

## **Bridging the Gaps between Democracy and Democratic Governance in Nigeria: A Comparative Analysis**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper critically examined the gaps between democratic governance and the notion of democracy. It applied the secondary sources of data collection, used both the historical and the descriptive approaches in the analyses, and adopted the Social Contract Theory, to explain how representative democratic system works. The findings show a remarkable and vivid difference between the concept of democracy and the practice of democracy. It further identified a number of factors that inhibit democratic practice, such as corrosive politics that perch on exclusion and pervasive corruption, among others. It results in lack of coordinated political development process. The study concludes that the present democratic practice in Nigeria simply professes the concept and has not actually conformed to global best practices.*

**Keywords:** Democracy, Democratic Practice, Political Development, Comparative Analysis

### **1. Introduction**

Democratic governance births the notion of mass participation and political development. It upholds the assertion that democracy guarantees the rule of majority and the rights of minority (Sharansky, 2004). In theory, democratic principles highlight the essence of transparency, accountability, human empowerment, infrastructural development and socio-economic growth through inclusive governance (Macpherson, 1973). In practical terms, democratic experiments in most African states lack scorecards to justify the gains that accompany democratic governance (Okibe, 2000). Every opportunity to assess democracy in Nigeria and compare notes with other climes produces chilling response that the country is still democratising after many years it embarked on the tortuous journey. Indices of inclusive governance and development are grossly inadequate and it keeps one wondering what Nigeria conceives as democracy different from democratic practice (Okibe, 2000).

The major distinctions between developed and undeveloped or developing nations predicate on the type of governance process they put in place, the level of citizen's inclusiveness in decision-making, the effectiveness of response to demands, including the performance of the system in policy formulation and implementation (Schattschneider,

2004). The system encompasses political, socio-economic, religious, cultural, and human and natural resources development subsectors that forms the source of indicators for ranking countries. Scholars coalesce at any level of assessment, in classifying most countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, either as undeveloped, underdeveloped, or developing countries of the world (Sorenson, 2007). The classification depends largely on the sustainability of their different development programmes, which the countries in Africa portray worse indicators.

Thus, a country attains certain level of political development when it meets certain standard in comparative terms. Democracy provides leadership that translates the dream to existential reality by mobilizing mass supports and participation in governance. In this case, democratic practice in Nigeria is fraught with many challenges that hinder its disposition towards pursuing public concerns in governance (Okibe, 2000). The system is laden with intrinsic negations that fail to distinguish between personal interests from public expectations. In fact, the interlocked and conflicting objectives of governance from the perspectives of the rulers and the ruled, often questions the intendments of the founding fathers of modern Nigeria that fought for democracy, in order to secure civil rule for the country.

At the vortex of struggle to entrench democracy in Nigeria, both the political class and the masses played significant roles to wrest power from the military and subdue their iron fist or draconian laws. The essences were to have a sense of national identity devoid of authoritarianism, to run the affairs of the country on the principles of democratic drives and to behold a sovereign nation-state that compares with others in every indicator of national unity and political development. The indicators revolve around justice, equity, fairness through transparency, accountability and even development in the country (Okibe, 2000).

Against this backdrop, exclusion in democratic governance have resulted in a scenario where either the military that sacked a civilian regime or co-military one belched allegations of inordinate ambition, human rights abuse, perversion of justice, pursuit of personal interests and corruption as reasons for inability of the country to develop. Lack of good governance based on democratic principles culminates in abuse of power, mismanagement of national resources and decay in infrastructure. It tops global news headlines in the case of Nigeria.

Since May 29, 1999 when the military handed over power to the civilian government, and after nineteen years of uninterrupted democratic government, growth process in the system continues to decline (Okibe, 2000). Successive administrations keep trading blames on the military and immediate past civilian government they succeeded. None has vigorously pursued political development or transformed the system to benefit the masses.

