

DEMOCRACY AND AFRICAN POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to assess the level of entrenchment, growth, challenges and sustainability of democracy in Africa. It identifies major problems or challenges facing the practice and progress of democracy in Africa. These include, but are not limited to, military incursion in politics, sit-tight syndrome of some African leaders, illiteracy, poverty, communication challenge, misinformation, violence, imposition of candidates in an election, negative influence of religion and endemic corruption. Using analysis, evaluation and speculative methods, the paper discovers that the challenges facing the development of democracy in Africa are artificial and occur due to inherent corruption, selfishness and inequality in the polity. However, these challenges are surmountable if inclusiveness is encouraged in politics and governance of African states. The paper therefore emphasizes that democracy in Africa is modelled and influenced by African ideology of communalism and egalitarianism which preach personal and inter-personal relationship and fairness in distribution of dividends of democracy to members of the society. Besides, the Western utilitarian ideology also influences government policy in the distribution of social amenities to the citizenry. It concludes that democracy as a political ideology of governance is one of the best systems of government in contemporary Africa. Also, as a veritable ideology of development of the society, democracy encourages constant participation of citizens in programmes and activities of government. The paper therefore recommends amongst others that: internal democracy should be entrenched in the political parties; political activities should be carried out in a peaceful atmosphere that guarantees protection of lives and property; and education of citizens is a panacea to solving problems associated with ignorance that is militating against democracy and development of its structures in Africa.

Keywords: Democracy, African democracy, Development, Corruption, Politics, Political development.

INTRODUCTION

The development of democracy as a form of socio-political system of government can be traced to the ancient period's demand for freedom as a prerequisite for authentic life that guarantees the right of citizens. From Aristotelian's city State to the contemporary mega States, the demand for freedom by citizens was and is still being sustained through various forms of agitations, demonstrations, lobbying and resolutions reached by parties on issues of common interest. Dialogue is often applied as means of settling disputes arising from the feelings of dissatisfaction, unfair treatment of citizens of the State in the distribution of social amenities, amongst others. The freedom to choose an acceptable form of life by members of the society is sacrosanct. This freedom of choice by concerned individuals and groups ultimately, leads to accepting personal and collective responsibilities as citizens. Of course, leadership carries its own burden and is expected to fulfil its obligations to the people.

Democracy and socio-political development are interrelated terms that connect the activities of members of the society with the ideals of politics and governance of the society. As an integral part of the structures of government, democracy and socio-political development defined the roles of individual and collective engagement of citizens in the task of running and executing government programmes for the good of the citizens. It addresses the management of both human and material resources of the African States. It also considers the leadership question in sustaining economic strides and encouraging political cohesion in African society. In its heterogeneous nature, African society is predominantly socially and communally structured. Democracy in African contemporary society is focusing at enhancing balance and sustaining an egalitarian spirit which African society prides itself in the past. The protection of the rights and privileges of citizens is necessarily guaranteed in the constitution of the member States. It also ensures that every citizen is treated equally without undue preferences occasioned by myopic ethnic chauvinism and other forms of biases.

The paper shall endeavour to clarify the concept of democracy and political development. Our efforts shall be tailored towards assessing various problems and challenges facing the entrenchment of modern democracy as a system of government and socio-political development strategy. Moreover, we shall also attempt to examine the prospects of democracy as understood and practiced in line with African social nature and practical goals.

THE CONCEPT OF DEMOCRACY

Apart from the etymological definition of democracy which derives its meaning from Greek root 'demos' translating 'people' and 'Kratos' translating 'rules' and literally connote rule by the people; rule by the masses; rule by the generality of the populace; etc., democracy as understood by one-time American President Abraham Lincoln in his Gettysburg address is "Government of the

people, by the people and for the people". Judging from the Greek root 'demos' and 'kratos', we infer with categorical exactness that democracy have been practiced by Africans as a populist political ideology and method of government which allows for massive participation of citizenry in party activities, general elections and major interactions currently phrased: 'town-hall meeting'. The town hall meeting avails the citizens an opportunity of addressing major and narking issues affecting the progress of their society, and in some cases, affording them the opportunity in selecting leadership through balloting and consensus arrangement.

