

CHALLENGES OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA (1999 TO 2019)

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Abstract

Democracy is the most acceptable form of government in the world as it gives preferences to popular participation, rule of law, periodic election and good governance. The paper adopts the pluralist democratic theory as its theoretical framework. It uses secondary method of data collection, which involves documentary evidences like textbooks, Newspapers, magazines, and internet materials to generate information relevant to the study. The study reveals that Nigerian democracy is confronted with the challenges of poor political culture, corruption, insecurity, dependent electoral body, and primordial nature of the nation's politics and democratic practices. Therefore, the paper recommends for a reform in the nations' electoral and political process to ensure effective citizenship participation and good governance in Nigeria.

Key words: Democracy, Human Rights, Rule of Law, Democratic Governance

Introduction

Globally, democracy is the most acceptable form of government. It is a system that places premiums on popular participation, human rights, rule of law, periodic election and good governance. One important feature that distinguishes democracy from other forms of government is election, which envisages mass involvement of the citizens in the governing process of their country. However, the political environment in most developing countries in Africa has been ravaged by decades of colonial rules, military dictatorships, feudal structures, poor political culture, ethnic politics and other forms of primordial sentiments. As a result, the continent found it very difficult to have an enduring democracy.

Since the attainment of political independence on the 1st October, 1960, Nigeria has continued to gravitate and boil in her effort to institute democratic governance and build a nation where its citizens could take active part in the governing process of their country. However, such effort by the citizens has been threatened by frequent military interregnums, corruption, primordiality, and elite politics in ethnicity and ethno-religious violence in the country.

The first democratic experimentation in Nigeria was thwarted by the military in 1966, the same thing played out during the 2nd Republic in 1983 and the 3rd Republic was aborted to extend and consolidate military dictatorship and abuse of democratic process in the country. And in 1999, democracy was instituted in Nigeria after intensive struggle by the citizens and civil society organizations. The current democratic dispensation in the country have survived over two decades but the dispensation have been threatened by primordialism, ethnic and religious violence, and where wealth have become the major bane of politics and power play in the country. As a result,

merit is sacrifice for mediocrity in the appointive and elective positions, and the essence of citizenship which entails membership of the state and enjoyment of political and legal rights have been defeated.

In any democratic state, the citizens are politically equal and they are the driving force of the governing process. But in our own setting the reverse has been the case, because citizens' participation in the democratic process is determined by pecuniary and primordial considerations. This paper therefore attempt to examine citizenship, democratic principles, challenges of democratic governance and way forward for Nigeria.

Clarification of Concepts

Democracy

The term democracy is associated popular participation or mass involvement of people in the governing process of the state. It means government by the consent of the people where the majority rules while the minorities are protected. Democracy is either direct or indirect; the former is where people come together to discuss their common problems or welfare while the latter is where people elect their representatives to act on their behalf. Democracy is a system of government in which the exercise of political power and authority is vested in the people through their elected representatives (Adedeji, 2013). Democracy is generally attributed to the concept of rule of law, constitutionalism, separation of power, checks and balances, periodic election, the presence of opposition and public opinion.

Human Rights

Human rights can be described as those freedoms that the citizens enjoy in the state. They are inalienable rights that are said to have been enjoyed by a man right from creation. And when man began to think of the idea of living in a state, he decided to forsake some of his natural rights to the state, believing that the state will protect those rights on his behalf. Therefore, it becomes essential to document or codify human rights in such a way to avoid them being misused or abused (Ali, 2017).

The first effort to codify human rights started with the enactment of the Magna Carta of 1215 which represents the right granted by the British Monarch to be enjoyed by the member of the noble family. Rights like rights to life, personal liberty and the pursuit of one's happiness. However, the Magna Carta did not cover the entire British citizens; efforts to replace it became eminent. The second efforts at the codification of these rights were made with the enactment of Bill of Rights in 1689 by the British House of Parliament. The Bill however proclaimed the supremacy of the British parliament over the British Monarch or the Crown as it serves the interests of the entire British citizens in respect to rights or freedoms. The rights provided in the Bill of rights were referred to as civil and political rights expected to be enjoyed by all British citizens which included rights to life, liberty, and dignity of human person, speech, association, and self-determination (Ali 2017).