Consequently, many Nigerians lose confidence in the system, due to multiple snag and challenges to life expectancy. Hunger, poverty, violence and insecurity pervade the system while many unscrupulous elements and public officeholders soar in chronic corruption. It has made democratising process in Nigeria to run at cross-purposes when compared with advanced countries. It does not follow a path that guarantees stable

political development, as personal interest is elevated over and above public and national interests.

Nevertheless, the idea of modern democracy based on the notion of mass participation in civil governance unambiguously manifests in citizen's representation. As social contract, it mandates political officeholders voted into positions of authority to truly represent the people and impact society through coordinated and beneficial socio-economic and political development. It focuses less on theory and more on practice. Hence, representation entails inclusiveness, participation and the dividends of democracy. Their interconnectivity makes the paper to examine the trajectory and ascertain how they work in Nigeria.

## **2. Conceptual Clarifications**

### **2.1. Democracy**

From the ancient Greece's conception, democracy is perceived as government of the majority (Berelson, 1952). Though this definition reflects the idea of direct democracy in the form of male adults' direct participation, the idea is not too different in modern representative democracy. In both forms of democracy, the position of the people is germane. Democracy suggests that ultimate sovereignty resides with the people (Milbrath, 1965).

In the present context, this is expressed through the electoral process. Countries in Europe, America, including Russia and China, etc, which have attained appreciable levels of political and socio-economic developments, premised the process on inclusive participation. Nigeria has had an uninterrupted period of nineteen years of democracy and all through this period, the country has at best been democratising without really practicing what can be termed a true democracy; hence, it practically lacks core principles and values of democracy.

### **2.2. Democracy and Political Development**

According to Naidu (1997:151), development-oriented democracy is action-oriented, people-oriented, change-oriented, carrier of innovation, aims at progressive socio-economic changes and nation building, client-oriented in character, flexible and dynamic, encourages participative decision-making, gives position to the representatives of people in the administrative process of making and implementing decisions, time-oriented and requires functional leadership. However, the peculiarities of the different countries, need to be considered when assessing the indices of development per country, the mindset and dispositions of democratic operators is key to what becomes of any democracy (Dahl, 1961).

Almond & Verba (1965) alluded to the differences when they contend that the political characteristics of some developed states like Great Britain and the USA are referred to as the civic culture, one that is participatory and pluralistic, persuasive and characterised by a culture of consensus and diversity. Accordingly, the civic culture promotes democracy and participation in civil affairs. It permits change, though

moderates it. The political system under civic culture is relatively stable and its legitimacy is well established.

In a similar contextual analysis, Ogbogu (2016) posited that Great Britain, over the years has been able to establish a stable democratic political system and as early as the 17<sup>th</sup> century, has achieved political integration. It maintained the political system of civic culture because it is participatory, diverse, permits change and encourages communication. As a result, Great Britain has a firmly established national identity. It makes its social and economic interests clearly defined and vigorously defended. It thus appears very clear that Great Britain attained public trust on the social contract with the people; enviable political development and nation building based on civic culture and established democratic process.

In the case of the United State of America, it has also attained the present enviable status of driving democracy and sustainable political development through painstaking efforts. From the thirteen (13) colonies, which came together in 1776 to sign a declaration of independence from Britain, it gradually evolved into 37 states in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and since then, the country has expanded rapidly with 50 states now. Like Britain, Almond & Verba (1965) affirmed that the political system of the US was in line with civic culture. It operates a federal political system, which is participatory and pluralistic with multiple tiers of government. It maintained a strong democratic tradition that is lacking in Nigeria.

### **2.3. Comparative Overview**

From the brief comparative analysis of the two countries above, one can see that the Great Britain and the US did not attain their levels of political development and democracy on a platter of gold. They both adopted a civic culture in their political system. Roskin et al (2008) observed that the British and American democratic operators and business entrepreneurs are guided by national interest, but in the Nigerian situation, personal and sectional interest influences the policy of government. In such environment of parochial associations, political development cannot be feasible let alone being sustainable. Democracy in the Western tradition grew out of individualism and a competitive market economy.