John Elijah, in his book, *Man and The State* (99) asserts that democracy as a concept is difficult to define. He explains that the difficulty in definition of democracy "is not because the concept is vague like so many political terms, but more importantly, because democracy is a complete polymorphous concept". The polymorphic nature of democracy gives rise to divergent classifications of the concept as: African democracy, Western democracy, Eastern democracy, etc. In addition, democracy can also be described by its participatory nature as popular, liberal, consensus, direct or indirect ideology of governance.

The understanding above buttresses the fact that democracy has different strands and evokes different interpretations and understandings. In a contemporary consideration, Some scholars understand the term democracy not just as a form of government; but as a particular form of government where the rights and privileges of citizens are guaranteed; where the citizens freely exercise their franchise and participate in selecting the government they want; and where the citizens know the rules and follow it in all aspects of their engagement in government as constitution provides and guarantees some of such freedoms as speech, peaceful association, right to property and all other human rights as provided by the United Nations Charter on human rights. This explanation of the concept of democracy is somewhat a contemporary inclined approach where democracy represents multidimensional approaches to governance all, for the purpose of achieving a common goal of organising both human and material resources for the development of the society.

On his part, Nnamdi Azikiwe, in *Renascent African* (2-3), understands democracy as:

"The rule of the people by its majority inhabitants and includes a government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation, usually involving, periodically held free and fair elections". The central focus of democracy is the people. Hence, democracy is the system that encourages review of leadership abilities and popularity. This review or assessment of leadership performances is carried out through timely conduct of elections which allows citizens the privilege to participate in electing or re-electing of leaders. It also affords others the privilege of aspiring to various political offices in the land, as a right. The nature of such an election is not a kind that is marred

by violence and various other forms of irregularities but a kind that is done in a peaceful and orderly atmosphere and capable of being judged free and fair.

In his characteristic pragmatic and Instrumentalist dispositions, John Dewey considers democracy both as a system and method of government. He believes that democracy is: "The settling for free use of the experimental method in social inquiry and thought, which is required for the solution of concrete social, political and industrial problems" (Copleston 373). Appadorai (137) is of the opinion that democracy maybe described as a system of government under which the people exercise the governing power either directly or through representatives periodically elected by them. He further explains that a state may, in political science, be termed a democracy if it provides institutions for the expression and, in the last analysis, the supremacy of the popular will on basic questions of social direction and policy. Moreover, Appadorai considers the fact that "political liberty is the indispensable minimum" qualification for democracy. Where such minimum standard of freedom or liberty is not guaranteed, the claim for existence of democracy is definitely in doubt. He highlights these indispensable minimum provisions for democratic entrenchment to include:

equal rights of all normal adult to vote and stand as candidates for election, periodical elections, equal eligibility for executive and judicial office (provided the essential qualifications for the performance of these duties are satisfied); and Freedom of speech, publication and association. These rights provide the opportunities for political participation, i.e. for choosing rulers and deciding the general lines of their policy, they enable those who are so minded to devote themselves to political problems as much as they please... Among the political rights outlined above, stress must be laid on the rights of speech, publication and association (Appadorai 137-138).

From Appadorai's submissions above, we can appreciate the importance of freedom of speech and necessity of functional media functioning as basic ingredients for democratic governance. Free association of citizens is also one aspect that must be allowed in the state before we can accept such system as democracy. Blackburn on his part reasons that "in modern society, the sovereignty of the people in general, expressed not directly by a vote on individual questions, but through representatives". He however raises concern whether various mechanisms that have responsibility to conduct elections and manage the people and their resources ensure that decision making authentically answers to the people or serve their interest.

