

The Praxis of Democratic Consolidation: The Nigerian Experience

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the praxis of democratic consolidation by laying emphasis on the theory and practice of democratic consolidation in Nigeria. The methodology used in this study is the review of secondary data. The study came out with findings that since the advent of this Fourth Republic, democracy in Nigeria is one of the most vibrant in the world but there are so many internal and external factors that militate against its effectiveness and efficiency. They include lack of internal democracy in the political parties, manipulation of election results and terrorism. Others are lack of adherence to the rule of law, violation of fundamental rights of citizens, corruption, poverty and insecurity. All these have made the people to become disillusioned with governance in Nigeria especially with the political party that formed government in power and it has degenerated into unprecedented status, thus, forcing the citizens to become apathetic and it is not good for any democracy. The paper recommends that the government should provide an enabling environment for the political parties to thrive and elections should always be free and fair in the country without unnecessary intervention and the issue of poverty should be tackled with immediate alacrity to discourage people from being apathetic. Also, the civil society organisations should sit up to always checkmate the excesses of democratic institutions in the country and lastly, political parties should always insist on the practice of internal democracy because by so doing, the whole country will witness democracy in the true sense of it.

Keywords: Democracy, Democratic Consolidation, Election, Rule of Law

INTRODUCTION

Democracy refers to a system involving multiparty, elections, representative government, and freedom of speech [1,2,3]. It is a form of government in which all eligible citizens have an equal say in the decision that affect their lives. Ideally, this includes equal (direct or indirect) participation in the proposal, development and passage of legislation into law [4,5,6]. It encompasses social, economic and cultural conditions that enables the free and equal practice of political self-determination [7,8,9]. The origin of the concept of democracy could be traced to the Greeks. To the Greeks, "Demos" means people while "Kratien" or "Kratos" means government or to rule. The concept has myriads of definitions depending on the scholar. [10], conceives democracy as "the power of the people and the rule of the people. To [11], "It is a system of government under which the people exercise the governing power either directly or through representatives periodically elected by themselves" [12]. Abraham

Lincoln views democracy as "the government of the people, by the people and for the people". Democracy requires the active participation of citizens [13,14]. Ideally, the various democratic institutions should keep citizens engaged in the business of governance by informing, educating and mobilising the public. In many new democracies, political parties, civil societies and other non-governmental organisations (NGOs) play a very important role because they serve as connecting rods between the people and the government [15,16,17]. The reality, however, is that the people in a new and restored democracy like Nigeria do not always live up to expectation and or play by the rules [18,19]. Still, in many fledgling democracies like Nigeria, the people have been managing to assert their role because the political class has been too influential that they have hijacked the democratic process making nonsense of the dictum, 'power to the people' [20]. The area that is now Nigeria was controlled by the British during the

"scramble for Africa" era of the late 19th and early 20th centuries [21]. In 1914, the British created modern Nigeria by uniting three distinct ethnic regions-the Islamic north (home of the Hausa-Fulani peoples), the Southwest (Yoruba) and the southeast (Ibo). The ethnic divisions within the country have also been a constant source of political troubles [22, 23]. Beginning in the 1920s, nationalist leaders were demanding autonomy for Nigeria within the British Commonwealth. These movements gathered momentum in the post-Second World War era, and the British soon realized that independence was inevitable. Negotiations led to democratic elections and the installation of an independent government on October 1, 1960. The nascent democratic system, however, fell victim to Nigeria's underlying ethnic divisions shortly after independence [24, 25]. A military coup by Ibo officers brought down Nigerian democracy in 1966 and anti-Ibo violence and counter-coups eventually sparked a civil war. The eastern, Ibo-led, oil-rich part of the country, named Biafra, attempted to secede in 1967; the ensuing three years of war killed between 500,000 and 2 million people in the region. Civilian rule returned to Nigeria in 1979 in the form of the National Party of Nigeria, led by Alhaji Shehu Shagari [26]. He attempted to govern by consensus, but his administration was perceived as weak, ineffective and corrupt. In addition, widespread economic mismanagement created mounting economic problems [27]. In 1983, Shagari was forced to confront a drastic loss in revenue caused by falling oil prices; he announced a sharp cut in imports to slow the mushrooming foreign debt. The resulting economic chaos initiated renewed public unrest and Shagari's government was replaced by another military oligarchy. A succession of northern-dominated military governments has held power ever since [28]. These regimes have repeatedly promised a return to democratic government, and various preparatory steps have been taken. In 1985, the military regime, under General Ibrahim Babangida, promised a return to more humane and civilian government.

Steps to this goal included a loosening of political censorship and the release of political prisoners. Continued economic distress, however, forced the government to delay a return to civilian rule until 1992. Elections were held in 1993. MashoodAbiola, a prominent Yoruba businessman, apparently won the elections and declared that he would be forming a government of national unity [9]. The military rulers nullified the election results and in June 1994 arrested Abiola for claiming the right to rule. He was imprisoned until his release and subsequent death on 7 July 1998. Though Abiola was by no means the cleanest actor in Nigerian politics, he was a symbol of democracy for most Nigerians. Many Nigerians hope that his death, along with the death of General Abacha, will usher in a new era of civilian democracy [16]. Nigeria, the most populous and potentially the richest country in Africa, was at an important crossroads in its political history. The deaths of Nigeria's two most important political actors-hardline military ruler General SaniAbacha and imprisoned leader MashoodAbiola, both of heart failure-has left the country in chaos. It is hoped by most of the population that Nigeria's new military leader, General AbdulsalamAbubakar will create a civilian transitional government, as has been promised in the past. The struggle for civilian democracy has defined Nigeria's political history [18]. In 1999, the administration of General Abdulsalami Abubakar conducted an election that ushered in the Fourth Republic which is the focal point of this research project. The election was won by Chief OlusegunObasanjo whose tenure ended on May 29th 2007. Elections were conducted that same year and Umaru Musa Yar'Adua won the Presidential election and died in 2010. On his sick bed, Nigeria went through some tumultuous periods occasioned by a group of cabal who did not want to transmit the presidential powers to the then Vice President in the person of Goodluck Jonathan. Eventually, through the invocation of doctrine of necessity the parliament passed a resolution transmitting the presidential powers to him and in 2011, there was another