Conversely, most developing societies are rather authoritarian, virtually all their leaders practically rule with or without the people's consent. The elites, who are at the top or the most influential people in a political system, completely oppress and suppress people, who supposedly, should have both say and way in democracy (Roskin et al 2008). It negates both the theoretical prescriptions on democracy and the practical examples from the practice.

According to Lipset (2004), democracy today is a political system, which supplies regular constitutional opportunities for changing the governing officials, and a social mechanism, which permits the largest possible part of the population to influence major decisions by choosing among contenders for political office. Modern representative democracy, which invariably brings about sustainable political development and

ultimately lead to nation building if properly managed, should reflect the aforementioned characteristics.

### **3. Theoretical Framework:**

The theory, which succinctly provides explanation to this study, is the Social Contract Theory. This theory, which was popularised by the trio, Locke (1994), Hobbes (1968) and Rousseau (2007) advanced the view that the state is the product of a contract, covenant, agreement or compact. Alubabari (2012) exemplified the idea of the social contract theory by citing Rauscher who listed five areas into which contractual approaches may be analysed. These are the nature of the contractual act; the parties to the act; what the parties are agreeing to; the reasoning that leads to the agreement; and what the agreement is supposed to show.

The element of contract in Aquinas' theory derived from his views based on moral obligation, which according to him, is located in man's nature (Noone, 1970). Similarly, Rousseau (2007) argued that in the state of nature where there was no state or civilisation, people were essentially innocent, good, happy and healthy. In the state of nature according to him, men had absolute freedom, equality and enjoyed pleasant happiness, but they were enslaved. The idea that man is borne free and everywhere is in chains buttresses the need for democracy that favours government, controlled by the majority through power of their votes.

The Rousseau's distinction between the will of all and the general will (Hardwick, 2011) summarises the argument of this paper. The latter, according to him refers to the common interests of the citizens, while the former has to do with self-interests. The social contract theory is hinged on the realisation that public office, which is what representatives hold in trust for their people, is about adherence to the general will, thereby rendering service for common good and attending to the demands of the constituents. It is in this sense that democracy thrives and results in good governance, quality service delivery, sustainable political development and nation building by inclusive policy in decision-making process.

### **4. Brief Background to Democratic System in Nigeria**

Nigeria is a product of history, sometimes history that muddles up in controversy. Having attained political independence on October 1, 1960 and Republican status in 1963, it experimented civil governance between 1960 and early 1966 before it snowballed into several military administrations that spanned decades (Okibe, 2000). Remarkably, under Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo in 1979, the country returned to civilian rule whereby Alhaji Shehu Shagari was sworn in as the first President under a presidential system of government. The military struck again on December 31, 1983 during which the military junta sacked Alhaji Shehu Shagari's government, banned all political party activities, suspended the constitution, and imposed Gen. Muhammadu Buhari as military head of state (Okibe, 2000).

An interlude in military regime following the stepping aside by Ibrahim Babangida and introduction of civilian rule known as the Interim National Government (ING), led by

Chief Ernest Shonekan terminated abruptly. Gen Sani Abacha ousted the government in a palace coup. The battle for restoration of democracy in Nigeria raged between the eras of Gen Ibrahim Babangida and Gen Sani Abacha that witnessed significant domestic commitments and international assistance. The military remained in power until 1999 when Abdusalami Abubakar handed over to Chief Olusegun Obasanjo as a civilian democratically elected president (Okibe, 2000), marking the return to democratic practice in Nigeria's governance.

## 5. Comparative Analysis of Representative Democracy

According to Roskinetal (2008), modern representative democracy possesses the characteristics of popular accountability of government, political competition, alternation in power, popular representation, majority decision, right of dissent and disobedience, political equality, popular consultation and free press. In this context, policy makers in a democracy obtain majority support or plurality of vote cast by the people. Leaders are accountable to citizens. The people in subsequent elections vote out elected leaders who performed badly.

