

The Politics of Opposition in Nigeria: Lessons and  
Challenges Beyond The 2015 General Elections

**Sa'idu Abdullahi**

Department of Political Science, Bayero University, Kano

Phone Number: 08036502650, 08028141422

e-mail addresses: [asaidu027@gmail.com](mailto:asaidu027@gmail.com), [asaidu36@yahoo.com](mailto:asaidu36@yahoo.com)

**Abstract**

The prevalence of a vibrant and strong opposition parties is profound in building an effective competitive politics. More than one and half decade of the country return to multiparty politics in 1999, People Democratic Party (PDP) has been in control of power, at least, at the national level, making the country almost a de-facto single party political system. This remains until when it was defeated in the 2015 general elections. The decomposition and recomposition of some opposition political parties, which have given rise to a strong opposition party and consequently defeat of the incumbent party for the first term, have brought a new trail in the history of the Nigerian political development. Thus, the emergence of APC in 2013 has made the politics of opposition vibrant since the inception of the present democratic dispensation. With the defeat of the PDP in the last general elections, there has been increasing culture of defection and switching from one political party to the other, particularly from the PDP - as an opposition party to the ruling party - APC. This situation has raised a serious concern about the place of ideology in Nigerian politics and dynamic of competitive multiparty politics. Thus, the inability of politicians to appreciate the fact that the existing of a strong opposition party is a key for effective competitive politics is informed by self centred interest. This is evidenced looking at the unending leadership tussle in PDP especially after it defeat in the 2015 general elections, in addition to the failure of APC to perform credibly. This article examines the dynamic of opposition politics in particular with the emergence of APC, first, as opposition and, then, as ruling party in Nigeria.

Key words: Political Party, Election, Democracy, Multi-party politics

**Introduction**

The prevalence of a vibrant and strong opposition parties is profound in building an effective competitive politics. The dynamism of politics under multi-party system is determine by the present of viable opposition parties which perform three basic traditional roles include "...voice of voiceless, alternative to the ruling government, and official opposition" (Naanen, 2015: 2). The sixteen years of PDP rule corresponds with the rising crisis of legitimacy as evidenced by the collapse of socio-economic infrastructure, rising insecurity, and above all, corruption among government officials, The misruled of the country for past sixteen years under the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) could have been challenged, if for instance there was a present of strong opposition party in the country. Many attempts were made by some of the existence political parties to come into alliances to oust PDP from power. But because of the inability of the Nigerian politicians to seal their individual differences and divergence view over sharing of positions, this especially within the context of ethnic, regional and religious divides made these attempts at forming a formidable opposition alliance a dismal failure (Ibrahim and Hassan, 2014).

The rising internal crisis within PDP with the decision took by the party not to shift power to North and the emergence of President Goodluck Ebelle Jonathan as its presidential flag bearer in the 2015 general elections, coincidentally occurred at a time when three major opposition parties in Nigeria have accepted to decompose and merge into a single political party called the All Progressive Congress (APC). The emergence of APC as the first strong opposition party since the inception of the present political dispensation has significantly affected the dynamic of party politics in Nigeria. While this was seen as development for the country competitive multiparty politics, however, the waves of political defection that have been witnessed after the defeat of PDP in the 2015 general elections, particularly in states where APC wield more power, in addition with the rising internal party conflict that rampage PDP for almost three years and subsequently pushed it to the point of collapsing, have give rise to another concern over the dynamic of politics of opposition in Nigeria. Appreciably, the verdict of the country Apex Court on July, 2017 has resuscitated the hope of coming back of the PDP to political lifeline. But with the eruption of fresh leadership tussle after it national convention in December 2017, thing becomes more hard for the PDP again doubting the possibility of coming back stronger and perform as a viable opposition party in Nigeria. Also, given the limited performance of APC in the area of uplifting the living standard of Nigerians since coming to office in 2015, what would be the faith of APC in 2019 general elections?

This study interrogates the dynamic of opposition politics in Nigeria with the view to bring about some of the challenges and lessons to be learned since the emergence of APC as opposition and later ruling party in Nigeria. The article is structured into six parts. The first part is the introduction followed by discuss on the trends in party and electoral alliances in Nigeria. Part three discusses on socio-economic of the Nigerian Fourth Republic. Part four deals with the issues towards the 2015 general elections and the emergence of All Progressive Congress (APC). Part five discusses on the lessons and challenges with regard to dynamic of politics of opposition in Nigeria beyond the 2015 general elections, and lastly part six is the concluding remarks.

