeria's march to constitutional civilian rule has so far been a tortuous adventure, characterized by moments of hope raised and hope dashed. The democratization processes that ushered in the fledging fourth republic were particularly daunting. It could be said to have effectively begun with the setting up of the Political Bureau in 1986 by the General Babangida regime. Reputed as the most ambitious, imaginative, complex and expensive transition in the world; it however ended in fiasco with the tragic and arrogant annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election [29]. The sudden death of General Abacha on June 8, 1998 however paved the way for the emergence of General Abdulsalam Abubakar as the Head of State. The basic concern of the regime would appear to be a successful transition to a democratically elected government within the shortest possible time. The emergence of a democratic Nigeria in May 1999, ended 16 years of consecutive military rule. This fourth republic was anchored on the 1999 Constitution, whose features are not substantially different from the 1979 Constitution. Obasanjo, a former general, took over the leadership of a country as a president that faced many problems, including a

dysfunctional bureaucracy, collapsed infrastructure, and a military that wanted a reward for returning quietly to the barracks [11].

Since the Nigerian state returned to democratic governance in 1999, during the era of what [10] called the third wave of democratization, the nature of the democratic project has been the subject of an intense debate in various circles. In Nigeria, democracy has been restored for over a decades ago, which so much hopes and expectations by the people. For instance, it is assumed that with democracy, people would be free to choose their leaders and representatives and hold them accountable for the overall objective of fast tracking development and improving the general living conditions of the masses. This expectation is not misplaced considering that Nigeria has abundant human and natural resources. However, the reality on ground has shown that this expectation is yet to be realized [25]. It is hardly surprising that the various attempts at democratization have failed abysmally. The reason for the continued failure is not far to seek. One basic problem has remained unsolved right from the drafting of the first constitution in 1922. This is the problem of integration [27]. This problem appears to have bifurcated and continues to multiply in different trajectories with the effect that the plethora of problems associated with disunity continues to manifest as insurmountable impediments to a true democracy.

In his analysis of the inability of democracy in Nigeria to bring about expected level of development, [28] states that: The failure of democracy to engender development is therefore inextricably tied up to the nature of the Nigerian state whose origin and initial goal was not to pay any serious attention to the problems of the subjects but to exploit one people and their resources to serve the goal of the metropolis. In other words, it had never been inclusive *abinitio*. This was later reinforced by the nature of political elites that emerged and whose goal was self-serving at the detriment of the masses and even the state. The elites did not see any reason to change the focus of the state, since the dictatorial nature of the state, as it were, at independence was also appropriate for them to serve their own purpose. The type of democracy operating in Nigeria inhibits or hinders developmental efforts. No wonder, Ake (1996) remarked that; "we have pursued development with a confusion of purposes and interest and with policies full of ambiguities and contradictions. It is not that we

could not find suitable notions of development or ways to apply them to our experience."

What appears as damaging evidence for Nigeria's democracy is the failure of democracy to meet the material aspirations of the Nigerian people alongside evidence of tension in the polity among the different levels and branches of government as well as the various constituent elements of the Nigerian federation. Of these concerns, the most critical is the popular expectation that democracy would overcome poverty, deprivation and want, and above all create democratic citizens. Good governance has for many years remained elusive in Nigeria's political terrains because of the fact that this worthy aspect of culture, tradition and norms, political vestiges has been abandoned. Rather, despotic and corrupt leaders mostly in uniform, have always found their ways into the polity as leaders [31].

Corruption is quite widespread and consists of various forms and this is why each successive administration in Nigeria has always been accused of corruption. Till today, it is pertinent to note that some state governors have been accused of corrupt practices including the former Senate President, Adolphus Wabara, with some members of the National Assembly in league with the former minister for Education, Prof. Fabian Osuji. So also, the erstwhile Inspector General of Police, Tafa Balogun was convicted on charges of graft. All these serve as barriers to our growth as a nation because private interests have taken over public interest. Thus corruption has eroded efficiency and professionalism of patriotic services to the Nigerian federation [22]. Corruption is no doubt an endemic problem that has thoroughly affected the development of the Nigerian economy. This in turn has clearly enhanced poverty, unemployment, prostitution, armed robbery, and many social ills that endanger the lives of millions of Nigerians by exposing them to a high level of insecurity within the polity. Cognizant of the damaging effects of corruption on Nigeria, the administration of President Obasanjo, upon assuming power in 1999, established the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offenses Commission (ICPC) is its official acronym) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). The administration charged these commissions with investigating and prosecuting various criminal activities and officials involved in corrupt practices. Initially these commissions prosecuted a few low-level officials, leading to near universal condemnation of their efforts. In the recent past, however, the ICPC and EFCC have scored some notable successes. The EFCC has facilitated the