In Harold Laski's assessment of modern society's quest for democracy as an option for totalitarianism shows that the adoption of democracy is accompanied by rigorous but complicated economic connections that cannot be ignored. In such chained economic climate, democracy must seek to fulfil all

conditions for its incorporation into the main stream of society's administrative and economic demands. Laski (V) in his *Grammar of Politics* submits that:

In the war period, it was widely assumed that the universal attainment of democracy was the highest political objective before mankind; since the minds of men. Not a little of the present confusion in political theory is the outcome of a failure to state the problems to which this change in the mental climate of our time had given rise in anything like adequate term. Men have been asked to accept a formal political democracy as a good in itself without taking regards to the complex of economic relationships in which that formal political democracy is involved (v).

As expressed above, we can discover that democracy occurs in different forms and entails complicated economic relationships with other Countries of the world. Besides, democracy occurs in different forms of economic and political indices such as capitalism, socialism, welfarism, etc. Following these different forms of democracy as explained earlier, scholars like John Rawls and Nnamdi Azikiwe emphasize on a welfarist form of democracy where the resources of the state is managed and shared to citizens as primary responsibility of the state towards the welfare of its members. (Popkin and Stroll 106, Igwe 187 -191). All these forms of democracy are necessary for engaging in development agenda of any society and African political development is not an exception. However, as has been observed earlier in the work, emphasis on modern form of democracy is not alien to Africans and their society.

In terms of social, political and economic integrations, African nations had established their own standards and ideologies that assisted them to relate with the so-called developed democracies. For instance, African communalism exemplified in *Ujaama* of Julius Nyerere and *Connsciencism* of Kwame Nkuruma were ideologies focused on socialism and welfarism as typical African practical sense of expressing relationship and cooperation with member nations and showing responsibility to one another as 'brothers' keeper'. This sense of unity, sharing spirit, togetherness and communal living creates a possible opportunity for sharing of ideas in all aspects of social, political, economic and religious life. This sense of unity provides an opportunity for fellow members of the society to feel the pains of others and show empathy on their burden. It encourages and enforces a bond of unity and inclusiveness in the minds of citizens. It is this sense of inclusiveness in decision making and other actions that informs a sense of collective responsibility.

Jain and Alistair Macmillan (139) however believe that democracy as "a descriptive term is synonymous with majority rule". The majority rule emphasized here typically found its meaning in an egalitarian society where there is emphasis on equal rights and rule of law. Hence, African democracy thrives through a sense of communalism and inclusiveness that elevates the spirit of African brotherhood towards building and sustaining egalitarian

system that gives vent to equality and liberty. If the tenets of democracy include emphasis on unflinching freedom of citizens, then, freedom enjoyed under democratic system should not be freedom in disguise that tends to enslave and de-humanise the citizens in a way and manner that they cannot enjoy their inalienable rights to life, freedom of speech, association and movement. Rather, it should be an all-encompassing form of freedom that completely erodes all forms of neo-colonialism and its attendant negative effects on the citizens. Modern African democracy tends to follow contemporary democratic ideals and trend which, to a large extent, is suffering from blending and synchronisation of the best elements of ancient African democracy that thrives through mutual trust and deep sense of brotherhood. The idea of brotherhood is expressed in communal living and sharing dispositions. It considers human life as sacred; urging respect and protection for citizens' lives as a priority or primary responsibility of the State.

UNDERSTANDING DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

The communal living spirit which characterises the nature of African society forms, to a large extent, the understanding and practise of democracy in Africa. To this end, democracy can be seen as a contextualized system of government and a way of life of Africans. The practice of democracy in Africa reflects both the nature of African system and peculiar African thought pattern. Togetherness can best describe the perception and feeling of an African man towards another. This idea of togetherness is not detached from collective decisions, actions and responsibilities. If democracy in the Western idea involves participation of the masses in organising the future of their society through peaceful and orderly selection of leadership in an election then, the practice of democracy in African has these credentials and is not waiting to be westernised for it to be relevance to the people and the world as a larger community. As mentioned earlier, the very nature of African life is characterised by communalistic living and has been the preferred system of integration and cooperation since the inception of the socio-political configuration called Africa.