#### Trends in Party and Electoral Alliances in Nigeria

The formation of political parties in Nigeria can be traced as far back as 1920s which the birth of the first political party - the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) founded by Herbert Macaulay. This development is followed the introduction of elective representation by Clifford Constitution of 1922. By 1934, the Nigeria Youth Movement (NYM) was formed, challenging the political influence of NNDP. This followed the failure of NNDP to radicalise the political space especially in dealing with the colonial obnoxious policies.

By 1950s, Nigeria witnesses the proliferation of political parties and associations. Most of these parties and associations were emerged in line of ethnic or regional divides for the purpose of protecting the interests of ethnic or regions they are inclined with. Some of these political parties included: the Northern People's Congress (NPC) inclined to the people of the north, the Action Group (AG) to the west and the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) to the East. Others are: the Niger Delta Congress (NDC) for the people of Niger-Delta region of Nigeria, Mid-West Democratic Front (NDF) for the people of Edo and other minorities' ethnic groups of the mid-west region, United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) for the people Benue and River Benue axis and a lot of others.

The first political alliances started sometimes before the 1964 general elections. The main reason for this alliance was to improve the chance of acquiring political power. Ibrahim and Hassan (2014) argued that when the country operated parliamentary system of government, the existing political parties were divided into government party and opposition parties. While the government party was trying to maintain its political power, the opposition parties were on the other hand planning on how to outs the government party from power. Towards the 1964 general elections, there were move to form an alliances. The ruling party - NPC with the Niger Delta Congress (NDC), the faction of Action Group - the New Nigerian Democratic Party (NNDP) and the Mid-West Democratic Front (NDF) formed the Nigerian National Alliance (NNA). On the other hand, the opposition parties - Action Group (AG), the

National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC), and the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) with some minor parties also formed along ethnic divides, made United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA).

Before the election, there were accusations and counter accusations, particularly in the Western Region. This led to the boycott of the election by many of the UPGA candidates. Ibrahim and Hassan (2014) stated that the reason for this boycott was as result of the poor conducive atmosphere for the opposition alliance to campaign as the incumbent ruling party made it difficult for most of the APGA candidates; in some places opposition candidates were not given nomination forms living the NNA to swept most of the seats. They further argue that in the second republic, the establishment of splinter groups within most of the opposition parties fuelling by the ruling party – NPN, made it difficult for them to come into alliance that could challenge it political supremacy especially at the centre.

The Nigerian Fourth Republic comes into being on May 29, 1999. As a multi-party politics, three political parties were first got register. These are: the People's Democratic Party (PDP), the All Progressive Party (APP), later All Nigerian People's Party (ANPP), and Alliance for Democracy (AD). Osinakachukwu and Jawan (2011) argued that, even though the three political parties were registered, the presidential election of 1999 was contested by an alliance of APP and AD, filled in Chief Olu Falae of AD as it presidential flag bearer Alhaji Umar Shinkafi of APP served as his running mate, while the PDP on the other hand filled in Chief Olusegun Obasanjo. In spite of that, the APP-AD alliance failed to win the presidential election. Like any other elections held previously, the 1999 electoral process in Nigeria was flawed, the results were rigged as ballot boxes were snuffed and many people were disenfranchised.

Towards the 2003 general elections the rulings PDP entered into 'temporary arrangement' that look like alliance with AD, at that time controlling most part of the states in the South-West. This pact was purportedly to have entered to help Obasanjo to secure victory for a second term. Under this alliance or what could be term as temporary political ethnic alliance, it was agreed that the AD would not field any presidential candidate in solidarity with Obasanjo being also from the South-West and, in exchange for the AD governors to have smooth sail in their re-election bid (Ibrahim and Hassan, 2014). While AD have respected the agreement for not fielded a candidate to contest for the office of Mr. president with Obasanjo, on the other hand PDP was very fast for not only fielded its candidates to contest in the gubernatorial election in 2003 along with those seeking for re-election under AD, but also ensure that it won five out of the six states under the control of AD prior to the election. With "...only the Lagos State who rejected the alliance retained his seat". These states included, Ondo, Osun, Ogun, Oyo and Ekiti States.