arrest and prosecution of many fraudsters. It has also prosecuted officials involved in corrupt enrichment, including a former inspector general of police. Further, the president of the Senate was forced out from office under the pressure of accusations that he took bribes from the education minister to pass an inflated budget. The government has also formed a partnership with Microsoft to crack down on notorious email fraudsters [22]. In spite of these efforts, Transparency International, an independent global watch on corruption, continues to rank Nigeria among the five most corrupt nations in the world. Perhaps nothing demonstrates the challenges of democratization in Nigeria better than the problem of ethno-nationalism. The issue of ethnic cleavages, manifested in the high incidence of ethno-nationalism, has loomed quite large in the affairs of successive Nigerian governments. A major problem arising from the ethnic and religious diversity of Nigeria is that it makes democratic compromise difficult. The different groups clamor for scarce resources and for control of the government. This leads to what [13] refers to as "democratic paralysis". As Nigeria works out representational democracy, there have been conflicts between the Executive and Legislative branches over major appropriations and other proposed legislation. A sign of federalism has been the growing visibility of state governors and the inherent friction between Abuja and the various state capitals over resource allocation. The perennial disagreements between the executive and legislative branches of government over appropriation laws is explained in terms of inherited tradition of executive dominance despite the inherent pre-eminence of the legislature in the constitutional allocation of responsibilities. Lack of capacity, knowledge and information of budget issues which is even more acute with sub-national legislatures makes executive dominance more real. However, faced with pressures from their constituents and "concerned with their re-election chances, federal and state legislators may become vocal and uncompromising advocates of the inclusion of funds not provided for in the draft budgets for projects in their constituencies, although they risk the prospects, in so doing, of the president or governor, based on their power of patronage and control over the party machinery, to ensure that they are not re-nominated by the party for their opposition to executive branch bills". In addition, the overbearing role of the executive linked to situation of extreme centralization of power and resources has remained a key challenge in Nigeria's democracy; it is at the root of the growing culture of impunity

and lack of respect for the rule of law. Among the various groups in Nigeria, the presence of hostility is rampant and this has constantly created instability in the polity as a result of nepotism [12]. Merit and efficiency are scarified on the altar of ethnic chauvinism". Hence conflict between groups seems to be the order of the day in the polity rather than the development of a cooperative spirit. The competitive nature among Nigerian ethnic groups has till date made census figures questionable because right from the first population census crisis of 1954 to that of 1962 the Southern ethnic groups have repeatedly challenged the return of high figures for the North.

Ethnicity is therefore a plague that is prevailing over democratic consolidation in Nigeria as there were calls by the Christian and other socio-cultural groupings in the polity threatening to boycott the census if ethnicity and religion were omitted from the list of questions. This is as a result of the fact that census figures have been a backbone for the hegemonic disposition of a particular group in the Nigerian federation over the rest, so in the contest for the control of state power and resources, ethnic sentiments have always been employed by both minority and majority ethnic groups in the pursuit of national resources. The increased ethnic tension that this has brought, has affected economic development as the climate is considered not investment friendly [20]. Furthermore, Nigeria is today battling with modern day autocracy that retains some "democratic norms". The system substitutes 'democratic' system with "totalitarian rule" in "every sphere of human interest and activity. The increasing pattern of centralization and political control by the executive; and this contradicts the principles of democracy that emphasizes freedom of opinion and decentralization of the political system. The Nigerian politics that is characterized by intimidation, oppression, and subordination is in most part a product of the general culture. Political democratization involves certain values, which include freedom of association, citizen participation in decision-making and non-arbitrary rule, tolerance of opposing views, respect for law and order, free and fair elections, leadership transparency, etc. However, since 1999 Nigeria has been witnessing an increasing build-up of authoritarian structures and institutions. The control units, particularly the Police, EFCC, ICPC, SSS, INEC, etc, are authoritarian and thus out of control. Consequently, human rights abuses have worsened in the society over the years, and mostly the common people are feeling the pinch [27].

