

DEMOCRACY AND THE CHALLENGES OF NATIONAL INTEGRATION IN NIGERIA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC.

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Abstract

This study discusses democracy and the challenges of national integration in Nigeria. Since the inception of democracy in Nigeria's fourth republic, Nigerian governments, past and present, have made serious efforts to propagate policies and programmes that are geared towards national integration. This study examines democracy and national integration in Nigeria and also investigates the challenges of national integration in Nigeria. This study adopts secondary sources of data collection, from books and other documentary materials, especially internet materials. Therefore, the theory of integration is adopted as the theoretical framework of analysis. The study opines that practice of democracy failed to deliver dividends of democracy to Nigerians, due to ethnicity, corruption, bad leadership, insecurity, poverty, weak institutions, executive impunity has all become the features of democracy in our current dispensation, be that as it may, national integration is been threatened. This study recommends that achieving national integration in a democratic set up, is dependent on escaping the challenges of ethnicity, corruption, bad political leadership, weak institutions and others. Nigeria must therefore settle for true federalism and good leadership devoid of any bias and sentiments to enhance democracy and national integration to a desirable level. It concludes that to claim the victory for an integrated Nigeria, the people must lead the vanguard of change and that for the continued existence of Nigeria to be guaranteed consensual agreement must be reached by its diverse ethnic nationalities.

Keywords: Democracy, Fourth Republic, Integration, National Integration, Nigeria.

Introduction

Since independence, tension, fear, mutual suspicion, real attack and counter-attack have characterized ethnic co-existence and Nigeria's nationhood. This to a large extent has resulted in some people believe casting aspersions on the unity and continuous corporate existence of the country (Okunade, 2014). National integration has long been seen as an important focus for postcolonial African governments. Upon African decolonization in the 1950s and 1960s, social scientists were concerned about the need

for what was then called "national integration" in societies with multiple ethnic, religious and racial cleavages (Onifade & Imhonopi 2013). As Ifeanacho & Nwagwu (2009) observed, Nigeria's efforts at achieving national integration have remained largely unrealized. In their words, the history of democratization in Africa, in general, and Nigeria, in particular, has remained the history of national disintegration. Thus, the integration crisis facing Nigeria is manifest in the minority question, religious fundamentalism and conflicts, ethnic politics, indigene-settler dialectic, resource control, youth restiveness and militancy and the clamor for a (sovereign) national conference or conversation about the terms of the nation's continued unification.

Democracy as a system of government has a universal appeal. Nigeria as a nation has had several tastes of it but were all truncated by military intervention, until Fourth republic was finally restored. Nigeria was fully ushered into a democratic dispensation in May 1999, as a scepter of national integration with its tentacles of peace and unity. Thus, there is no doubt that democracy is traceable to the ancient Greece specifically in the polis or city state of Athens. In ancient Greece, every adult male citizen participates in the process of reaching at decisions for the governance of the community. Agu, G. (2009). By implication, democracy in ancient Greece meant direct and active participation of the citizens in the affairs of polis or city state. As practiced in ancient Athens, Anifowoshe (2005) cited in Tersoo & Ejue (2014) posits that, democracy was characterized by two distinguishing features, first, the supreme power was vested in the Ecclesial the assembly of all male citizens of which each was entitled to participate in discussion and voting. The second feature permitted freedom of speech and the third, it made all political offices open to all citizens who were chosen by lots. The emphasis here was that, checks and control were put to prevent individual or group from acquiring excessive power. This form of governance practice by the Greeks gives them a better understanding and integration among themselves. However, the Nigeria situation has presented itself in a different way. This is predicated on the fact, that since 1999 to 2023 the democratic dispensation has manifested traits of poor integrative mechanism based on conflicts and mutual suspicion that exist not only between the north and south but also within the religious angle. In fact, democratically speaking, the Nigerian state exist as divide between the north and south in terms of power acquisition at the federal level based on the principles of rotational presidency. This no doubt explains the political topsy-turvy associated with the death of Umaru Musa Yar Adua as the president of Nigeria in May 2010 and the heightened activities of Boko-Haram the Northern ethnic militia that favors the majority of Islam in the north (Omodia 2012). The constitutional takeover of the presidential seat by Goodluck Jonathan from the south in 2011 to most northerners has been costly and damaging to national integration because of the anomic scenario in the north especially after the outcome of the 2011 presidential elections which witnessed mass killing of southerners in the north and the subsequent rejection of about 6696 batch

B southern national youth service corps members from serving in some states in the northern part of the country (Daily Trust July 2012 cited in Tersoo & Ejue 2014). This has created atmosphere of rancor and acrimony amongst people of this divide.