Furthermore, in 2007 general elections, attempt was made to form an alliance between AD, ANPP and the faction of PDP championed by the former Vice President Atiku Abubakar. The proposed alliance failed because of the inability of the opposition parties to reach an agreement on who will be the presidential flag bearer. This arose due to individual differences, particularly between the Muhammadu Buhari, a former Military Governor and minister as well as one time Nigerian military Head of State and Atiku Abubakar. This further weakens the possibility of forming a formidable opposition party that could muzzle power with PDP. Worsen the situation further, the formation of Action Congress (AC) and the emergence of different candidates under the platform of different political parties to contest for the 2007 presidential election, for example, AD - Pere Ajuwa, AC - Atiku Abubakar, ANPP - Muhammadu Buhari has not only weaken the capacity of the opposition parties in Nigeria but further strengthen the political influence of PDP. Attempt is also made to form alliance in 2011 among the opposition parties but just like the previous ones, this attempt failed again. As opposition parties continue to achieve very minimal in forming a formidable opposition party, the political power of PDP continue to deepen, particularly at the centre.

Most of the pacts, alliances and attempted alliances in the Nigerian political history was mostly entered by various parties are for the purpose to win electoral contests. No wonder Ibrahim and Hassan (2014) argued that the consistence failure of the opposition party to thrive over the year in the history of the Nigerian political development is due to the antagonistic in the sharing of political post. This is so

profound when assessing this within the context of ethnic, religious and regional divides, especially with the increasing importance of state in the distribution of petro-revenue based resources.

The Socio-economic of the Nigerian Fourth Republic

At a time when Nigeria returned to civil rule in 1999, the per capita stood around US \$270, the capacity utilisation of the manufacturing industries was 35 per cent and the incidence of poverty was up to 67 per cent. The exchange rate for the naira to one US Dollar was put at around N90. In 2002, the capacity utilisation remained at high as 35% but the incidence of poverty rose to 70 per cent and the value of the Naira to one US Dollar also rose to N 125 (Jega, 2004:8).

In spite of significant economic growth due to the propelling positive price of crude oil at the international market especially from 2005 to late 2011. There is increase in the rate of unemployment, in particular among the youth, as the trend in the unemployment rose from 12.3 percent in 2006 to 23.9 percent in 2011 (Olowonomi and Audu, 2012: 432). This trend significantly jumped to 24.3 percent in 2012 and to 28.5 percent in 2013 (Innocent, 2014:110). It was estimated around 90 percent of youth graduate totally about 1,430,000 from the Nigerian tertiary institutions between 2004 and 2014 roam the streets in search for jobs (David and Manu, 2015:159).

Also, poverty has become too close to the comfort of the majority. The percentage of those categorised as extreme poor rose from 6.2 percent in 1980 to 38.7 percent in 2010 (Olowonomi and Audu, 2012: 433). Adesina (2012: 8) argues that the income share between those considered at the top and down is continuously widening in Nigeria. For instance, the share income of the lowest 10 per cent of the people in 1986 was around 2.47 per cent, 28.21 per cent for the top 10 per cent and that of top 20 per cent in the same year was estimated to be 45.01 per cent. By 2010, the percentage of income share among these categories of people drastically changed with sharp decline among the lowest 10 per cent to about 1.75 per cent. There was remarkably increased of income share among the top 10 and 20 per cents from 28.21 and 45.01 per cents recorded in 1986 to 38.23 and 54.01 per cents, respectively, in 2010.

There is evidenced of rising insecurity across the country from the Boko Haram crisis in the North-East to youth restiveness in Niger-Delta and farmers-herdsmen conflict in Benue, Ekiti and other states across the country. The unfolding situation coupled with increasing corruption especially among elected officials brought public disenchantment in many quarters and the call for change in the political leadership in the country.

Towards the 2015 General Elections and Emergence of All Progressive Congress (APC) as Opposition Party in Nigeria

Prior to the emergence of APC in 2013, the political terrain in Nigeria has been dominated by PDP with some political parties forming opposition. Ibrahim and Hassan (2014) contend that most of the opposition parties that exist during the fourteen years of PDP political domination - the All Nigerian People's Party (ANPP), Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA), Labour Party (LP), Progressive People's Alliance (PPA) have regional representation. On this fact most of these parties have weak capacity to oust PDP from power, giving more opportunity to continued consolidating its strength by winning majority in every election, especially at the central level. This is evident as report of African Elections Database (undated: 3-4) shown that PDP won the presidential election that held in 2003 with about 24, 456, 140 votes or 61.94% of 42, 018, 735 total valid votes cast. The report also shows that PDP won 76 seats out of 109 in the Senate and 223 seats out of 360 in the House of Representatives in comparison with other political parties that contested with PDP in the 2003 election into the National Assembly (see Table 1). table