Democratization may be in vogue in Africa, but democracy is not yet a reality in Nigeria. One possible explanation is the weakness of civil society. If civil society is strengthened to perform its democratic roles, civil society can exert pressure on the state and promote democratic development and consolidation. The creation of a vibrant civil society therefore is critical for the effective performance of democracy and must be linked inextricably to the social, cultural, and historical institutions of a society. Nigeria's greatest weaknesses lie in the civic, cultural, and moral realm where government solutions are often deficient and unworkable [21]. If Nigeria has to reduce the role of the government, it will have to find ways to strengthen other sectors that are public but not governmental - that civil society.

Democratic Pluralism and Crisis of National Development in Post-colonial Nigeria

Looking at development from a broad perspective, one will recall that at the international conference on Human Rights held in Teheran, Iran in 1968, very important decisions were reached. Accordingly, [4,5] pointed out that: The enjoyment of economic and social rights is inherently linked with any meaningful enjoyment of civil and political rights and that there is a profound inter-connection between the realization of human rights and economic development. The conference noted that "the vast majority of mankind continues to live in poverty, suffer from squalor, disease and illiteracy and this leads to subhuman existence, constituting in itself a denial of human dignity. The Teheran Conference resolution also recognized that there was "an ever widening gap between the standards of living in the economically developed and developing countries" and that universal enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms would remain a pious hope unless the international community succeeds in narrowing this gap.

Momentarily, let us reflect on the state of Nigeria at the time of the Teheran Conference in 1968. Firstly, the country was just eight years old as independent state. Secondly, it was completely immersed in fratricidal civil war and thirdly, it was groaning under the beginnings of military dictatorship. In effect, its democratization was put on hold as it were, while the structures for social and economic development were being wasted away by the destructions of the war which broke out in

1967. It is, indeed, a matter for deep regret that after thirty nine years, following the end of the Nigerian civil war and the restoration of democratic civil rule in 1999, the country is still ranked among the poorest states in the World and our democratic institutions still being jettisoned in international rating [1,2].

Indeed, the former president Chief Olusegun Obasanjo stopped to proclaim that Nigeria at the threshold of the third millennium had relapsed into the Hobbesian state of nature where life is "brutish, nasty and short". In other words, from the very inception of Nigeria's nationhood, there were clear signs that the country's march to "democracy and development" was definitely going to be an uphill task. As [23] lamented "As I surveyed the canvas of our national life, I saw little more than confusion, greed, corruption in high and low places, selfishness, pervasive lawlessness and cynicism. The very state itself to which we are all required to be loyal, had become a state full of malice and meanness. Public officials appeared to have forgotten what selfless service meant. Private citizens felt a profound distrust of it not hatred for the state".

In another international dimension [20], the General Assembly adopted International Development Strategy for the third United Nations Development Decade in which it noted that "the stark reality confronting mankind today is that close to 850 million people in the developing world are living at the margin of existence enduring hunger, sickness, homelessness and absence of meaningful employment" and expressed the view that: "The development process must promote dignity. The ultimate aim of development is the constant improvement of the well being of the entire population on the basis of its full participation in the process of development and fair distribution of the benefits there from".

In all fairness, with the benefits of these international guidelines to democracy, human rights and development, we need no seer to reveal to us that we have not done well in Nigeria. Indeed, Nigeria has done very badly over the past forty nine years. Democracy has serious shortcomings in this country, and accounts for the reality of wide-spread poverty, increased crime, sectarian violence and prebendalism. Nigeria is a dismal state, for [12] index report had it that Nigeria is still

trapped in poverty and underdevelopment. In the said report, Nigeria painfully and sadly was ranked as 148 out of 173 countries surveyed for the yearly Human Development Index. It now behooves all lovers of our common heritage, Nigeria, based on the above helpless and factual situation, for all round self-appraisal, collective re-examination and national re-awakening.