No one has an inherent right to occupy positions of political power, either when he has become unpopular or has been voted out; but in Africa, the trend differs remarkably due to absence of democratic culture. It makes the 'sit-tight' mentality of political officeholders in most African countries a misnomer (Odoziobodo, 2019), and thus the bane of sustainable political development. In Nigeria, elected representatives lord it over the people. There is hardly any form of accountability to the people. They disregard judicial processes, and even when they perceive their unpopularity, they play on the psyche of the people and before long; they find their way back to power. It constitutes major hindrance to democratising process.

Against this backdrop of contradiction in Africa, Roskin et al (2008) argued that in representative democracies, voters elect representatives to act as legislators and protect their general interests. Each legislator represents a given number of people from wards, districts and constituency levels, and the way such representative – legislators act in representing them, is important. Similarly, Ricci (1970) corroborated the fact that legislators must treat elections as mandates to carry out constituents' wishes. Unfortunately, Nigeria exemplifies imposition of policies and projects not considered relevant to constituents' interests and leaders rarely consult with their constituents. It is merely during elections that legislators or politicians aspiring for elective positions remember their constituents but abandon them thereafter; and neither do they carry out or conform to the wishes that emanate from their peculiar situations. Nonetheless, the mandate theory submits that the legislators should get for voters what they want and not what the legislators want for the voters.

Those opposed to the mandate theory, (which Africa promotes) hold the view that constituents have no opinion on issues. The representative legislators and other appointees of government must act as trustees who should carry out wishes of constituents when feasible, but acting for the best interests of the community as a whole. Schumpeter (1942) argued that the major problem with the classical (democratic) theory

centred in the proposition that the people hold a definite and rational opinion on every individual question and that they give effects to this opinion ... by choosing representatives who will see to it that their opinion is carried out. This may not have been the intendment of sovereignty belonging to the people.

Nevertheless, Besley (2004) posited that representative democracy does not mean that the representatives must become a cipher for constituents. Rather, it means that the people as a body must be able to control the general direction of government policy. Roskin et al (2008) affirmed the need for partnership between the people and their representatives as the bastion of modern democratic system, which Schattschneider (1960) summarised thus:

*The beginning of wisdom in democratic theory is to distinguish between the things that people can do and the things the people cannot do. The worst possible disservice that can be done to the democratic course is to attribute to the people a mystical, magical, omnipotence which takes no cognisance of what very large members of people cannot do by the sheer weight of numbers. At this point, the common definition has invited us to make fools of ourselves.*

This controversy underlines the border between theory and practice. Theory proposes how, justifies why and prescribes what and what not obtains in a system. The simple nature of prescriptions in theory becomes complex in practice. The environment and individual's characteristic play key roles in shaping the practice, sometimes contrary to theoretical assumptions. While some tends to draw closer to the recommendations of the theory, others maintain miles apart from the set standard and rarely attempt to conform to the conditions.

The implication, in the context of this study, is that developing societies like Nigeria lack democratic institutions and do not practice democracy that conduces to good governance or does it make sincere efforts that show readiness. The political system is not characterised by free, fair and credible elections and independence of the election management body. It does not entrench and implement the rule of law, transparency, accountability, independence of judiciary and legislature, freedom of the press, and respect for fundamental human rights. There is exclusion that breeds insecurity, threatens the stability of the system and corporate existence. It requires that the people as well as the informal sectors should brace-up and identify with, as well as confront the challenges inherent in the democratising processes.

## **6. Ingredients of Functional Democracy**

### **6.1. Inclusive Participation in Decision-Making**

Popular will determination is a critical factor in democracy. This is done or achieved by the majority deciding what happens in the system (Dahl, 1961), using the instrumentalities of ballot in elections and public opinion in referendum. Through this means, the policy, which has the popular support, becomes the policy of government. This is in tandem with ancient Greece's conception. In modern representative democracy, the majority decides but with respect for minority rights. For such minority rights to be

upheld, an independent judiciary becomes a necessity. In fact, what actually becomes policy is the result of a conflict between majority and minority groups (Milbrath, 1965). If minority views are silenced, the will of the majority then becomes the tyranny of the majority.