The third efforts came with the creations of the League of Nations and later the United Nations Charter of 1945. The United Nations Charter made conspicuous provisions on rights to be enjoyed by all nations and peoples all over the world. Therefore, human rights become the essential element of government, for any government to be considered a good government it must provide for the recognition of human rights of its citizens.

Rule of Law

The concept of the Rule of Law was developed by A.V. Dicey. He wrote a book titled "Introduction to the Law of the Constitution" which was published in 1885. In that book he describes the rule of law as absence of arbitrary power. Dicey says:

Rule of law implies the absolute supremacy and predominance of regular law as opposed to the influence of arbitrary power, and excludes the existence of arbitrariness, or prerogative or even wide discretionary authority on the part of government. Citizens are ruled by the law and by the law alone. A man may with us be punished for a breach of the law, but can be punished for nothing else.

Rule of law emphasizes the supremacy or predominance of law over and above all members of the society. Aristotle had argued that law should govern and those in positions should be servants of laws. This means that rule of law is associated with constitutional government and absence of dictatorship. Thus, Emmah, (2006) opined that the doctrine of the rule of the law is without doubt intimately bound with the practice of democracy. Tambuwal (2013) observed that the term rule of law encompasses all it takes to uphold, promote and safeguard the supremacy of law over any proclivities of institutions, groups or individuals.

The rule of law is however guided by three basic principles: supremacy of the law, equality before the law and fundamental human rights. Dicey goes further to say that those in position of authority should rule in accordance with the provisions of the constitution and be subjective to the law of the land. It presupposes that government itself is subordinate to the law.

Democratic Governance

Democracy is related to elected representatives or officials whose duty is to carry out the activities of governance in the state. And governance is the process of decisions-making and how those decisions are implemented. Therefore, democratic governance gives citizens a say in how decisions are made and implemented. Democratic governance is synonymous with the dividends of democracy, which according to Henry (2008) is characterized with popular participation, development of political institutions (political parties), free press and freedom of association, independent judiciary, the rule of law and civilian control of the military and its institutions.

However, popular participation is a critical indication of democratic governance in Nigeria; it gives the citizens an opportunity to take active part in the political process of the country. The 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, section 40 made it clear that every citizen shall be entitled to assemble freely and associate with other persons, and in particular he may form or belong to any political party, trade union or any other association for the protection of his interest. Democratic governance allows the citizens to express their on any matter of public interest and make sure that there is rule of law. The bodies that carry out the basic function of governance such as the legislature and executive are elected, and the judiciary is independent of the other arms of government.

Theoretical Framework

The paper uses democratic theory with particular reference to pluralist theory of democracy as its theoretical framework. The rationale behind this theorization is to enable the readers have an insight into the subject under review, challenges of democratic governance in Nigeria (1999 to 2019).

However, democracy is one of the oldest forms of government and has its roots from the Greek city states, which recognizes people as the bedrock of government. Great liberal political theorists like John Lock and Edmund Burke made enough assertions which were premised on 'limited government,' guided by the laws of the state. In another development other theorists like Bentham and James Stuart Mill made submission relating to democratic government in their formulation of the "greatest good of the greatest number". Other theorists like John Stuart Mill, Bryce, Laski, Rousseau, and Green made a lot of arguments in support of democratic government.

Thus, democracy, apart from being a rule of the people, or of the majority, is a socio-political system in which the power of the state is shared with a large number of private groups, interest organizations and individuals represented by such organizations (Johari, 2014). There seem to be similarity between the pluralist and elitist theories of democracy. The elitist theory of democracy is built on the fact that every political system is divided into two groups- the elite or the political entrepreneurs who have ideological commitments and manipulative skill, and the citizens at large, the masses or the apolitical clay of the system, a much large class of passive, inert followers who have little knowledge of public affairs and even less interest'. Every elite is formed around a leader, the credit or discredit for all acts of triumph or disaster is given to him (Johari, 2014).