Parties	Senate			House of Representatives		
	No. of vote	% of vote	No. of seats (109)	No. of vote	% of vote	No. of seats (360)
PDP	15,585,538	53.69%	76	15,927,87	54.49%	223
ANPP	8,091,783	27.87%	27	8,021,531	27.44%	96
AD	2,828,082	9.74%	6	2,711,972	9.28%	34
UNPP	789,705	2.72%	-	803,432	2.75%	2
NDP	459,462	1.58%	-	561,161	1.92%	1
APGA	429,073	1.48%	-	397,147	1.36%	2
PRP	2004,929	0.71%	-	222,938	0.76%	1
Others	641,535	2.21	-	587,082	2.01%	-
Vacant	-	-	-	-	-	1

In 2007, twenty-five candidates were contested for the April 21 presidential election. Out of the 35,397,517 valid votes cast PDP had 69.60% followed by ANPP with 18.66%. PDP also won 87 out of 109 seats in the Senate and 263 out 360 seats in the House of Representatives. This dramatically dropped to 45 seats in the Senate and 123 seats in the House of Representatives in 2011 election (African Election Database, undated: 4). The PDP was in control of 23 out of the 36 states in 2011, in spite of the fact that it had lost six states in the South-West to Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), which before 2011 general elections was in control of only Lagos. Similarly, the party presidential flag bearer - Goodluck E. Jonathan was also declared to have won the 2011 Presidential election by 58.89% of the total votes cast, living his closest political rival - Muhammadu Buhari of the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) with 31.98% of the valid vote cast (see Table 2).

<b>Candidate</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Number of Votes</b>	<b>% of Votes</b>
Goodluck E. Jonathan	PDP	22, 495, 187	58.89%
Muhammadu Buhari	CPC	12, 214, 853	31.98%
Nuhu Ribadu	CAN	2, 079, 151	5.41%
Ibrahim Shekarau	ANPP	917, 012	2.40%
Mahmud Waziri	PDC	82, 243	0.21%
Nwadike Chikezie	PMP	56, 248	0.15%
Lawson Aroh	PPP	54, 203	0.14%
Peter Nwangwu	ADC	51, 682	0.14%
Iheanyichukwu Nnaji	BNPP	47, 272	0.12%
Christopher Okotie	FP	34, 331	0.09%
Dele Momodu	NCP	26, 376	0.07%
Solomon Akpona	NMDP	25, 938	0.07%
Lawrence Adedoyin	APS	23, 740	0.06%
Abiti Ndok	UNPD	21, 203	0.06%
John Dara	NTP	19, 744	0.05%
Rashid Shitta – Bey	MPPP	16, 492	0.04%
Yahaya Ndu	ARP	12, 264	0.03%
Ambrose Owuru	HDP	12, 023	0.03%
Patrick Utomi	SDMP	11, 544	0.03%
Chris Nwakobia	LDPN	8, 472	0.02%

Source: African Election Data Base at <http://africanelections.tripod.com/ng.html>.

Looking at the number of seats both in the Senate and House of Representatives won by the PDP during the 2011 general elections, one could note that PDP's majority diminished. This resulted from the dissatisfaction of the party's members over nomination process and absence of internal party democracy. Under this condition candidates were forced on the party members and in some cases party primaries were not held or being manipulated to suit some powerful political godfathers. In fact, these undemocratic nature of selecting candidate to contest in an election within the party and the increasing impunity had made stakeholders within the party to believed that once one emerge as a party flag bearer after primaries he or she will definitely emerge victorious during the general electoral contest. Lack of internal party democracy in PDP cleared way for opposition parties such as ACN to gain more ground especially in the South-West. The defeat of PDP by ACN corresponds also with the dwindling fortune of All Nigerian People's Party (ANPP) in the North because of its leadership crisis.