When the CIA report of 2005 predicted the collapse of Nigeria in about 15 years' time, patriots and critics alike reacted differently to the report. There have been a lots speculation that if care is not taken, Nigeria may disintegrate in the next 15-25 years. This speculation may not be confidently disputed owing to the fact that the political elite-corps, right from time immemorial, seems to have violated the principles of national integration. The work is orchestrated to interrogate democracy and the challenges of national integration in Nigeria's fourth republic. As such, this study therefore, examines democracy and national integration in Nigeria, explore the relationship between democracy and national integration in Nigeria and probe the challenges of national integration in Nigeria's fourth republic. Therefore, this study adopts secondary sources of data collection, from books and other documentary materials, especially internet materials.

The study is structured into six sections of which this introduction is a part. The second segment delves on literature discusses, i.e. conceptual review of concepts such as democracy, integration and national integration. The third section is the theoretical framework. For this study, the theory of integration is adopted as theoretical framework of analysis. The fourth section analyses democracy and challenges of national integration in Nigeria's Fourth Republic, while the last section is the findings, conclusion and recommendations.

Conceptual Discuss

Concept of Democracy

Etymologically, the term democracy is derived from two Greek words 'demo' meaning people and 'kratia' meaning rule or authority. Democracy then refers to the form of government in which the highest authority or power is in the hand of people or masses which invariably constitute the numerical majority in any government. In classical context, democracy is linked with the small city state of Athens in Greece, where all adjudged male adult citizens were allowed to directly participate in decision-making and implementation. Political philosophers articulated this form of democracy as a revolutionary antidote to dictatorship, monarchy, oligarchy, aristocracy and feudalism (Isekhure1992) in (Egbefo 2015). In the same vein, is a system of government in which all qualify adult citizens share the supreme power directly or through their elected representatives.

However, with the growing complexity of modern states in terms of vast territory and population, the classical democracy has become infeasible. Thus, in contemporary times, democracy has been referred to as the expression of popular will of the political community through elected representatives. The contemporary democracy according to Raphael (1976) rests on representative government. According to Oyovbaire (1987) cited in (Egbefo 2015) democracy is a system of government which seeks to realize a generally recognized common good through collective initiation, and discussion of policy questions concerning public affairs and which delegates authority to agents to implement the broad decisions made by the people through majority vote. Democracy has thus been recognized as the only moral and legitimate way through which a society can be administered. Democracy is the enhancement of the rule of law, and empowerment of the citizens for the development of their potentials for their wellbeing

Democracy is a form of government, in which the supreme power of a political community rests on popular sovereignty. Democracy has become the most fashionable form of governance in the world. In all societies of the world today, the issue is not which political system is appropriate but rather when will society become democratized or fully democratic. The democratization project is therefore, regarded as the age of civilization that every society should strive to attain rather than a political option among many others (Owolabi, 2003).

Democracy is a household political concept in many parts of the world today which often recourse at political participation and discussions, any government (civilian or military) now lay claim to it sound as an ideal form of government. However, the controversy surrounding the employment of the concept is a clear indication that it means different things to different peoples and societies (Abia, 2003).

According to Elaigwu cited in Yio (2012), the concept of democracy is alien to Africa and needs to be domesticated to Nigeria (Africa)'s local conditions and targeted to her peculiar problems. He went further to define democracy as:

A system of government based on the acquisition of authority from the people; the institutionalization of the rule of law; the emphasis on the legitimacy of rules; the availability of choices and cherished values (including freedom); and accountability in governance.

The definition proved that democracy is a political system in which there is choice of political leaders by the people through competitive elections, a guarantee of extensive civil and political rights, the rule of law, the public accountability and transparency. In the same vein, democracy is government designed in unifying and mobilizing people towards national development and political sustainability.