The practice of democracy had existed from time immemorial. It remains the usual and effective system of government known to the African traditional institution. The assumption that the advent of democracy in Africa and its developmental indices is a product of western intervention and establishment is a misnomer, fallacious and hasty conclusion that defies common sense logic and carries no iota of truth. The system of government practised by Africans has always lay emphasis on consultation, mutual respect of individuals' opinion on issues of common interest, mutual agreement and sense of justice. The African sense of justice defines the nature of reward system for citizens irrespective of their social standards. The basis for integration in African society be it matrimony, patrimony, monarchy and any other form of defined system of ruling are still part and parcel of the system of 'give and take', 'live and let's

live' strategy which have endeared African man to a fellow African. Although westernization of African communities through colonialism has dealt a devastating blow to communal African spirit in recent years, the challenge of Xenophobia being one of its negative influences, majority of Africans however, still retain the harmonious living spirit which is characterised in their *organum* and translated to African moral dictum of 'being our brothers' keeper'. This, perhaps, is far from a sense in which the western idea of democracy is represented. The western practice of democracy is at variance with African understanding and practice of democracy. The individualistic and capitalistic spirit of western life style have had a negative influence on democracy as it is recently practice in some Africa nations. This western attitude has exerted negative influence on global politics and economics. However, the modern experience of democracy in Africa appeals for reforms in policy making and implementation to the extent in which all sectors of the society are guaranteed fair treatment unlike Western democracy that rests its system of democratic justice on the over-fluxed doctrine of utilitarianism which justifies government action on the basis of majority satisfaction without considering the desires, wishes, and hopes of minority within the same polity.

Generally, democracy emphasizes the idea of collective bargaining, existence of pressure group to press home demands for better life through enforcement of decisions and principles that guarantee total protection for citizens. D. D. Raphael (147) in his westernized orientation believes that "democracy in a sense has to mean following the view of majority". Abraham Lincoln's assertion that democracy is the government of the people, by the people, and for the people is not in any sense of the word, different from the norms that guide the traditional leadership style and generally, the African traditional democratic experience. The addition of the phrase 'for the people' by Lincoln is perhaps, reading through *and adopting Jean Jacques Rousseau's concept of the 'general will'* which caters for the participation of the masses or citizens in governance through few selected individuals who are first and famous, elected by the people to represent them as their mouth piece and exercising completely, the sovereign will of the people who are the legitimate sovereigns which they owe allegiance. However, the traditional African political system symbolises by kinship rotational and communal participatory leadership returns sovereignty to the people. This informs the popular exclamations by both kings and the people of Efik and Ibibio extractions that "*Obong isidaha ikpong ibong*" meaning the "king does not stand alone to shout" implying that the king cannot rule alone. He needs the understanding and assistance of every member of the community or kingdom to succeed. This exclamation is a direct call for citizens participation in leadership as the natural sovereigns indicating that leadership is not one-man showmanship as western democracy seems to prescribe, which also turns to influenced the present nature of some African leaders.

Democracy in Africa is not devoid of cosmetic and window dressing approach to social justice which we have unfortunately experienced through western nature of democracy which is viciously war-like with clashing and confrontational mode of agitations. Before now, these vicious strategies of gaining control of government and achieving group's goals, objectives and demands were not identified with African system. In fact, the recently practice of military democracy and selfish capitalists' economic and political regime is far from being Africa preferred strategy of governance.