Taking into consideration the fragile nature of our nascent democracy and perhaps the skewed nature of our federation, in structure and in concept, it is our belief that the greatest challenges of development in our nation are the twin issues of democratization and national unity. Let no individual make any mistake about this. The challenges of national unity are very critical to our national progress. The very substance and essence of national unity is that short of national unity, our country stands to disintegrate and when there is no country there cannot be democracy or development. Moreover, in a situation of cosmetic unity, it becomes impossible to achieve a nation-state, national consciousness or patriotism. These we can agree are essential ingredients for setting national goals and the determined pursuit of these goals for the purpose of achieving them in the national interest. The realization of these goals constitutes national development [3,4,5].

In nurturing a federation like ours for development, it is no gain saying that the rule of the game must be anchored on justice, fairness and equity. To actualize these virtues, the rule of law becomes imperative, the promotion and enjoyment of fundamental freedom becomes indispensable; and accountability, transparency and due process must be the guiding principles in the conduct of public affairs. It is our position that no other form of governance can guarantee these virtues except democratic governance. In May 1999, the 4th Republic was born in Nigeria with the echoes of a presidential system of democracy. By this fact, our challenges for development are no longer the actualization of democratic system of governance but the sustenance of democracy and the quick pursuit of democratization. May we remind ourselves that democratization does not only imply the creation of the basic institutions of democracy, rather it involves the creating of the right environment for the institutions to thrive [17].

So, over the years, the Nigerian government has failed to harness the vast human and material resources at its disposal to break the cycle of poverty and autocracy that has characterized it since independence in 1960. Thus, the Nigerian state has been constantly struggling between the forces of democracy and authoritarianism, and characterized by "the push for development and the pull for underdevelopment, the burden of public corruption and the pressure of accountability" [17,18]. And, it has "deviated from the known curve of consolidation to de-consolidation" [19]. This is traceable to the fact that Nigeria is one of the colonial legacies in the African continent. As an offshoot of the colonial praetors, the Nigerian state retains parts of the authoritarian ethos. Rather than being at the service of the people, it is in the service of the ruling oligarchy [20].

On October 1, 2011 the Nigerian state celebrated 51 years of independence and specifically, on the 29th of May, 2012 celebrated thirteen years of democracy. For many, it is a fresh period of sober reflection and stock-taking. For optimists, the process could be deemed to be on course and there is every reason to pop champagne. Those in this school of thought believe that having come this far without interruption from the military the fledging democracy could be safely said to be gradually and steadily taking roots in the nation. To such people, it does not matter the challenges the process has had to contend with all these years.

Arguably, majority of those who would share this view are government functionaries or those who may have held one position or the other since 1999 when democracy was re-introduced in Nigeria. But for the pessimists, rather than celebrate, the situation calls for worry. The nation, in their estimation, has nothing to show for practicing democracy this long. For them, from one sector to the other, Nigeria has arguably fared even better under the protracted military administration. The thinking of those in this group is that the standard of living has worsened under the democratic dispensation. However, in appraising the journey so far, there are several parameters to put in perspective [27]

The classification of democracy is problematic in the sense that it has been the subject of immeasurable interpretations by scholars over the years. One school emphasizes the

existence of socio-economic equality in society as a fundamental condition for the successful functioning of democracy [29]. Others see it in the light of its etymological sense as the rule of the people [22]. In essence, therefore, a democratic system is judged according to the degree of its commitment to the ingredients of democracy. Democracy thrives where people freely stand for election and vote during election; where there are periodic elections based on universal suffrage; where freedom of speech, publication and association is allowed; where the government and its agents adhere to the rule of law; where majoritarian rule is maintained; where there is acceptance of opposing views; where elections conducted are free, fair and credible; where defeated leaders accept defeat freely in an election; where succession process is smooth and not problematic; where the individual is allowed to freely make his/her choice; and where the process of election is competitive among the political parties. If all these tenets, elements, and parameters are adhered to, a government can be regarded as being democratic.

In addition to the problem of election violence, the phenomenon of corruption makes Nigeria a fertile ground for fraudulent electoral processes. Not only officials of the electoral commission but also law enforcement agents, members of the judiciary and even voters are exposed to the strong and seemingly overwhelming temptation to taste the forbidden fruit of corruption which threatens the electoral process and its outcome. Consequently, the challenges that face Nigeria as a nation cannot be met without a credible and competent leadership. A credible and competent leadership cannot emerge through an electoral process riddled with corruption and violence. This is why the general elections in 2011 are crucial to the country. It largely helped in re-claiming its nickname as "giant of Africa"; and now Nigeria is positively assessed amongst its African neighbours and international bodies [16,17].