Nzongola Ntalaja, (2000) in the annual lecture in honour of Claude Ake on democracy and democratization in Africa, sees democracy as a form of the rule of law and political civil rights of individual citizens. He pointed out some features of democracy; one of the major features of democracy is the right of the citizens to choose their leaders from among the small elite of the leading families, members of liberal professors and business executives. Another features of democracy are transparency, and accountability among the leadership.

Iwuagwa (2002) democratic administration is the one in which the people all are able to express free choice on all matters affecting them and which give them room for popular will and participation of the majority. Therefore, one of the most important tenets of democracy is the service to the people and the eradication of poverty in the state. More so, democracy is also a government rooted on the consent of the governed in which the franchise is universal and which seeks to satisfy the needs and aspirations of the people or citizens and is ultimately accountable to the people.

In the words of Anifowose (2005) democracy is essentially a method of organizing society politically. He further adds that: There are, it is suggested, five basic elements without which no community can call itself truly democratic these elements are equality, sovereignty of the people, and respect for human life the rule of law and liberty of individuals. The author explains that democratic equality implies one man one vote irrespective of the differences in wealth, religion, intelligence etc. It also connotes the equal rights and opportunity of all citizens to hold political offices. Based on the elements of political equality of all is the principle of popular sovereignty the nation that ultimate political power or sovereignty rest with the mass of the people in practice popular sovereignty is express through representation and majority rule. It is through their representative that the people express their will. In other words, democratic regime should be based on the rule of law. A democratic regime should also respect certain basic freedoms from its citizens, these freedoms include among other things freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of the conscience, and freedom of assembly (1999 Nigerian constitution as amended). This definition underlines the cardinal contents of liberal democracy which may however be faulted for its lack of emphasis on the role of political parties in the democratic process. This deficiency is remedied in the definition provided by Haruna, (2010) who notes that democracy entails meaningful and extensive competition among individuals and organized groups (especially political parties) either directly or indirectly for the major position of governmental power. In addition to popular participation in the electoral process and respect for the civil and political rights of the people it must be noted that the existence of numerous parties and conduct of periodic elections may not result in popular choice of leadership.

Generally, democracy emphasizes freedom of the individuals in various aspects of political life, equality among citizens, justice in the relationship between the people and the government, and the participation of the people in choosing those in government (Nnoli, 2003).

Integration/National Integration

Just like every other concept in social sciences, integration has no universally acceptable definition. This is why Karl Deutsch et al (1966) seem to have considered these issues when they defined integration as “the attainment, within a territory of a ‘sense of community’ and of institutions and practices strong enough and widespread enough to assure, for a long time, dependable expectations of peaceful community.” In other words, a sense of community is an integrated group of people. According to them, a sense of community is a belief on the part of individuals in a group that they have come to agreement on at least one point that common social problems must and can be resolved through processes of peaceful change. This means the resolution of social problems without recourse to large scale physical force (Deutsch et al, 1966 cited in Ojo, 2005). There is no doubt that agreement on peaceful resolution of disputes is an important element of integration that can ensure lasting peace in a society. It also implies that the members of the community in question are ready to compromise and treat each other fairly and equally.

This line of thinking is therefore similar to the view that integration is a situation in which diverse groups in a political system have been successful in developing common institutions and norms by which to settle conflicts peacefully or pursue collective goals cooperatively, depending on the situation (Eisinger, 1976). It is asserted that “integration is built on the fact of diversity, the need for mutual accommodation and the desire of the parties in the system to maintain the integrity of the competing groups” (Eisinger, 1976:57-58 cited in Ojo, 2009).

The concept of national integration is widely used to cover a wide range of phenomena and it is opened to a number of interpretations. Literally, integration involves bringing diverse parts or units together to operate as a single whole. Tihamiyu (1997) affirmed that national integration is the attempt at uniting or bringing together the hitherto multi-ethnic groups of people with diverse culture, histories, languages, religion and belief systems into one which would remove primordial and subordinate loyalties and sentiments to ethnic groups.

For Tunde (1984) national integration has to do with the alteration in the relationship between people with respect to the flow of interaction whereby individuals find their places within the community without reference to ethnic origins. What this view implies is that in the relationship or interaction among people of a multi-ethnic

nation, the individuals involved pay greater allegiance to their national unit than their ethnic affiliation. Similarly, Nwosu (2005) submits that “integration has to do with the elimination of ethnic sentiments and parochialism among the ethnic groups that make up a political system”. In properly integrated systems therefore, political or religious conflicts are reduced to the barest minimum. In the same line of contention, Rupert (1960) argues “that if people are convinced that they belong to a terminal community whose values and institutions are worth preserving, they are unlikely to permit conflicts among themselves”.