CHALLENGES FACING DEMOCRACY AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

We cannot deny the fact that there are numerous problems facing democratic/political development in Africa. Some of these problems are natural and others are artificial. That is to say, some of the problems are caused by African cosmogony and heterogenic nature, while others are man-made and motivated by ignorance and greed. The following will buttress the assertion made above:

Election rigging: one of the ingredients of democratic practice and development is timely conduct of election. Davidson and Oleszek in Tunde Opeibi's *Discourse, Politics and the 1993 Presidential Election Campaigns in Nigeria* (6), stressing the important of elections believes that "elections celebrate the individual citizen's membership and participation in the community's decisions and they allow the voters to signal their approval of the regime in power or to express their disapproval and set in motion an orderly transfer of power". In Africa, the electioneering exercise is constantly turned theatre of violence and, in the process, human lives and property are lost. Typical examples of these elections' violence-ridden countries are Nigeria, Senegal, Liberia, Zimbabwe, Gambia, etc. However, in recent times, some African countries have started learning lessons that violence in elections is like a whirl wind that blows no one any good. As a result, conscious efforts have been made by stakeholders to ensure a hitch-free exercise though, a pocket of violence becomes inevitable a times. Negative other tendencies that characterize elections in Africa include: thuggery, ballot box snatching, ballot paper scuffing, change of original result of opponents in favour of individuals and government's preferred candidates, financial inducement, false propaganda during electioneering campaign (i.e. spreading of falsehood), incitement of electorates against government and the contestants as the case may be, disenfranchisement of electorates by election officials and political gladiators, over voting, under-age voting, etc.

Lack of proper Communication and wrong use of language: Political communication had been a major set-back to political development and promotion of democracy in Africa. But in recent times, the advent of GSM and other communication gadgets including internet, Facebook, messenger, tweeter

handle, Instagram, what's up, etc have aided tremendously in easy dissemination of information. Besides, the establishment and installation of high frequency radios and television studios by government and private individuals have aided in no small manner the dissimulation of information. Also, the role played by print media cannot be overemphasized. It is a necessity to feed the public with concise information and carry them along in the programmes of political parties and government.

Nevertheless, we cannot pretend that the challenge of information and communication is completely surmounted. The unfavourable network terrains that most African electorates are located have negatively affected the free and speedy flow of information. This challenge has dominated discussion on the possibility of deploying full technology in our political and electioneering processes. While majority of citizens thump up for the use of technology especially in the conduct of general elections, others express fear on its workability due to constant challenge of network failure in Africa. However, fabulous effort is being made by network operators to resolve the challenge. Government of African States are making tremendous efforts to spread development programmes to the difficult terrains through construction of road network, rail system and installation of high frequency and digital media gadgets. Opeibi (6) observes that "in recent times, political communication has occupied a centre stage in discourses on governance because democracy as a form of government itself has become a global phenomenon". Political development and democracy cannot adequately thrive without addressing the challenges of communication channels. In some cases, wrong information in form of propaganda and attempt to sabotage the efforts of government and integrity of opponents in an election may be disseminated to the electorates who have no means of verifying such spurious information. Before they realise that the pieces of information they had were not correct, a lot of damages may have been done both to government and the affected individuals whose integrity is soiled and character assassinated for no fault of theirs.

It is therefore of necessity for electoral bodies and government to address squarely communication challenge if democratic development in Africa must be sustained. In this digital age, it is proper for relevant agencies of government and organised non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to campaign for and ensure up to date communication equipment are provided for speedy dissemination of information.

It is also necessary to observe that wrong use of language and uncontrolled hate speeches have characterised most of African political campaign outings and has impeded the democratic progress of African Nations. That is to say, wrong use of language of politics is a challenge to ideal and ideological electioneering process in our clime. Beard (2) in his *The Language of Politics* clearly shows the relevance of language in political development when he reasons: "looking at the language of politics as an occupation is important

because it helps us to understand how language is used by those who wish to gain power, those who wish to exercise power and those who wish to keep power". Indecorous use of language is, in most cases, the cause of political tension that often resulted to verbal and physical attacks on citizens. To this end, proper use of language is encouraged for the primary purpose of enthroning peace and security of lives and property of citizens.