The pluralist theory of democracy recognizes the existence of open society, varied interests, associations, and groups to project specific interest. Pluralism emerged in the 19th century and some of its advocates like O.V. Gierke, F.W. Maitland, and Emile Durkheim recognized the medieval social system of autonomy of the groups. However, a group either small or big have a role to play in a democratic system be it is federal or non-federal states. The sovereign powers of the state should be designed in such a manner that each group or segment has a role to play.

Contribution by Ray (2018) reflects clearly the situation of the Nigerian democracy where political godfathers or patrons use their political godsons to extend their hold on power, money and influence; they will give the anointed or godsons the political appointees and determining what happens in the country or their states. By this, government becomes a minority activity, the few (godfathers) dictate the sphere of the political system in their favour; and the 'will of the people' will be replaced by the will of the favoured group. Ray envisaged that democracy is however, endangered where the citizens are not vigilant and a few elites hijack the political process and imposes their will against the will of the majority of the voting population as is often the case in most African countries.

Nothing represents this ugly trend like what played out in the recent primaries of the political parties where there were huge allegations of imposition of candidates against the will of the majority of the party members... These clique of dictators are found in the party headquarters where the issue orders that favour their preferred candidates, while others are in various Government Houses, where the state governors determine who gets nominated for elective positions.

Having a closer look at the pluralist theory of democracy, it can be concluded that the theory did not envisaged the existence of groups within group and the social contradiction that ensued between or among members of group in expressing their concerns and influence in the political system. The political system is dynamic like the group, it keeps changing and needs of each group changes and each group has a role to play in relation to what the state wants to achieve.

Democratic Principles and Citizenship in Nigeria

Democracy is essentially a form of government that is built and guided on some principles, which distinguished her from other forms of governments. Such democratic principles like popular participation, periodic election, independent of the judiciary, independent of the electoral body, freedom of the press or the media, rule of law and accountability enhance citizen's participation in the political and electoral process of their country. The citizens are major drivers of the democratic process, they engage in all kinds of democratic activities such as forming political parties, associations, voting in an election, standing as candidate in an election, participating in rallies, campaigns, political and constitutional conferences and engage in constructive criticisms of the government and its policies.

The independent of the judiciary is paramount to democratic principles and ideals. It envisages a scenario in which the judiciary discharges its duties and responsibilities without being molested

and subjugated by the external bodies. The judiciary is insulated from the control of the other two organs of government, its officials are free to take judicial decisions without any fear or favour (Anyaele, 2003). The concept of the independence of the judiciary originated from the theory of separation of power advocated by Baron de Montesquieu, who argues that if liberties and freedoms are to be maintained then the three arms of government, that is the executive, the legislature and judiciary must be kept separate and entrusted to different bodies. However, the three arms must be coordinated and mutually independent, each having an indisputable power in its sphere of jurisdiction.

Also of importance to democratic principles is the issue of the independence of the electoral body that is charged with the responsibility of conducting credible election in the country. The electoral body is one of the critical agencies in a democracy, it is the body that sets the ball rolling in the democratic process by registering political parties, registration of eligible voters, display of voters register, review of voters register, training/retraining of electoral officials, conducting elections and declaration of election results. Therefore, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Nigeria needs to be strengthened by making sure that the leadership of the electoral body is appointed by an independent body established by law to it carry out its activities without any fear of intimidation or molestation by the executive arm of government.

One other thing that is worth mentioning with regard to the principles of democracy in Nigeria is the freedom of the press or media. Media are channels of delivering messages. Media are classified into print and electronic media. Print media use printed symbols in form of words and pictures in order to communicate information to the general public (Gbaden, 2014). Print media includes books, newspapers, magazines, billboards, pamphlets and circular.