Also, Ogunjenite (1987) believes that national integration relates to the building of nation-states out of disparate socio-economic, religious, ethnic and geographical elements. According to him, this entails the translation of diffuse and unorganized sentiments of nationalism into the spirit of citizenship through the creation of state institutions that can translate into policy and programmes in line with the aspirations of the citizenry. Stated in another way, national integration means efforts to weld together a plural society to enhance development but without necessarily jeopardizing ethnic identity (Ogunjenite, 1987 cited in Ojo, 2009).

Thus, national integration is a serious and purposeful endeavour, the failure of which has grave consequences. It is no wonder, therefore, that Emeka Odumegwu-Ojukwu sees it also as ‘active nation-building’ which means “forging out a nation out of our diverse ethnic groups.” He also contends that the failure to achieve this in respect of Nigeria is that: “Today, the result is that tribalism and ethnicity has become a potent source of friction, rather than diminish in the face of an emergent, virile and modern nation” (Odumegwu-Ojukwu, 1989).

Pen ultimately, Ojo (2009:206) goes along with Osaghae (1994) and argues that national integration is “the process by which sub-national and particularistic identity with and loyalty to the state supersedes primordial loyalty.” According to him (Ojo), the end-product of this process is a nation which has been defined as the “largest community which when the chips are down effectively commands men’s loyalty, overriding the claims of the lesser communities within it...” (Emerson, 1960, p.96 cited in Ojo, 2009).

It is clear that individuals are the units of integration, and members of a nation are integrated as they share a common identity. Thus, the term national integration is not applicable to a single nation, but involves two or more nations. A state is a political entity that is in many cases made of more than one nationality group. Thus, for example, Nigeria is made of about 250 ethnic groups (Enegwea & Umoden, 1993; Coleman, 1986). From the array of definitions on national integration, Enaruna (2014) opines that “national integration is actualized when individuals from different ethnic backgrounds demonstrate a high spirit of oneness in every aspect of their relations”. This may

therefore bring about some critical ingredients which of course, will go a long way in ensuring the realization of both individual and national objectives.

National Integration means combing all the people of the nation into a single whole. It is a particular sentiment that binds together all people in one common bond no matter what their religion, language or history is. It is strong cementing force whereby all kinds of people live together peacefully and can identify themselves as a part of a single whole. It reduces socio-cultural and economic differences or inequalities and strengthens national unity and solidarity, which is not imposed by any authority. People share ideas, values and emotional bonds. It is feeling of unity within diversity which paved way for the supremacy of National identity. However, Nigeria's fourth republic seems to be marred with a lots of controversies that had called to question our unity as a nation state with obvious symptoms of disintegration.

Theoretical Framework (Integration Theory)

This study adopts "integration theory" as theoretical framework of analyses. The theory's foundations were developed by Ernst Haas, whose 1958 work *The Uniting of Europe* became seminar in the field. Haas developed the neo-functionalist approach, which was later refined by scholars like Leon Lindberg and Phillippe. Other prominent proponents of integration theory include 'David Mill, Karl Duesch, Arend Lijphart, Walter Conner and more.

Assumptions

The Integration theory assumes that national integration and nation building are both same sides of the coin, the theory maintained that democratic approach is the easiest approach to nation building and national integration, they insist that a major object of a nation building is to weld the disparate population into a congruent whole by forging new loyalists and identities at all the levels, federal, states and local levels. The theory also assumes that non state actors, including interest groups, political parties and bureaucratic elites play a significant roles in driving integration forward by shifting their loyalties and expectations towards new regional centers.

They further explained that the successive integration of multi-ethnic societies has to do with open but not resistance to political amalgamation into a common nation state, minimal integration to the point of passive compliance with the orders of such a common state and with continuing ethnic or cultural group cohesion in such states (Ojo, E. 2009).

This is not the case in Nigeria's democracy and national integration, for example, in 1914, the northern and southern protectorates of Nigerian state were amalgamated together, this is what many scholars believed to be "forceful marriage" or "the mistake of 1914", for the state was joined to live together on colonial interest and ever since, this

nation of ethnic and tribal groups sees one another as strangers and as a result brought about distrust and intolerance among them.