In a democracy, people must have the right to resist the commands of government, which they see as wrong or unreasonable. Thomas Jefferson invoked this right in America in 1776 in the Declaration of Independence. The most profound American defense of civil disobedience was probably made by Henry Thoreau in his opposition to the war with Mexico, when he declared, "All men recognise the right of revolution, that is, the right to refuse allegiance to, and to resist the government when its tyranny or its inefficiency are great and unendurable" (Cramer, 1849). In practice, developing countries often disagree with this rule.

The disagreement is regardless that the disobedience, as it is allowed in modern democracy, is civil and non-violent. In Nigeria, there has been series of protests against some perceived government insensitivity, authoritarian posture and unpopular policies. In most instances, government uses security apparatus to disperse protesters even when such protests are actually non-violent. The beauty lies in the compelling force it attracts, which probably makes unwilling and insensitive government to listen and actually have a rethink. Through this means, Mahatma Gandhi and his followers forced the British to leave India.

In a democracy, all adults are equally able to participate in politics (Milbrath, 1965) but these days in Nigeria, it is evidently difficult to use election as a barometer for measuring participation. This is because of disparaging and unwholesome activities of government, political parties, the election management bodies or all the three combined in truncating the popular will of the people in elections. It is also capital intensive to run for public office, especially in Nigeria where godfatherism, religion and ethnicity command high premium.

These factors are among the major hindrances to the democratising process and thus national political development. Nonetheless, popular consultation is an ideal democratic principle. Most leaders realise that they must know what the people want and must be responsive to their needs and demands (Berelson, 1952). This, in their thinking, enables them to govern or lead effectively.

## **6.2. Regard for Public Opinion**

In recent years, several critics have noted that US officials often rely heavily on the opinions of small segments of their constituencies because they are well organised and highly vocal. The role of the people in the political system is determined largely by the conflict system, for it is conflict that involves people in politics and the nature of conflict determines the nature of public involvement (Schattschneider, 2004). This conflict borders on interest, which is competitive in nature and not destructive or violent laden like the cases in most developing societies.

Most times, Nigeria claims that it patterned her democracy after the American model without doing what the American democrats and politicians do to keep the



political system safe for participation in politics and governance. Intelligent and calculative leaders know that they must not be too far ahead or behind public opinion. They evolve a lot of technique to measure and test public opinion. For such leaders, public opinion is an indispensable input of democracy. It behooves the leadership to give room for popular consultation with the people and not be unilateral. This consultation lacks in Nigeria where leaders do whatever they like.

### **6.3. Regard for Media Freedom**

Makinde (2005) opined that policy beneficiaries should be involved from the formulation stage and not the present practice where policy actors make the decisions for them. Press freedom is essential characteristic of democracy and means of communication that quickly reaches large (heterogeneous) audience. The essential part of its responsibility is to keep leadership on its toes. It plays the role of a watchdog, gatekeeper and “Fourth Estate of the Realm” simply because it informs and educates the public about their elected representatives and brings the feelings and opinions of the people to government attention.

The media can create a forum where the people meet and dialogue with their leaders. Some of these fora abound in Nigeria. Example is the once popular Labe Odan of the Osun state government, “Talk Your Own” programme, aired by most Radio Stations especially in South Western Nigeria, to mention a few. However, the benefit of these techniques is in the willingness of leaders to work with people’s suggestions at such fora. However, dictatorship is naturally intolerant to free and critical press, which constitutes a cardinal pillar of democracy. In other words, free press is a litmus test of the degree that the concept of democracy blends with the enforcement of its basic principles in governance in a country.