The electronic media are media that rely on transmission of signals or messages which can be received aurally or which can both be received aurally and visually (Gbaden, 2014). The electronic media encompass television, radio and internet. Radio and television are called open-circuit because they are designed for general or public reception. The electronic media particularly television transmits news, drama, movies, films, and documentary programmes to the vast majority of people in the society. The content of the programmes transmitted shapes and influences the behavior of the audience (Ali, 2017).

The importance of mass media in a democratic system cannot be overemphasized. That why Edmond Burke described the mass media as an unofficial fourth arm of government in view of the central role the media play as an agent of information dissemination and creating awareness on the development in the society. The media educates, entertains, informs and serves as a platform for expression of public opinion. The protagonists of representative democracy are of the view that the news media should remain free so they may educate the public in making political choices (Clerk and Fredin, 1980) cited in Ali (2017). The media is the eyes of the society. Apart from educating the public on state affairs, they also expose wrong doings, including corrupt practices and ensure accountability, transparency, probity and integrity in governance (Obada, 2005).

As part of democratic principles in Nigeria, elections are held periodically. One good thing about democratic governance is that leadership is not an exclusive right of any individual; it is open to all citizens of the country. Periodic election becomes very important as it helps checkmate the excesses of the political leaders, who will seek for the renewal of mandate after every four years as provided in the constitution. In every democracy, sovereignty belongs to the people where government through the constitution drives all its powers and such powers are reviewed periodically to ensure accountability and good governance.

Furthermore popular participation is another critical of democratic principle in Nigeria. The Nigerian citizens have the right to take active parts in the political and democratic process of their

country. The political space should be opened and expanded to accommodate all shades of opinions, or views expressed by the citizens on any issue of national interest. The political system should revolve around what Ake (2001) described as the four characteristics of democracy:

- A democracy in which people have real decision making power over and above the formal consent of electoral choice.
- A social democracy that places emphasis on concrete political, social and economic rights, as opposed to a liberal democracy that emphasizes abstract political rights.
- A democracy that puts as much emphasis on collective rights as it does on individual rights.
- A democracy of incorporation that will ensure that, the legislative bodies will in addition to nationality groups, have special representatives of mass organizations, especially youth, the labour movements and women groups, which are usually marginalized but without whose active participation there is unlikely to be democracy or development.

Principles of Citizenship in Democratic Governance

Citizenship involves membership, legal status, rights and political participation. And citizenship is built around certain fundamental principles that add value to the state and ensure good governance. Ali (2017) identified nationalism and patriotism as the basic principles of citizenship in Nigeria; other principles are participation, accountability and law abiding.

- i. Nationalism: This means, a strong desire and sense of love for one's country. That feeling of one to sacrifice his life for the survival of his own country and making sure that his thinking and activities are nationalistic in nature. This feeling of nationalism is one that makes a good citizen to think more of his country as an indivisible entity and not a tribal estate.
- ii. Patriotism: This implies the act of showing great commitment and support for one's country at all times. A patriotic citizen is one who believes in dedication to duty, law abiding, truth, trustworthiness and discipline.
- iii. Law Abiding: Nigerian citizens are expected in all ramifications to obey all the laws of the country in order to ensure peace and orderliness. A good citizen exhibits a sense of constitutionalism by making sure that he or she adheres strictly to the spirit of the constitution and other relevant laws of the land.
- iv. Participation: Nigerian citizens participate in the political process of their country, they form political parties and civil society organizations, they vote and be voted for during elections.
- v. Accountability: A good citizen needs to be sincere in dealing with the state and the fellow citizens; and is expected to pay all the taxes due to him as at when due from which government can provide him and others essential services like schools, electricity. The payment of taxes and other state levies by the citizens enable the government to provide for dividend of democracy in terms of raising the standards of living. A citizen should be prepared to defend his country against internal and external aggression. Also a good citizen must be prepared to protect government property under his custody. He or she should provide useful information to the security official like the Police in a bid to dictate crime in the society. It is the duty of the Nigerian citizens to respect the constituted authority and those in position of authority. It is also the duty of a good citizen to respect the National Anthem, National Pledge and the currency and it is the duty of those in

positions of authority to be accountable to the citizens.