The integration theory is no doubt a very important and closest analysis as to what it takes for integration or assimilation of nations into one homogeneous whole, the theory indeed serves as a good reference to the Nigerian situation of democracy and national integration with her nature of ethnic diversity. The integration theory is indeed very relevant to the nature of democracy and challenges of national integration in Nigeria because the theory presupposed how different ethnic nationalities in every democratic setting can coexist peacefully and thereby promote the spirit of unity in diversity.

However, this theory is crucial in juxtaposing democracy and the challenges of national integration such as the fear of political domination, corruption, weak democratic institutions, ethnic and religious differences had contributed to the lack of national consensus and integration. All these have the mobilization of all productive forces in the nation for the attainment of national goals for integration, while the problems of national integration can be much attributed to the nature, pattern and process of politicking. The Nigerian democracy is characterized by a great deal of anti-democratic practices. The constitution itself is not well formulated let alone its proper articulation. Elections are rigged in most pattern and shameful manner the political parties in the nation lack dynamism, dedication to national cause and most importantly they lack clear and distinct ideology. On the social aspect, poverty among the majority masses of the nation enough to foster disintegration. The problem of ethnicity, regionalism, tribalism, nepotism, and ethnics conflict has been a much serious to grapple with alongside religious intolerance among Nigerians. It is because of these that, this theory seeks to address the above issue in a pseudo democracy like ours.

Democracy and Challenges of National Integration in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

When Nigeria became independent in 1960 the problem of national integration remained one of the greatest. Investigation shows that one of the disturbing problems before and immediately after independence was the issue of ethnic conflicts in Nigerian democracy and nation building. Thus, there are other factors that hinder true democracy and national integration in Nigeria factors like, political crisis, corruption tribalism, and insecurity among other ones will be discussed.

However, ethnicity, tribalism and corruption are the major impediment to national integration. Nigeria is a country of over two hundred and fifty ethnic groups with different backgrounds. The first republic operates a constructive regional differences and provided a strong institutional base for group sentiment and ethnics. The political arrangement was regionally based and local and ethnic issues became highly politicized. Each region was administered by political parties organized along ethnic lines that vowed

to protect the people interest and had nothing to do with other regions in the country. This situation further entrenched ethnicity and led to regional and sub-regional agitations in the country. Hassan (2006:48). In May 1999, mark the return of democratic rule in Nigeria with a multi-party system in operation, this development further fostered ethnic conflict across the country. Nigerian could no longer accommodate one another as sentiments which fueled ethnic massacres and the rise of militant regional organizations became the new order. The rush to introduce sharia Islamic law in some states in the north despite the virulent protest by the Christians further fueled the ethno-religious conflicts in that part of the country. The question is why did ethnic conflicts assume a more daring and destructive posture. Analysts believe that the introduction of democratic rule in Nigeria acted like a pressure which enables the people to vent their pent-up anger and express their group interest and further demand for more political power and equitable distribution of natural resources. However, a true democracy is built up on justice and equity. Nigerian democracy to some extent was able to provide his people with fundamental human rights. Democracies in Nigeria context contributed gradually in the struggle for national integration and in turn also contributed to the disunity of Nigeria nation, on the bases of it features that guarantees individual citizens freedom and political participation.

Democracy and national integration as it implies are contested terrain in the context of polity in Nigeria or any system of government that strives to survive so far, the Nigeria federation has been played by instability of war and other numerous out breaks of ethnic violent despite the setback Nigerian has not disintegrated there have been vigorous efforts design institutions that can promote democracy and national integration. In the same vein, the colonial power that initially laid the foundation of the Nigeria state also worked against the formation of a common national identity this initial lack of consensus has resulted in the numerous political problems that have pitted one ethnic group against another. As such nation building in post-colonial Nigeria has become a deliberate effort to create and imagined political community that will foster peace and unity. Over the years, Nigerians have learned that peace and unity cannot be realized without proper political representation for all ethnic groups as well as the fair and equitable distribution of resources. Considering the above there are studies restricted to the roles of democracy in national integration, in which cannot be de-emphasized but it is important to note that certain issues has milted against democracy in the quest for national integration which can be address Under the following factors has been associated with electoral fraud and competitive riggings, clash of political interest or differences , ethnic and religious differences, corruption, power shift and ethno-regional tensions among other related factors will be discuss.