In Nigeria, government frequently challenges the press freedom. It formulates policies to gag and censor press freedom, unlike the American Press that appears to be the freest in the world. The ugly trend in Nigeria does not deter Private Media Organisations – Newspapers, Magazines, Radio and Television from surging in number and competing with that of government and in some cases, having competitive edge over them. The authoritarian nature of democracy practiced in Nigeria results in the slow or non-implementation of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). It puts spanner in the works of free press in Nigeria and this stance is not healthy for democracy, national political development and nation building.

## **7. The Challenges of Democratic Practice in Nigeria**

Bello-Imam (2010), Dahida & Akangbe (2013) identified five challenges responsible for the underdevelopment in the nation’s democratisation process. These are lack of credible election; lack of freedom of speech and publication; non-acceptance of defeat (in an election) by political gladiators; corruption and the attitude of some political office holders to corner the nation’s wealth for themselves alone; long period of military regime; and non-observance of the doctrine of rule of law. In sincerity, Nigeria ranks high among countries in this debris.

Most of these issues, which repeatedly resonate, are subjects of electoral reform that formed part of the Report of the Uwais' Commission on Electoral Reforms in Nigeria. It recognises that free, fair and credible election is the beacon of democracy, which vests credibility on leadership succession process, gives legitimacy to a ruling government and instills value on national public institutions. However, Nigeria is far from adopting the proposed reform.

### **7.1. Poor Conduct of Elections**

Election involves competition among parties where only one emerges the winner of a particular position. In Nigeria, leaders do not or rarely accept defeat and abide by the rules of the game. That is part of military vices in the nation, which placed high premium on building cult of loyalist from among the civil class, whom they sponsored to contest election and win by every means possible. It breeds corruption and affects political development in a country.

### **7.2. Corruption, the Bane of Democracy in Nigeria**

Succinct examination of the interplay between corruption and development outlines the nature, scope, problem, causes and challenges of corruption in Nigeria (Bello-Imam, 2010; Dahida & Akangbe, 2013). Analytically, it portrays the concept of corruption and development as lucid background to seeing the relationship between corruption and the socio-economic and political development of any nation. The matrix and prevalence of corrupt practices leaves the possibility of questioning what National Orientation Agency (NOA) and various religious bodies preach on National Ethics Programme, which supposed to serve as a weapon against recurring incidences of corruption and as a platform for character molding.

The fact remains that where there is corruption, especially of the kind prevalent in Nigeria over the years, there cannot be transparency and accountability in governance and development efforts (Dinimio & Kpundeh, 1999; Dike, 2008). Corruption has the tendency of scuttling developmental initiatives. There has been damning and most times unsubstantiated claims, allegations and counter-allegations against perceived past administrations and individuals that does not exonerate or make any accuser of corrupt practices free from the sin.

Democracy abhors corruption through the institution of inclusiveness in policy formulation and implementation, transparency in the management of public affairs and accountability in stewardship. According to Dininio & Kpundeh (1999), corruption causes a serious development challenges. In the political spheres, it undermines democracy and good governance by weakening political processes. Corruption in elections subverts accountability and representation in policymaking; in the judiciary, it suspends the rule of law and in the public service, it leads to the unequal distribution of services. The implication is that corruption has pervaded our landscape that it seems practically that everyone is involved in it.

The corruption roll calls stretch to Police Officers on the road, the EFCC, ICPC, FRSC Officials, Custom Officers, Immigration Officers, Local Government Rate Collectors,

Public Servants, Contractors, Legislators (State and Federal), the Executive, Judiciary, Business People, the Clergy, Lecturers, and Teachers (Shehu, 2006). Corruption actually thrives where there is undue elevation of personal interest above public or national interest. True democracy does not promote the idea of desiring and wanting to obtain, acquire, receive, or satisfy self-interest alone at the expense of others' interests. Such inordinate ambition and craving is commonplace in Nigeria system and it gives rise to corruption.