The Challenges of Democratic Governance in Nigeria

Nigeria efforts to establish democratic rule has not been easy. The present democratic dispensation in the country that emerged on the May 29th, 1999 has suffered a plethora of crisis. The political environment is volatile that viable opposition could not be accommodated. The scenario led to all specters of electoral and political violence as well as political assassination of the political opponents leading to wanton destruction of lives and property in the country.

Electoral violence is one of the major challenges of democratic governance in Nigeria. Electoral violence encompasses all kinds of organized activities aimed at harassing, intimidating, harming, blackmailing a political actor before, during or after election with a view to undermine the electoral process. It includes all forms of riots, demonstrations, party clash, political assassinations, looting, arson, thuggery, kidnapping and the like, spontaneous or not which, occurred before, during or after elections (Roberts and Obioha, 2005, Ogundiya, 2003). Electoral violence occurs before, during and after elections. Politicians and Party faithful or supporters are always entangled in all sorts of fights using knives, razor blades, cutlasses, broken bottles, guns and any other offensive weapons to intimidate, terrorize and kills their perceived opponents at political rallies or party conventions, during elections or when election results are declared officially. Sometimes attacks are inflicted on the security agents, members of the public or vice versa.

Electoral violence and political violence has become a major feature of nation's democratic system. This has led to a lot of political assassinations in Nigeria. The murders of the late Attorney General and Minister of Justice of the Federation, Chief Bola Ige, the late Vice Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) South South Geopolitical Zone, Dr. Harry Marshal the late Senatorial Candidate of the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) in Imo State, popularly called OGB, the late Chairman of Kwara State Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Alhaji Ahmed Pategi, the late Governorship Candidate of Lagos State, Engr. Funsho Willians and many more.

Also the Sharia crisis, Boko Haram insurgent, and banditry in the North, Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State Of Biafara (MASOP), Indigenous Peoples Of Biafara (IPOB) in the South East and South South, Odua People Congress (OPC) in the South West and kidnapping in the Nigeria has added to the waves of violence that have ravaged the country in terms of human and material resources. However, the orgies of violence become the dominant feature of the Nigerian state. The spate of socio-political conflicts and violence threatening the foundation of the Nigerian state and democratic governance are as old as the nation itself. Kuka (2000) opines that the current discussion about sharia is 95% about power and perhaps about 5% about religion. He therefore related surge for power to the Anglo-Fulani Hegemony established in 1903 after the British took over the Sokoto Caliphate.

To add more salt to the wound, the ruling class has not done anything tangible to address the ailing political environment rather they engaged in their usual manner of searching for power after power to strengthen their economic base, depending heavily on state structure, intimidation, manipulation, threats, blackmail and ethnic consciousness as well as ethnic nationalism. However, the political class in Nigeria inherited this state structure from the colonial master but did nothing reasonable to improve the system rather compound it. Ake (1981) posited that "So we have indigenous leaders who are in political offices but with little economic base. This contradiction between economic and political power becomes a source of further interesting development as the rulers try to use the only tool they have, political power, to create an economic base in order to consolidate their economic power".

The manipulative tendencies of the ruling class in Nigeria are compounded by the politics of Godfatherism, occultic acts where party candidates are compelled to take oath in shrines

surrounded by the dead bodies and human bloods. The experiments were manipulated by the same elite controlling a state structure basically designed to encourage authoritarianism to the detriment of consensus building...The hegemony of the ruling class supersedes it. From 1983 to 1999, Nigeria was ruled almost continuously by the military. Generally the military teased the public with promises of democracy while continually delaying its implement (Shively, 2003). As democracy was allowed to breathe in Nigeria on the 29th May, 1999, the attitudes and approaches of the ruling class to the newly born democracy were highly autocratic, and this cannot be unconnected with the long period of military rule in the country. Political parties behaved like military establishments where internal democracy was suppressed and candidates were imposed by the party hierarchy.