Electoral Fraud and Competitive Riggings

The propensity to win elections by all means and at all cost has become a cankerworm militating against democracy and national integration in Nigeria. Politics in Nigeria is a zero-sum game, as such, politicians in their efforts to win elections usually resort to illegal means such as hijacking election materials, shifting ballot boxes, riggings, thuggery vandalism and the likes are all electoral frauds of democracy and national integration in Nigeria (Iwuagwa, 2002).

From his point of observation, Kurfi (2005) opined that electoral rigging is almost synonymous with Nigerian elections, the objective is to frustrate the democratic aspirations of the electorates who have voted or would have voted into offices someone other than victor, he further opines that Nigerian elections have been doomed by the machinations of fraudsters who frustrate people's democratic aspirations.

It's on that note that Adekanye (1990) rightly observed that the history of electoral fraud in the state Nigeria have often been associated with political tension, crisis and even violence. The resultant effects of that electoral fraud in Nigeria are that the outcomes are so fiercely contested that the survival of the democratic order has been compromised.

This sad history of electoral fraud has serious implication for the Nigeria's democracy and national integration now and at the future because the ugly phenomenon is growing rather than declining. The principal form of rigging and fraud were perfected in the elections in 1964, 1965, 1983, 2003, 2007 and 2011 general election in Nigeria respectively, the result is that the outcomes of this elections have been subversion of democratic processes rather than its consolidation (Kurif, 2005).

Finally, the above mentioned factor of electoral fraud has become an incurable concern that is seriously challenging democracy and national integration Nigeria.

Clash of political interests or differences: Since Nigeria returned to democratic practice in 1999 there has been a problem of political crisis almost every year election is being conducted. This crisis ranges from marginalization of groups, manipulation of votes or sometimes as a result imposition of candidates. These has impacted negatively on Nigerian democracy and the process of national integration. This can be seen in the 2011 presidential primaries of the PDP. At the fore front of this campaign is Alhaji Adamu Ciroma. After a bitter campaign struggle Alhaji Atiku Abubakar emerged as the candidate of the North who was eventually defeated by Dr. Good Luck Jonathan in the PDP Primary election. As it is often said in politics there is no permanent friend but interests, the north decided to support Muhammadu Buhari of the CPC who was the

strongest Challenge to Good Luck Jonathan. There was serious mobilization for Muhamadu Buhari in the North-West and North-East zone. The mobilization was so intensive in the north that the average man on the street was made to believe that Buhari was going to have a knell slide victory. Most of the early return of the elections results were from the North-west and North-East which showed the CPC candidate to have a Clare lead. By the time the results from the other zones started coming in trend was democratically changed in favor of Good Luck Jonathan Ujo (2012). Supporters of the CPC interpreted this to be an outcome of rigging despite the fact that international and local observers confirmed that the election was free and fair and reflected the will of the majority of electorates. The buildup tension degenerated into violent explosion mainly in the Northern states of Katsina, Kano, Kaduna, Bauchi, Adamawa, Gombe and Taraba states protesters burnt places of religions worship, public buildings and the houses of the politicians from the ruling PDP and religious leaders consider to be related to party targeted INEC buildings and its personnel including NYSC members servings as INEC ad-hoc staff and in Bauchi State ten of them were killed in gruesome manner (The Nation 21 April 2011 cited in Tersoo and Ejue, 2014).