In a similar perspective, Schaffner, Christiana (202) believes that in linguistic literature, political language has been used either to donate the use of language in the context of politics, i.e., a specific language use with the purpose of anchoring a specific politically motivated function. She justifies two types of political communication which are: internal and external political communications. The internal political communication concerns discussions that centres on "functioning of politics within political institutions, i.e., governmental bodies, parties or other organisations", while external political communication is aimed primarily at "general public especially, the non-politicians for the purpose of carrying them on the government activities and other political developments around them." The essence of analysing the language of politics here is to draw attention to the necessity of proper utilization of political language not as a means to deceiving the public but as a machine for proper articulation of political ideologies and programmes to the understanding of the electorates. Communication, and perhaps right communication for that matter, is a panacea for the challenge of misinformation and misrepresentation of government, political parties and other interest groups' strategies that have been misconstrued and is currently setting a wrong political and anti-development agenda in our society. Of course, right and strategic information is a means of overcoming the deformity occasioned by misinformation. One fact is clear, either we are properly informed or improperly deformed. In either way, the effect of improper communication and wrong use of political language is enormous as it affects the execution of government programmes and services.

STRUGGLE FOR POWER

African society has over the years experienced fierce battle or struggling for power. Power play at all tiers of government has negatively affects the progress of African nations. Roche and Stedman (322) in *The Dynamics of Democratic Government* aptly observe that "Among the most complex problems that rise to plague democratic government are those which relate to the extent and basis of executive power" since absolute power is said to corrupts absolutely. However, there are those who maintain that strong, vigorous leadership is a dangerous proposition, while others, like the great political sociologist Mosca and Michels in Rosche and Stedman reason that "leadership is by its very nature undemocratic". Their assertion is of course, directly or indirectly inferring that leadership cannot be democratic since the trace of autocracy has been implanted in the heart of every leader. To this end, two

opposing ideas surface: some persons are of the opinion that strong democratic executive is not necessary on the ground that they are likely to manipulate the process and ignore the ideals of government to satisfy personal ergo and run away with the resources of the state, while the other group believes that strong leadership is necessary since democracy is a facade, a “political formula” which clever leaders use to convince the masses that they are working in the best interest of the society as a whole. We can appreciate the level of misunderstanding of the use and function of power. While we may not disagree with those who kicked against strong leadership, we may not also rule out the necessity of strong leadership in most African States with their specific experience of security and economic challenges.

Our experience in Africa (and most especially, amongst countries that practise what we may call camouflage democracy) is the fact that few groups of people often runaway with government. They do this through various means: either by ignoring the people after assuming office; siphoning their money from the treasury and heaping them in foreign lands; creating a barrier that makes it difficult for anybody to approach or confront them on issues of good governance or embarking on vicious power mongering expedition such as unjust arrest or detention of oppositions on trump up cases; withdrawal of aids and incentives from the people and concentrating such aids and incentives within small enclave of political and family bourgeois; and creating insecurity that may climax in incessant and sustained assassination of innocent people who are seen as posing a threat to government on their stands on certain issues of governance. Power struggle is a challenge that has to be handled with care if meaningful achievement is to be attained by government in Africa. Political power ought not be seen as an end in itself rather, it is, in the right sense of the word, a means to an end and should be understood as such. If we acquire political power to serve the people then, it should be acquired in a most responsible manner that is devoid of physical and psychological threats to the lives and property of the very people we aspire to serve. Those who struggle for power should endeavour to imbibe acceptable ethical code of conduct in order to avoid a rancorous situation that will destroy the peace and progress of the society.

MILITARY INCURSION

Military incursion in politics is one of the unfortunate experiences and the worst destabilizing factor in African political system. In majority of cases, Military takeover of government has negatively affected the development of political life of African society. The military, on taking over power runs a unitary government with minimal number of civilian involvements in the administration. The constitution as a basic democratic principle of government is often suspended. The supreme leader rules only with degrees promulgated by the supreme military council that acts as an alternative legislature at the same

time whirling executive powers. During this time, major political activities are suspended; the existence of pressure groups which is one of the features of liberal democracy ceases giving room for the regime to rule the society with naked force. Criticism of government programmes and policies is not tolerated as seen as an affront to leadership. The punishment that follows criticism of draconic military government in Africa is unpleasant. As a common experience, innocent and constructive critics are often framed up with trumped-up charges of Treason and treasonable felony.