The undemocratic nature of our political parties is another challenge of democratic governance in Nigeria. Political parties right from independence to date lack the potentials to preserve and protect our national identity, they play the cards of regional, ethnic/tribal and cultural sentiments; and governments are formed on these grounds of undemocratic postures. In the First Republic for instance Egbe Omo Oduduwa, a Yoruba tribal organization became a political party, Action Group (AG), for West, Jamaa Mutanin Nrewa, a Northern cultural organization transformed into a political party, Northern People Congress (NPC) for the North, United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) was a political party that represented the concerns of the middle belt people, National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) for the East. In the 2nd Republic National Party of Nigeria (NPN) was the major political party in the North, Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) dominated the West, and Nigeria People's Party (NPP) dominated the Eastern states. In the present democratic dispensation which began on the May 29th 1999, Alliance for Democracy (AD) was the dominate party in the West, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) dominated in the Eastern states and All Nigeria People Party (ANPP) in the Northern states. And with merger of some political parties in 2014, All Progressive Congress (APC) predominated in the North and West, while the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) dominated the South/Eastern states. Electoral behaviours in Nigeria are influenced by all these undemocratic sentiments of religion, region, and tribe/ethnicity. The nation is bound to be facing the crises of identity and division if political parties upon which governments are formed project and promote regional and tribal agendas (Ali, 2018).

In addition our political culture and socialization is still at primordial and subjective stages, where the citizens find it very difficult to make electoral decisions devoid of sentiments of tribe, religion and region. The ruling class sees politics as a do or die affair, where they do everything possible to win election and the winner takes all. The Nigerian ruling class and their associates are highly unstable; they move from one political party to another to remain in power. Before the 2003 general elections top politicians like Dr. Olusola Saraki moves from the Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP) to the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Dr. Alfred Marshal abandons Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), Sen. A. T. Ahmed forsakes the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), Alh. Atiku Abubakar moves from the Peoples Democratic Party, (PDP) to the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), Alh. Mala Kachala moved from the Nigeria Peoples Party (NPP) to the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP), Dr. Cuba Okadigbo abandons the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP).

Of recent some top politicians defected from one party to the other: The Senate President, Dr. Bukola Saraki, defected from the All Progressive Congress (APC), to Peoples Democratic Party, (PDP), Senate Minority Leader, Senator Godswill Akpabio defected from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), to the All Progressive Congress, (APC), The Speaker, House of Representatives, Hon. Yakubu Dogara defected from the All Progressive Congress (APC), to the Peoples Democratic Party, (PDP), The Governor of Sokoto State, Hon. Aminu Waziri Tambuwal defected from the All Progressive Congress (APC), to the Peoples Democratic Party, (PDP), Senator Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso defected from the All Progressive Congress (APC), to Peoples

S/N	PERSONALITIES	PARTY DEFECTED TO
1.	Dr. Olusola Saraki	NPP to PDP
2.	Dr. Alfred Marshal	PDP to ANPP
3.	Mr. Peter Obi	PDP to APGA
5.	Dr. Cuba Okadigbo	PDP to ANPP
6.	Mr. Rochas Okorochoa	ANPP to PDP to APGA
7.	Sen. A. T. Ahmed	PDP to ACN
8.	Alh. Ali Modu Sheriff	NPP to PDP to APC
9.	Prof. Charles Soludo	PDP to APGA
10.	Alh. Atiku Abubakar	PDP to ACN to PDP to APC
11.	Engr. Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso	PDP to APC to PDP
12.	Dr. Abdullahi Ganduje	PDP to APC
13.	Mal. Ibrahim Shekarau	ANPP to PDP to APC
14.	Hon. Aminu Waziri Tambuwal	PDP to APC to PDP
15.	Mr. Samuel Ortom	PDP to APC to PDP
16.	Sen. Abdullahi Adamu	PDP to APC
17.	Sen. Umar Tanko Almakura	PDP to CPC to APC
18.	Gov. Abdulrhman Abdulrazaq	PDP to APC to PDP
19.	Sen. Bukola Saraki	PDP to APC to PDP
20.	Hon. Yakubu Dogara	PDP to APC to PDP to APC
21.	Sen. Magatakadda Wamako	NPP to PDP to APC
22.	Sen. Uzo Kalu	PDP to PPA to APC
23.	Sen. Godwin Akpabio	PDP to APP
24.	Dr. Emmanuel Uduogban	PDP to APC to PDP
25.	Mr. Agboola Ajayi	APC to PDP to ZLP
26.	Mr. Geoge Akume	PDP to CAN to APC