### **7.3. Democracy and Restructuring Debates**

The drift in the democratic values and the driving factors in civil governance justify the on-going debate and discussion on whether Nigeria deserves restructuring or not. It premised the emphasis on correcting many anomalies in the system. This is despite that many Nigerians would not accept the corrective method, to deepen the culture and practice of democracy. Many of the leaders are self-centred and do not desire to place national or public interest above personal, usually parochial interests. Nigerians celebrate corruption, not minding the devastating effects, which the illicit action causes on national development.

Nigeria's twenty years of unbroken democratisation process is supposed to be a major political strength but it is hallmarked by heightened cases of insecurity, institutional fragility, decaying infrastructure, unemployment, dwindling values of local currency and corruption, which suggest that what the country has had these long years is mere civil rule and not necessarily a democracy. In other words, wastefulness is the evil veil that covers the practice of democracy in Nigeria. Case of mismanagement of national and natural resources abound, government property is nobody's property, and so nobody cares to maintain it.

### **8. Prospects of Democratisation in Nigeria**

Nigeria has more than what it takes to be, not only a developed and flourishing democracy, but also a world power. Its classification among the poorest nations of the world presents a challenge. Those who pour eulogies on the concept and principles of democracy but loathe the practice in governance process can only feed fat from the present situation if there is no paradigm shift. Some of the nation's leaders as well as other public servants who target the national wealth for the purposes of enriching themselves and in the cause of the morbid aspiration, scuttles democracy pose an obstacle to democratisation. That notion and practice in itself is undemocratic, unethical and deceptive in all ramifications. The goal of democracy is to serve public interest. It summarises the essence of social contract that unites the governors and the governed in the pursuit of common good in a society.

### **9. Conclusion**

There is no denying the fact that it takes long time for a nation to attain sound and well-developed democracy. America, which is the model of modern democracy today, once, had it rough and tough but it persevered, focused and determined to get it right.

Nigeria has very many forces contending with its democratisation process. Even the operators of the system do not have faith in it. An average American think of what he would do for America and guided by national interest. Nigerians are yet to have that mindset. There seems to be more emphasis on things that divide us than on those things that unite us. This includes ethnicity, religion, claim to resource ownership, language and so on.

Today, the ambition of most Nigerians is to seek greener pastures outside the shores of this country. They relocate mostly to the Americas, Europe, Australia, United Arab Emirate, even to neighbouring South Africa, Ghana, Gabon, among others, but it took the wisdom, sacrifice and efforts of the government and nationals of those countries to entrench democracy and good governance in their system. The democratisation process in Nigeria show glaringly that the country is not on the path of political development. From every indication, the situation seems to suggest that everyone is in a hurry to grab the national cake, regardless of how such desperation would affect the system.

### **10. Recommendations**

The study suggests some antidotes as recommendations towards transiting from the mere conceptual romance with democracy as fanciful system to practical activity in everyday governance and efforts at national integration, corporate existence and nation building:

- ❖ There should be value re-orientation in addition to the restructuring being debated. Value reorientation will help in inculcating in Nigerians a sense of moral rectitude. It will also make politics less lucrative and dissuade professionals like Medical Doctors, Engineers, Architects, Accountants, Estate Surveyors, and University Professors from engaging in politics because of the high returns that accrue from it through corruption.
- ❖ There should be mass participation, internal party democracy and equal opportunities for all the eligible citizens who desire to vote or to be voted for in an election. In all the institutions that superintend over the day-to-day administration of public policy, they should have independence and not emasculated for ulterior motives.
- ❖ Issues of ethnicity and religion, tribe and tongue should be de-emphasised. Democracy does not discriminate against anybody but unites all for the common purpose of achieving justice, fairness and equity in a political system. Those particularistic identity patterns do not promote national identity, which supports the principle and practice of democracy.
- ❖ Election should be strengthened to guarantee democratic practice and good governance. Election management body should be independent and electoral processes made transparent. Once election results are declared, both winners and losers should accept the outcome without resorting to litigation.

- ❖ Leadership should be exemplary. It should set the pace for the people to follow. Followers too should think of how to contribute to nation building.

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