In the midst of this development three of the opposition parties decided to merger. This came after many fruitless attempts previously by the opposition parties to come together and challenge the political

dominance of PDP. This come in terms with Ibrahim and Hassan (2014) position who contend that the determination of the Nigerians opposition parties to wrestle power from the ruling PDP's led to the emergence of All Progressive Congress (APC) as a result of merger of three opposition parties, namely: the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), All Nigerian People's Party (ANPP), Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) and the faction of the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA). Its emergence followed the approval giving by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) after meeting the required statutory for the merger. Having emerged as a single political party, the certificates of the three applicants political parties merged were withdrew by INEC (Global Security, undated).

While APC was busy trying to gain a political ground in preparation towards 2015 general elections, this coincidentally come with the rising tension within PDP, especially from the decision made by President Goodluck Jonathan to contest the 2015 presidential election. The continued deepening of this crisis led to the split of the party into two factions - the 'New PDP' and 'Old PDP'. As this crisis worsen, not few than 37 members of House of Representatives from PDP with some serving governors and Senators, as well as thousands of their supporters have decamped to APC.

#### Dynamic of Opposition Politics in the Nigerian Fourth Republic: Lessons and Challenges

Among the lessons to be learned with the emergence of APC is that democracy hardly attained without existence of a strong and effective opposition party that can checkmate the activities of party in power. Sixteen years, PDP has not been able to transform the dreams of many into reality despite hopes and expectations raised with the returned of the country into civil democratic rule. Sixteen years of PDP rule to many could be described as the unfortunate, if not disastrous in the history of Nigerian political development. Within these years the country has been confronting with many challenges in the area of security, ranging from armed robbery, kidnapping, oil bunkering to the problem of Boko Haram insurgency and the spate of ethno-religious crisis.

There was obvious decrease in the human development index, in spite, rising economic growth of an estimated 7.75 percent, poverty remained too close to the comfort of many household of about 69 percent. The rate of unemployment get increased, while majority of the infrastructural facilities were on their last legs and life became difficult due to decrease in the human development index (Ibrahim and Hassan, 2014: 10). In the midst of these problems, few individual in the corridor of power continued to live in affluence and derive much benefit through corrupt means with impunity. The emergence of APC as opposition party, thus, provides an alternative for the electorate to choose between the contending programmes, vision and personalities during electoral contest (Naanen, 2015). For the first time this brought changed in the politics of opposition in Nigeria since 1999. It also rekindled the Nigerians' hope on democracy as the only alternative form of government they can think of.

The emergence of APC from the opposition later ruling party has further remind the Nigeria politicians the need to imbibe the culture of tolerance and respect of opposition, and above all, have faith in the ballot box. Prior to the elections many Nigerian politicians hardly believe that one could work for and actually earn votes in an election based on one's vision and appeal (Omoruyi, 2006). The victory of APC in 2015 general elections has proof this wrong. APC was able to mobilised electorate massive despite the unhealthy political condition to ensure that it emerges victorious in the 2015 general elections. It should be recall that towards the 2015 general elections, the anaemic political behaviour and mounting politics of intimidation had made it difficult for APC and its stalwarts to operate. Social network and the state coercion institutions such as police were used to harass members of APC by the then ruling party - PDP. The political victory of APC as an opposition party has raised a fundamental issue that for any political party to emerge victorious in an election it needs to be opened and associated itself with the urgent needs of the generality of the people such as security, poverty, unemployment and so on. Politics generally is all about serving the interests of and empowering the people. For democracy to thrives people must be empowered and their needs must be aggregated and articulated properly by the political parties, hence the need for strong and viable opposition parties that will help in checkmating the excesses of the ruling party become necessary.

There is no doubt that the emergence of APC as an opposition party is a welcome development, at least if not for anything, it provides an avenue in limiting an abuse of power by PDP. But could not have been without some challenges and one of such is the inability of the politicians to learn from their mistakes and appreciates the fact that strong and viable opposition is an important ingredient that capable of engendering an enduring democracy. In recent time, the desire to achieve political interests has led to the disappearing of ideology in politics. Because of this, particularly with the dramatic political victory of APC in the March-April 2015 general elections, the widespread culture of defection among the politicians intensified, worsen ever since the emergence of the present political dispensation, especially in the states where APC emerges victorious. It is agreed that politics is a matter of interest yet in Nigeria today desire to accumulate seemed more significant in determining where ones belongs. The defection from one party to the other is help in ensuring that one acquires political post as this remains an avenue where state resources can be accessed for the purpose of primitive accumulation. No wonder many of the politicians because of this cannot withstand the prolonged period out of power as this means starvation. Therefore, every opportunity that can provide access to political posts tends to be pursuing diligently.