From the table above, it is obvious that Nigerian politicians are highly unstable; changing from one political party to the other either in search for greener pasture or to contest in an election where they think their interests will be served. Senator Olusola Saraki moved from the Nigerian Peoples Party to the Peoples Democratic Party in 2003 to actualize the governorship ambition of his son, Senator Bukola Saraki in Kwara State. Senator Geoge Akume forsakes the Peoples Democratic Party to the Action Congress of Nigeria to retain his senatorial seat in Benue State. Senator Umar Tanko Almakura dumps the Peoples Democratic Party to join the Congress for Progressive Change to actualize his governorship ambition in Nasarawa State. Mr. Agboola Ajayi moved from the All Progressive Congress to the Peoples Democratic Party again to the Zenith Labour Party to contest for the 2020 Ondo State governorship election. In case of the Sen. Uzo Kalu abandons Peoples Democratic Party to Progressive People Alliance to secure a successor in Abia State and later moved to the APC to actualize his senatorial ambition of Abia North. This continues transition of the Nigerian politicians from one political party to the other is an indication that they lack ideology which is one of the necessary prerequisites for democratic consolidation.

Another challenge of democratic governance in Nigeria is that there is presence of too much money in the electoral and political processes in the country. The high nomination and expression of interest fees charged by political parties will corrupt the politics and make politics a do or die exercise. Monetization of our politics does not make any sense, more so that the country faced with the problem of 'vote buying' that rightly was noted during the recent gubernatorial election in Ekiti State. Thus, high cost of nomination fees by the political parties will only add more salt to the wound; the moneybags and godfathers are likely to hijack the political process and eventually the 2019 elections (Ali, 2018).

The high cost of nomination and expression of interest forms by two main political parties is a challenge to democratic governance in Nigeria. Political parties charge millions of naira for nomination and expression of interest forms. High nomination fee implies that only few who have the money carries the day, and this situation is likely to promote corruption and scuttle the nation's effort at democratic consolidation. For a person to aspire to be a presidential aspirant of APC, the person has to doll out N45 million, the fees for governorship aspirants at N22. 5 million, senate N7 million, Reps N3.85, state assembly N850,000; in addition the female and physically challenged aspirants will pay 50 percent of the prescribed fees for each position. The PDP for one to aspire for president, the person is to pay N12 million, governorship, 6N million, Reps N2. 5 million and State House of Assembly, N600,000.

Also there is the challenge of non tolerance of opposition in Nigeria. The government party are often accused of terrorizing opposition parties, denying them the opportunity to have a level play grounds in discharging their political obligations such as rallies, campaign in government own media houses, agencies, magazines and newspapers. Popoola (2004) provides that there have been several instances in Nigeria where thugs were hired by desperate politicians with the main objective of bulldozing opponent into passivity.

Furthermore, there is challenge of lack of independence of the independent electoral commission, a body that conducts elections in Nigeria. The appointment of the leadership of the independent electoral commission of the country is done by President, who is the head of the executive arm of government. Even the funding of the electoral body is controlled by government. By this, the electoral body is likely to be influenced by the chief executive of the country or the state. The electoral body is underfunded. This makes it difficult for the body to give enough training to their staff and compounds the problems of logistics. The electoral officials may be corrupt and may be induced with money by the politicians to declare results in their favour. Government and powerful politicians often interfere in the activities of the electoral body.