Nigeria which has attained 50 years was until recently not able to have successful regular elections. The Nigerian irregular election rather than regular was, to a large extent, masterminded by the Armed Forces. Military regime is an aberration to democracy, but the violation of the tenets of democracy by

politicians prompted the military intervention in the body politics of the country [28]. One of the proofs of the loopholes in the electoral process in Nigeria is the number of elections that have been voided by the petition tribunals and Appeal Courts since democracy was re-introduced. Some of the issues that have characterized elections in Nigeria are electoral violence; political intimidation; manipulation of the electoral commission and security agencies; multiple voting; hijacking of ballot boxes; and vote-buying [15]. And the inability of the national electoral body to manage logistics as it obtained in the July 2015 Gubernatorial election in Edo State.

Analysts are also not comfortable with political party development in Nigeria. Progressively, the opposition is gradually going into extinction. Whereas it made impact in 1979 and 1999 through the coalition of forces between the then All Peoples Party (APP) and Alliance for Democracy (AD), it was not so in the 2003 general election. The PDP has succeeded in clipping the wings of the opposition and many insist that it is not healthy for democracy and good governance. In a nutshell, the Fourth Republic witnessed the coming of President Olusegun Obasanjo as the elected President of this country, Nigeria, in May 1999. The Judiciary has been relatively demonstrating its responsibilities to defend the provisions of the constitution. In the 2007 elections, there were problems of proof of multiple thumb printing and ballot stuffing. The services of the foremost Israeli finger print expert who supervised a team of 10 other experts, who essentially crossed-checked some thumb prints on the ballot papers in selected states across Nigeria discovered multiple thumb printing. In each of the state surveyed, they discovered shocking evidence of extensive multiple thumb printing hundreds and thousands in some locations. In some locations in Osun State, especially Ife constituencies, the expert found that over 80% of votes cast for Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the Gubernatorial, Senatorial and State House of Assembly elections were full of multiple thumb prints [1,2]. Thus, we conclude that democratic pluralism rather than facilitated, in fact, hindered national development in Nigeria thereby deepening crisis of national development in the post independence era.

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions at which this researcher arrived include the following:

1. That democratic governance has not enhanced nation-building in Nigeria in the post-

2. colonial era.
That democratic pluralism has not facilitated national development in Nigeria in the post-colonial era.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the above findings, therefore, this researcher recommends the following:

1. To reconstitute the Nigerian state in such a way as to increase its autonomy in order to float above class struggles necessary for facilitating good

2. governance as well as enhancing nation-building.

2. To set up sovereign national conference to redefine the basis for our co-existence so as to strengthen democratic pluralism and facilitate national development in Nigeria.