The in-rush entering of some of the defectors into APC has raise a serious concern, particularly among its stalwarts that have contributed towards it formation, as to whether there is conspiracy to destabilise the party. This could be linked especially with the rising internal leadership crisis that engulfed the party soon after the defection of the PDP faction – the New PDP into APC. This defection forced many of the APC architectures and supporters like Attahiru Dalhatu Bafarawa and Ibrahim Shekarau, formed governors of Sokoto and Kano respectively to decamp to PDP. This political uproar can significantly weaken the strength of any opposition party, luckily for the APC, it was able to put its strength and challenge the PDP by identified itself with the desire of many Nigerians for change, emphasising on fighting corruption, tackling security challenge and reducing unemployment, especially among youth. The massive defection witnessed with the resounding defeat of PDP in the 2015 general elections have inundated party politics, further killed politics of ideology and stalled the development of viable political opposition that can challenge the actions or inactions of ruling party APC, making sure that whatever government intended to do, it does it for the interests of Nigeria and Nigerians. This becomes paramount in building viable democratic governance. It is important to note that the massive defection from PDP with the emergence of APC, coupled with the incisive unresolved internal crisis that factionalised the PDP have weaken its strength as an opposition party, indeed, if not signal “... an impression of a party on the brink of collapse” (Naanen, 2015: 5).

The pertinent question remains is whether PDP have what it takes to be called opposition party looking at the mistakes and blunders it made for sixteen years of its ruling. This is because credible opposition party most have ability not just to criticise, but also to demonstrate that it is capable of providing credible proposals and actions. The recklessness governance experience from 1999-2015 left many people disappointed for voting PDP into power. Indeed, for PDP to rely provide effective and vigorous politics of opposition there is the need for the party to put it house in order. But this seem to be difficult as some of the aggrieved members from the Senator Ali Madu Sharif faction are yet to accept defeat from the landmark judgement of the Supreme Court that ended the lingering leadership tussle in the party. In addition, the rising fresh leadership crisis after emergence of Prince Uche Secondus as a party National Chairman during it national convention in Abuja on December 2017, on the allegation of misconduct has further get the situation worsen in doubting the capability of the PDP to challenge the ruling APC in the 2019 general election elections as the party is now split further into more camps with the emergence of 'Fresh PDP' camp. This remains a challenge for the dynamic of politics of opposition in Nigeria.

APC was able to associate itself with the aspirations of many Nigerians in it electioneering campaigns for the 2015 general elections, but it has failed to change the dreams of many Nigerians into reality after winning the elections. Despite APC led-government effort in fighting corruption and ability to reduce the terror attack from the Boko Haram, more need to be done in the area of human security – reducing poverty, unemployment especially among the youth, illiteracy and improving on the living conditions of

many Nigerians. Since the APC formed government in 2015, there is growing concern about worsen of living conditions of many Nigerians, as many hardly afford daily three square meals and others are without job. The economic condition of the country get worsen as many small businesses find it difficult to progress particularly during the economic recession and with the fluctuating exchange of Naira to Dollar. There is deteriorating condition of road networks, health centres, schools as many of these socio-economic infrastructures are continued to remain in the state of utter dilapidation, making the dream of many Nigerians unrealistic.

There is a dwindling incidence of ethno-religious conflicts in recent time, however, the manifestation and the growing communal and sectarian strife as well as spate of youth restiveness in some parts of Nigeria, for instance, Niger-Delta, farmers-herdsmen conflicts in the states like Benue, Taraba and Ekiti, rampant kidnapping across the states, the fresh threat from Nnamdi Kanu for the actualisation of the sovereign state of Biafra, have continued engaging the state under the APC-led administration. Though the effort of APC-led administration in fighting corruption is highly acknowledged, however, the inability of APC government to expand this fight by investigating some corrupt cases that affect some of its members and government officials or prosecute some of the government officials found wanting such as Babachir Lawal, the former secretary of government, have continued casting doubt on sincerity of the APC-led administration in fighting corruption. This situation has clearly shown that the APC as a ruling party since 2015 has failed to learn from the mistakes of the PDP and these can serve as determining factors for the success or otherwise of the APC under any viable opposition politics. Given this situation, it is a right time for the opposition parties in Nigeria to put their houses in order by re-organising themselves to challenge the actions or inactions of the APC-led administration. As opposition politics goes beyond ability to muster strength with, but if possible, to defeat the ruling party and contribute towards peaceful and effective competitive politics that would usher in good and responsible government.