Through the brazen use of gun barrels instead of reason that liberalizes the process of good governance, the military leaders ruled with impunity. In fact, groups' agitation for return of democracy and infrastructural development is met with stiff punishment and in most cases, death penalty is pronounced and execution of agitators carried out with immediate effect and with ease. Typical example of this scenario in Nigeria's history is the execution of Ogoni Chiefs including King Saro-Wiwa- human right activist and environmentalist who clamoured for a better deal for his people in the hands of the multi-billion oil and gas companies located within their area. However, other small sections of the African society would be comfortable with a call for military incursion in politics as such interventions serve the interest of few selfish individuals within the society.

Once there is a disagreement in the political party where some individuals feel their interest is not protected, they will immediately contact the military politicians to overthrow the government. They do this in connivance with some self-seeking civilian's politicians who are moved to act primarily on selfish interest. In some cases, such individuals are compensated with appointments and huge contracts by the military government if the coup d'état was successful. On this account therefore, we may assume that selfish or egocentric political and economic manoeuvre is one of the factors militating against the realisation and entrenchment of democratic ideals in African political system and this may be the reason Africa is lacking behind in development both in politics and infrastructure. This egoistic and egocentric and narrow-minded political calculations by certain powerful individuals in the society resulted to various experiences of instability in the political calendar of African democratic society. If we must achieve a steady political development in African, such egocentric and egoistic individuals must be put under check.

PROBLEM OF GOD-FATHERISM

We can also spot on the problem of god-fatherism which has characterised the democratic landscape of African countries. God-fatherism breeds jealousy, hatred, nepotism and unnecessary pressure that remains counterproductive as far as peace, progress and stability of government and society is concern. What these god-fathers want is to have unflinching access to the machinery of government and influenced executive and parliamentary decisions in order to satisfy their whims and caprices. They are known to have often hand-picked less

qualified individuals, close relations and associates and impose them on the populace during political selections. This is one reason some persons see African democratic elections as merely 'selectocracy' instead of real and direct elections where parties in the race are protected and allowed to compete freely and favourably. Once there is a level playing ground in an election, the contestants will have no option than to accept the result and congratulate the winner. And in such atmosphere, the winner will ensure that the fellow contestants who could not win but have ideas that are capable of helping to stabilize the new government are accommodated and rewarded at the assumption of office because in every competition, there must always be a winner.

SIT TIGHT SYNDROME

Another major challenge to democratic development in Africa is the sit-tight syndrome of some African leaders. Experience of this situation abounds in some African countries. We cannot forget the recent political uproar in Libya, Morocco, Egypt, Zimbabwe, Gambia, Kenya, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Democratic Republic of Congo, and even up to 1990's Apartheid regime in South Africa etc, that experienced the sit-tight syndrome of some of their past and current leaders. This sit-tight syndrome would have been experienced also in Nigeria during Generals Gowon, Babangida, Abacha and even Obasanjo's regimes but not for divine intervention and vigilance of civil society. These leaders made tremendous efforts to egoistically perpetrate their stay in office through various conspiratorial to amend the military degrees, electoral acts and constitution to favour their political desire to stay longer than necessary in power. However, their efforts turned a misadventure as they exited power at a long run. The palaver here is that selfishness cannot be removed from contemporary democratic experience of Africans. This selfish desire leads to nepotism, ethnicity and complete absent of patriotism.