Ethnic and Religious Differences: Inter-and intra-ethnic rivalries and religious crisis constitute and potent challenges to democratic governance and national integration in Nigeria. Reading through the works of Best (2001), (Duru, Adewale 2009) and Duruji (2010) one sees these issue fairly handled and exhaustively treated. According to the Duruji (2010). The return of Nigeria to democracy in 1999 opened up the space for expression of suppress military rule. The expression of these demands have resulted in the emergence of ethno-nationalist insurgencies such as the movement for Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) in the Niger Delta region the renewed demand for Biafra spearheaded by the movement for Actualization of sovereign state of Biafra (MASSOB) and the increasing notoriety of the Odua people congress (OPC) in the South-West. This has also resulted in incessant ethnic clashes in the middle Belt region and other parts of the country such as the Ijaw Itshekiri ethnic clashes in 2009. There have also been frequent inter-religious clashes and sharia instigated riots in the Northern part of Nigeria as well as the emergence of the Boko Haram Islamic Jihadists with well-known preferences in religious belief and social practices. Intra-ethnic cleavages as witnessed in the horrors of Ife/Modakeke and Aguleri/Umuleri fratricidal wars in the South-West and South-East regions respectively have also been the order of the day. These inter and intra-ethnic rivalries and religious crisis not only results in the loss of human and material resources that cannot be quantified in monetary terms which occasion untold economic hardship, they most fundamentally breed state of anarchy that threaten the unity and corporate existence of Nigerian state. Leaving those who act on behalf of the state with magnitude of national issues to contend with. For instance, while the military in the Niger Delta took a heavy toll on the nation economy because of its independence on oil for

foreign exchange earnings. The Boko Haram insurgency in the North has at the last count left over 16,000 police men, soldiers and civilians including politicians dead. (Nigerian crime News, March 13 2012). Furthermore, given that these inter-religious and socio-cultural crises occur outside of the confines of the law. They challenge and weaken democratic institutional mechanisms that are meant to check them and threaten the consolidation and survival of democratic governance and national integration Nigeria Duruji (2010).

Corruption: it is a cankerworm that has done a lot of damages to Nigeria. Successive governments have made promise to eradicate the menace but all eventually amounted to a mere grandstanding. The looting of public funds by political office holders including state governors and local government chairmen is also at alarming rate. Examples include. The recovery of N364 millions from the former plateau state Governor Joshua Dariye which led to his impeachment. Corrupt practices performed by Governors James Ibori, Racheed Ladoja, Ayo Fayose of Delta, Oyo and Ekiti States respectively among others. At grass root level, corruption seemed to be more intensified. Chairman often divert monies allocated to various local government to facilitate the execution of projects into private use. There were series of allegations of corruption against the judiciary also it is important to note that there is no better test of the excellence of government than the efficiency of its judicial system Ujo. (2012). Driving from the above manifestation of corruption. It is clear that the practice of democracy in Nigeria is in the miasma of political corruption and this has negative effect on national integration in a democratic system like.

Power Shift and Ethno-Regional tension: The language of Nigeria politic often plays out in terms of ethnic regional domination is very wide. This is a language whose grammar is defined in two ways. The first is through control of political power and its instruments such as the armed force and the judicially. The second is through control of economic power and resources. Both affect the allocations of resources to group and individual. Both also contribute to the fear that is pervasive in Nigerian politics Nnoli, O. (1978). Since the creation of Nigerian state, the agitation for power shift and control has remain one among the major problems of democracy and national integration because of this the Nigerian fourth republic is not left out it is as a result of this that the federal character was introduce to control the rotation of power on regions in other to maintain peace and unity. Considering the above, it is very sad to note that a lot of crisis exists in Nigeria's federal system of government as a result of who and which region control political power at a particular time. Investigation show that in Nigerian fourth republic, the south West controlled political power starting from 1999 to 2007 where they return it to the north it is also very sad to know that the north could not continue with the process of governance as a result of the death of the former president Umaru Musa Yar-adua three year after occupying the seat of the presidency. After this, the power has again

shifted to the south-south region of the country in 2011, has greatly intensified the problem of Boko-Haram insurgency in the Northern States and disintegration in Nigeria.