#### Concluding Remarks

The present of opposition party is inevitable, indeed necessary for the development of multi-party politics. Where sound opposition polity thrives it promotes democracy and responsiveness in governance. The emergence of APC as an opposition party has ushered in new phase in competitive politics for the first term in Nigeria since the emergence of the present political dispensation. However, its inability as a ruling party to prove that it is capable of handling all the misfortunes and challenges facing the country, particularly its failure to improve on the living conditions of Nigerians since assume office in May 29, 2015, has shown that the decision of the some of the politicians to accept and form an opposition party - APC in 2013, in addition to massive defection witnessed especially with the defeat of PDP in the 2015 general elections rest on high values placed upon the need to access political power for the purpose of making self rich and for upward social status rather than group interests. Essentially, what is required for the existing political parties in Nigeria is to accept the fact that the survival of the democratic polity in Nigeria depends on the present of strong, viable and true opposition party that will serve as voice of voiceless, promote good governance, justice, and above all, bring change to the fortune of Nigerians when given an opportunity to rule.

#### References

Adesina, O. J, (2012). Human security and the challenge of inclusive development: Nigeria at the crossroad. In: Rauf Ayo Dunmoye, Ejembi A. Unobe and Aliyu Rafindadi Sanusi (Eds), National security, integration and sustainable development in Nigeria. Proceedings of the ABU at 50. Humanities International Conference, (pp. 1-14), Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University, Press.

Africa Election DataBase (undated). Retrieved from <http://africanelections.tripod.com/ng.html>. Date Accessed: 08/03/2016.

David, A., N. & Manu, A. Y. (2015). Democracy, youth and violent conflicts in Nigeria's fourth republic: A critical analysis. In: Journal of Research on Humanities and Social Science. Vol.5. No. 2, 159-171. Retrieved from [www.iisle.org](http://www.iisle.org). Date accessed: 20/10/2015.

Global Security (undated). Retrieved from <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/word/nigeria/political-parties.htm>. Date Accessed: 08/03/2016.

Ibrahim, J. & Hassan, I. (2014). Nigerian political parties: From failed opposition electoral alliance to merger: The march towards the 2015 general elections. Centre for Democracy and Development. Retrieved from [africanelections.org/userfile/Nigeria Pol. Parties 2 \(1\)](http://africanelections.org/userfile/Nigeria%20Pol.%20Parties%20(1).htm). Date Accessed: 14/01/2016.

Innocent, O. E. (2014). The unemployment rate in Nigeria: Agenda for government. In: Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies. July, Vol. 3, No 4, Rome-Italy: MCSER Publisher, 103-114. Retrieved from [www.mcser.org/journal/index.php/ajis/articles/viewFile/3077/3033](http://www.mcser.org/journal/index.php/ajis/articles/viewFile/3077/3033). Date Accessed: 10/03/2015.

Jega, A. (2004). Democracy, economic crisis and conflicts: A review of Nigerian situation. In: The Quarterly Journal of Administration, Vol. XXXII, No.1, 1-17, Ile-Ife-Nigeria: Faculty of Administration, Obafemi Awolowo University.

Naanen, B. (2015). 2015 elections: Threatened collapse of opposition and the future of democracy in Nigeria. Retrieved from [www.inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/conference-Paper-by-Ben-Naanen](http://www.inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/conference-Paper-by-Ben-Naanen.pdf). Date Accessed: 23/01/2016.

Olowononi, D.G. and Audu, I. (2012). Unemployment, national security and sustainable development in Nigeria. In: A. R. Dunmoye, A. E. Unobe and R. A. Sanusi (eds.), Proceedings of the ABU@50 Humanities' International Conference (pp. 424-436). Zaria-Nigeria: Ahmadu Bello University.

Omoruyi, O. (2006). Your vote is your voice, Kano-Nigeria: Centre for Democratic Research and Training, Mambayya House, Bayero University.

Osinachukwu, P. N. & Jawan, A. J. (2011). The electoral process and democratic consolidation in Nigeria. In: Journal of Politics and Law. September. Vol. 4, No. 2. Retrieved from [www.ccsenet.org/jpl](http://www.ccsenet.org/jpl). Date Accessed: 03/03/2016.