Other seeming problems that inherently discredit African democratic development are poverty, greediness, corruption, absent of continuity in governance in terms of project execution and policy direction, poor allocation of resources, violence, insecurity (which in some cases leads to voters' apathy during elections), and absent of political ideology in existing political parties and other pressure groups. Of course, the root causes of most of the problems enumerated so far is illiteracy. John (122) has explained the pattern in which this can affect the whole process of electioneering. He believes that illiteracy would not allow the very process of election to be fair and free "since the people may find it difficult to "distinguish party symbols and read and understand manifestoes of difference political parties for them to vote for ideology," if at all such ideologies do exist. In this scenario, we cannot undermine the need for result oriented training and formal education in polity. The more literate the people are the fewer problems they will impose on the society since knowledge is virtue, and virtue is a necessary ingredient of conscientious leadership.

PROSPECT OF DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA

Despite the numerous challenges and problems that democracy encounters in Africa, the prospect is there. In fact, the advent of modern democracy has had some major positive impact on the people. One of the many impacts is the participation of women in politics which hitherto was an exclusive right of men as African culture had allowed. Besides, youths are not excluded in the political calculation and economic indices of African development. The implication here is that the future of African politics would experience more influx of women and youths. In event of that, the political space will continue to experience liberalization and massive mobilisation and participation of populace which in turn, will fulfil one of the cardinal goals of democracy which is inclusiveness. In an inclusive political culture, development is assured and the unnecessary hitting of the polity is drastically curbed leading to reduction in crime rate as the right people will have opportunity to sit with others to draw programmes that will have direct impact on the people. It will also encourage proper exchange of ideas for the purpose of building a strong and viable economic cum political society where citizens are economically, socially and educationally empowered to contribute their quota in the development of their society.

The current over-bearing influences of religion which John (113) identifies as one of the problems of democracy will be overcome through the power of reasoning which, only qualitative education both formal and informal can guarantee. It is a truism that knowledge is power. The more voters are educated the less the indoctrinating influence of religion on their placement of loyalty. In recent times, many educational institutes and universities have been established. It is hopeful that the establishment of these institutions will translate to quality training of individuals who will actively participate in the task of democratic governance and development. Besides, efforts should be made to ensure compliance to the principle of internal democracy within existing political parties that is competing for power. The institution of internal democracy will help to control rancour amongst members of the same political party. By so doing, the booty and dividend of democracy will be enjoyed by citizens and it will boast Africa political development.

The political atmosphere of many African Nations has witness dramatic clamour for changes in democratic ideology and practice. In Nigeria for instance, the debate on the mode of primaries whether to adopt direct or indirect or consensus in selecting candidates for general elections by political parties has open up the eyes of the citizens to negative influence of political bourgeoisies who see political struggle for power as an investment opportunity. To break the barrier between the citizens and political godfathers' right to choose candidates for election, the recommendation for direct primaries where all members of political parties reserve the right to select a candidate for election is a step in the right direction. However, other options that respect democratic

ideals should also be allowed to stay as part of the processes towards furthering the development of democracy in Africa.

CONCLUSION

Democracy and political development in Africa have advanced beyond mere experimental experience. What we have now as democracy in Africa is basically, a modernised African democratic culture of communalism. This communal influence of African life-style is positively encouraging the thriving of democracy and political development. The tribal and ethnic influences on democracy are beginning to disappear as political education has dismantled some of the hurdles and barriers of indoctrination promoted by religion. Propaganda that often led to war, destruction of lives and property and military incursion in the democratic society is, at a maximal level curtailed as a result of pragmatic impartation of knowledge through education as a basic government principle for development. Therefore, it is not hyperbolic to conclude that African democratic and political development is on course and has demonstrated positive signs of improvements to meet yearnings of Africans. Also, democracy is most acceptable system of government in contemporary African States although we have few communities that still uphold to the traditional African culture that adhere to the practice of democratic or successive monarchy which produces direct biological heirs of successors in the kingdom in event of the death of the leader or king. However, this practice is not given wider acceptance as it is merely taken to be a process of selection of leaders and not a system of governance. The paper recommends with emphasis that democracy of our generation should return to ancient values of peace, equity, love for humanity and respect of individuals' opinions if sustainable development is to be achieved.

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