Another challenge of democratic governance in Nigeria is the lack of judicial independence.

Under true democratic governance, the judiciary is an arm of government that is supposed to be independent of the other arms of government, which is the executive and legislative arms. In Nigeria the Chief Judge which is the head of the judiciary is appointed by the Chief Executive of the Country or State and approved by the legislature. By this development there executive interference in the activities of the judiciary and this hamper the administration of justice in the land. The rule of law is also limited by lack of independence of the judiciary, a situation where the judiciary cannot exercise its power of discretion in the dispensation of justice. The efficiency and effectiveness of the judiciary is not determined by the structures of the court but by its independence. The unconstitutional removal or suspension of the Chief Justice of Nigeria Justice Walter Onnoghen by President Muhammadu Buhari in 2018 over allegation bordering on non declaration of assets called into question the independence of the judiciary, rule of law and democratic governance in Nigeria.

Another greatest challenge of democratic governance in Nigeria is corruption. The ruling class in country is always accused of corruption in handling public offices, when they use their position to embezzle public treasury, give favour and preferential treatment to the members of their family, tribe, religion and region. The manipulation of byelaws, constitution, court injunctions and the neglect of judicial procedures by the powerful is a fundamental form of judicial corruption (Barnes, 2011). When wealth, status and position are used to determine political, judicial and court processes, the nations' democratic process is bound to be undermined. Sorkaa (1999) opines that corruption exists when an individual illegally or illicitly puts personal interest above those of the people and the ideals he or she pledges to serve. It involves immoral actions or behaviours by public officials for pecuniary or status benefits. When corruption becomes endemic it will be a crisis situation in the polity which can eventually lead to insecurity.

Conclusions

The paper concludes that Nigeria's efforts to institute democratic governance have not been easy. This is because such efforts have been threatened by frequent military interregnums, corruption, primordiality, and elite politics in ethnicity and ethno-religious violence in the country. The first democratic experience in Nigeria was disrupted by the military in 1966, the 2nd Republic in 1983 and the 3rd Republic was aborted in 1993 to extend and consolidate military dictatorship and abuse of democratic process in the country. And in 1999, the current democratic dispensation was instituted in Nigeria after intensive struggle by the citizens and civil society organizations and has survived over two decades despite all the challenges.

Recommendations

The paper recommends the following:

- i. The nation's democracy should be above board in ensuring that each segment of the country or state is allowed to have a stake in the national or state leadership. The national leadership of Nigeria or any state leadership should rotate among the segment of the country or the state. In a democracy, every citizen is a leader in his or her own realm, thus should be allowed to lead. Constitutional provisions should be made to rotate the Presidency of Nigeria among the six geopolitical zones.
- ii. Independence of the judiciary is one of the principal component of democratic governance, the appointment of the heads of courts should be done by a body recognize by the constitution not by the head of another arms of government like the President or Governor. The judiciary is an arm of government of its own and should be allowed to determine its own affairs particularly in terms of appointments of chief judges and financial autonomy.

- iii. Also the independent national electoral commission should be independent enough to carry out its constitutional responsibilities of ensuring free, fair and credible elections in Nigeria. The appointment of the leadership of the electoral body that is done by the chief executive of the country or state is not healthy for the nation's democratic governance. This is because the electoral body is likely to dance to the tone of the chief executive of the country or state. Events at the states in Nigeria showed that elections are not held to elect the leadership of the local government councils, state Governors just appoint their stooges through the state independent electoral commission to govern on their behalf. The leadership of the electoral body should be appointed by a body establish and recognize by the constitution to avoid unnecessary interference, intimidation, and harassment, and the funding of the electoral body should be made through the consolidated fund.
- iv. The political parties which are the one of major stakeholders in democracy should encourage internal democracy, where party members can freely contest as aspirants and emerge party candidate. Democratic governance is going to be strengthened if internal democracy is allowed to flourish in the process of selecting party candidate who will represent the party at the general elections.

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