REFERENCES

1. Adar, K. (2000) "Democracy in Africa: The Second Liberation", in C. Legum (ed.) *Africa Contemporary*, Chicago: University of Chicago.
2. Adedeji, A. (1997) "Popular Participation, Democracy and Development: Is there a Dialectical Linkage?" in A. Adedeji and O. Onigu (eds.) *Nigeria: Renewal from the Roots? The Struggle for Democratic Development*, Ijebu Ode: ACDESS.
3. Adejumobi, S. (2000) "Elections in Africa: A Fading Shadow of Democracy?" *International Political Science Review*, 21 (1): 59-73.
4. Adekola, A.A. (2010) *Democratic Development in Nigeria since Independence: Challenges and Prospects*, Ibadan: College Press and Publishers Ltd.
5. Agagu, A.A. (2004) "The Nigerian State, Democracy and Development: A Hope Betrayed?" In A.A. Agagu and R.F. Ola (eds.) *Development Agenda of the Nigerian State*, Ibadan: Fiag Nigeria Publishers.
6. Agara, T. and Adekunle A. (2012) "Understanding the Nature of Conflicts in Africa: Some Analytical and Theoretical Explanations" in A. Osuntokun and V. Ukaogu (eds.) *Niger Delta: Politics of Despair, Deprivation and Desperation*, Lagos: ICS Print Shop.
7. Ahmed, S. (2002) "Democratic Governance and the Challenges of Poverty, Peace and Security in Nigeria" A Lecture Delivered on Third Democracy Day on May 29 in Abuja, Nigeria.
8. Ake, C. (1973) "Explaining Political Instability in New States", *Journal of Modern African Studies* 2 (3):351-359.
9. Ake, C. (1981) *A Political Economy of Africa*, London: Longman Group.
10. Ake, C. (1985) *Political Economy of Nigeria*, London: Longman Group.
11. Ake, C. (1996a) *Democracy and Development in Africa*, Washington DC: The Booklings Institution.
12. Ake, C. (1996b) *Is Africa Democratizing?* Port Harcourt: Centre for Advance Social Sciences.
13. Ake, C. (2001) *Democracy and Development in Africa*, Ibadan: Spectrum Books.
14. Akindele, O. (2011) *Democracy in Nigeria*, Ibadan: Ilesanmi Press.
15. Akwara, A. F. and Ojoma, B.A. (2013) "Religion, Politics and Democracy in Nigeria" *Canadian Social Science* 9 (2) 48-61.
16. Akwara, A.F., Udaw, J.E. and Onimawo, J. (2013) "National Identity, Integration and Question: Implications for National Security and Stable

- Democratic Governance in Nigeria", *International Journal of Public Administration and Management Research (IJPAMR)*, 2 (1): 48-62.
17. Alence, R. (2004) "Political Institutions and Developmental Governance in Sub-Saharan," *Africa, The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 42.
 18. Amuwo, K. (2005) "The Peripheral State: Critical Perspectives on the Structure and Role of the Public Bureaucracy", *Journal of Development Alternative Area Studies*, 24 (3-4): 119-130.
 19. Anyim, P.A. (2002) "Democracy and Development in Nigeria" A Text of Lecture Delivered at the 2nd Development Centre Annual Lecture on September 12 in Abuja, Nigeria.
 20. Atake, O.J. and Dodo, W.A. (2010) "Democracy, Good Governance and Nation Building: A Multi-dimensional Approach", *International Journal of Advanced Legal Studies and Governance*, 1 (1): 15-28.
 21. Baker, B. (2000) "Who Should be Called to Account for Good Governance?" *Democratization*, 7.
 22. Barten, F., Montiel, R.P., Espinoza, E. and Morale, C. (2002) "Democratic Governance Fairytale or Real Perspective? Lessons from Central America" *Environment and Urbanization*, 14: 129-143.
 23. Bayomi, E. (2011) *Nigerian Fourth Republic*, London: Stevensons Publishers Limited.
 24. Bello-Imam, I.B. and Obadan, M.I. (2004) "Democratic Governance and Development Management in Nigeria's Fourth Republic, 1999-2003: The Prologue" *Benin Journal of Social Sciences*, 13 (1): 192-205.
 25. Borishade, D.O. (2000) *Democratic Transitions in Nigeria*, Lagos: Henshaw Publishers.
 26. Brettschneider, C. (2006) "The Value Theory of Democracy" *Politics, Philosophy and Economics*, 5 (3).
 27. Carter, A. and Stokes, G. (2002) "Introduction" in A. Carter and G. Stokes (eds.) *Democratic Theory Today*, New York: Blackwell Publishers.
 28. Chikelue, O.K. (2011) *Political Governance in Post-independent Nigeria*, Enugu: Cripils.
 29. Cohen, L. and Manion, L. (1980) *Research Methods in Education*, London: Croom Helm.
 30. Cornwall, A. et al. (1994) "Acknowledging Process: Methodological Challenges for Agricultural Research and Extension" in I. Scones and J. Thompson (eds.) *Beyond Farmer First*, London: Intermediate Technology Publications.
 31. Diamond, L. (2004) "Democracy, Development and Good Governance: The Inseparable Links", A Text of Lecture Presented at the Annual Democracy and Governance Lecture at the Center for Democratic Development, Ghana.
 32. Dike, V. (2011) *Leadership, Democracy and the Nigeria Economy: Lesson from the Past and Directions for the Future*, Sacramento: the Lightning Press