Weak Democratic institutions: The weakness of the democratic institutions in Nigeria is another challenge to democratic governance and national integration. By democratic institution is refers to the executive, the judiciary, the legislature and electoral agency such as the independent national electoral commission (INEC). In principle, each of these institutions is constitutionally empowered to maintain a certain degree of independent and autonomy while serving as check on each other. In practice however, the tendency for the executive to dominate employing all manner of advantage on its side including the control of budgetary. Allocations remain a formidable reality. This dominance and over-bearing characteristics of the executive is located in the pattern and practice of dictatorship in Nigeria especially during the military era Bankole (2009) has asserted that decades of military dictatorship have had the effect of eroding constitutional federalism, the eroding of the culture of rule of law, the enthronement of an arbitrariness and impunity resulting in high levels of corruption. This legacy has fundamentally impacted on the power relations between the executive and other democratic institutions. The consequence of this has been the existence of subdued judiciary, weak oversight capacity of the legislature and the dumbness of the electoral bodies both at the federal and state levels. Assessing the independence and autonomy of INEC and the judiciary in the fourth republic, Omodia (2009) has observed that events in this democratic dispensation have shown that the electoral body is not independent of the party in power. This according to him has been defined in relation to the manner in which the electoral body has conducted elections in the way that advantage the party in power while the judiciary has served as a tool for creating political controversy that under-mind the democratic process. Duruji (2010) has also observed that the judiciary has been unable to sustain the democratic process in Nigeria by finding to convict anybody through the judicial process for the several cases of arson and killing that have characterized inter-and intral-ethnic clashes while the legislative institution has proven incapable of interfering decisively in management of ethno-religious and security crisis in Nigeria. According to Best (2001) the Nigerian police is an instrument of the state for the maintenance of law and other yet, it has repeatedly proved to be incompetent with respect to handing both simple and major internal conflicts, be they religious, ethnic, communal, etc. while the state has failed to prosecute and punish people under the laws. These weaknesses of state institutions impact negatively on democratic practices and national integration and also threatens the consolidation of democratic governance in Nigeria.

Findings of the Paper

One striking finding of this study shows that to achieve national integration, therefore, the government must reel out fantastic policies and programmes, it must begin

to build enduring institutions bigger and more powerful than the leadership. The leadership must become more accountable to the people and those members of the ruling class who fan the embers of hate, exploitation, ethnicity, marginalization and underdevelopment must be made to face the full wrath of the law.

Corruption which has become endemic must be fought until it is either eradicated or forcibly punished so that those who engage in it do so at their own risk.

Nigeria's diversity is not the problem; the managers of the state are. Nigerians must arise from the ashes of fear, wrongly inspired awe for political leaders and timidity and begin to make demands on the political leadership on what they want. For instance, the fuel subsidy strike of January 2012 sent an eruptive message to the ruling class that the people would no longer sit idly and watch them ride the country aground. To claim this victory, the people must lead this vanguard of change.

Conclusions

Nigeria as one political entity will continue to exist despite the various conflicts involving her citizens only if she is ready to learn how to coexist in peace and harmony, most especially amongst the community that share common resources. Government intervention in the provisions of infrastructural and other basic amenities should be encouraged: this should be evenly distributed accordingly in order to reduce people's agitation for marginalization.

On a similar note, there is a need to improve the quality and quantity of land pasture through governmental research programmed; government should educate the youths academically and technically with adequate provision of employment facilities for them, most especially in their own environment. Nigerian government should also embark on meaningful projects and programmed that will ensure even development of all regions of the state, these and many more will bring about a strong nation speaking on one voice and will also ensure the enhancement of democracy and national integration in Nigerian polity.

Nigeria's quest for national integration was given the impetus it needed by the military elite corps. This is partly because the military has dominated Governance for many years. The basic structural reorganization needed to foster national integration was instituted by the military. This also includes steps taken to assuage the fears of the minorities enclosed within the hitherto three major ethnic groups in Nigeria. This problem has lingered because national integration in Nigeria has not been a voluntary process. However, given a purposeful leadership and a 'just administration', national integration would produce an organic Nigerian state. However, it should be acknowledged that the journey towards that destination is still a long distance away.

Nigeria is still on that part, but a purposeful leadership which is inclining to inputs, would make national integration attainable.

As part of its recommendation, the article suggests:

Nigeria needs a democracy capable of guaranteeing not only freedom but addressing the overwhelming material poverty of her people.

Nigerians should for God sake try to break with their past practices, particularly, the massacres perpetuated by one ethnic group or another, and should understand that leadership is not meant for a particular ethnic group or region, let there be free, fair, and transparent elections and independent electoral body devoid of ruling party influence with vibrant oppositions.

The nature and the process of state formation in Nigeria demands a type of democracy that could address the problems of uneven development between various regions of the federation and that can guarantee individual and group liberties and allowed unfettered access to power and resources.

Finally, it is important that as we practice our own liberal democracy and use it as necessary platform for the acceleration of development, the progressive movements should ensure that the orientation of our political parties are informed by the means of empowering our masses so that they themselves can lead the renaissance of democracy and national integration in Nigeria.

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