rounds of general elections which returned former President Goodluck Jonathan to power through an overwhelming victory in the polls. That election was widely acclaimed to be one of the freest and fairest on the soil of

Nigeria. Again, in 2015, elections were conducted and President Muhammadu Buhari was elected as the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria between 2015-2019.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework used in this study is the elite theory. The array of the proponents of this theory like Robert Michels, Wright Mills, Floyd Hunter, William Domhoff, James Burnham, Robert D. Putnam, Thomas R. Dye are of the view that in every society, two groups of people appear; the minority who are very powerful and are united and very formidable and secondly, the majority that are unorganised and powerless. The major tenets of elite theory are:

- (i) Societies are divided into the few who have power many who do not. Only a small number of persons allocate values for society; the masses do not decide public policy.
- (ii) The few who govern are not typical of the masses who are governed. Elites are drawn disproportionately from the Upper Socio-Economic strata of the society.
- (iii) The movement of non-elites to elites positions must be slow and continuous to maintain stability and avoid reduction. Only non-elites who accepted the basic elite consensus can be admitted to governing circles.
- (iv) Elites share a consensus on the basic values of the social system and the preservation of the system.
- (v) Public policy does not reflect demands of the masses, but rather the prevailing values of the elites. Changes in public

policy will be incremental rather than revolutionary.

- (vi) Active elites are subject to relatively little direct influence from pathetic masses. Elites influence masses more than masses influence elites [8].

The elites especially the political elites usually struggle to consolidate democracy to further their interest within the Nigerian society. This is because the organized elites will always have consensus and in unity, they make sure that they get what they want using democratic institutions at all times irrespective of the feeling of the masses. This research fundamentally assumes that democracy is a beautiful bride and it appears to be the most appealing ideology and it is a force to reckon with if the elites who most often than not inundate the people with issues that are capable of causing uneasiness to our democracy want to always remain secured. Democratic institutions are like the pillars of every democracy and so, adhering strictly to their ethics by ensuring that there is always respect for the rule of law and due process is sine-qua-non to democratic consolidation. But the irony is that the elites use these institutions for their own benefits. Since it is a known fact that Nigerian elitism is a never-ending circulation, in which case, the elites that have been on the corridors of power since independence era are still the onesholding power today or their stooges. This is done to further or protect the interest of their elite-godfathers.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Concept of Democracy

The origin of the concept of democracy as earlier pointed out, could be traced to the Greeks, 'Demos' means the people while 'Kratien' or 'Kretos' means government or to rule. The concept developed first in the small Greek City States, and the Athenian model of democracy is what always falls back on

[13]. Democracy is always applied in a variety of ways. For instance, [8] conceives of democracy as, "the power of the people and his rule of the people." Furthermore, [17] describes it as a " a system of government under which the people exercise the governing power either directly or through

representatives periodically elected by themselves.” In his own contribution, [18] reduces the concept to procedural, when he defines the democratic method as the “institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals require the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people’s vote”. And from the Marxist point of [9] the communist manifesto, democracy connotes the “the dictatorship of the proletariat,” that is to say majority rule. [9], States that democracy originally meant rule by the common people, the problems. It was very much a class affairs; it meant the sway of the lowest and largest class. That is why it was feared, reflected, and modified by men of the age of enlightenment spearhead by the British who valued their property more than issue of political sentiments. Democracy as a levelling doctrine, was also rejected by Plato in the fifth century BC, Cromwell in the seventeenth century AD, and by John Stuart Mill, the major nineteenth century apostle of liberalism. J.B. Miller, for example, realized that the common people had to be treated as people, proposed a system of voting that would prevent the labour class from having majority voice from having majority voice in decision-making so as to safe-guard the interest of the propertied-class who were in the minority. This is the tap-rot of the variety of models of democracy we have currently.

There are certain things that must be in every democracy to make it a truly democratic society. These include:

- (i) There must be an electorate political authority derives only from the mandate or prior agreement of the electorate.
- (ii) There must be a parliament or an assembly to legislate for the country.

Concept of Democratic Consolidation

According to [23], democratic consolidation represents a state whereby institutions, rules and constraints of democracy becomes the sole legitimate means for the acquisition and exercise of political power. For [9] cited in [7], democratic consolidation is a term which describes the vital political goal for a transiting democracy with

- (iii) There is the need for executive that would be responsible for the day-to-day administration of the state. It is the Executive that would carry out the decisions of parliament.
- (iv) To be sure that the principle of separation of power is adhered to, there must be a free judiciary the courts must not be under the control of either the parliament or the Executive and justice must be family and justly dispensed.
- (v) Another feature of democracy is that there must be periodic elections at which all eligible citizens must have equal rights to vote without discrimination of any type.
- (vi) In a democratic set up, human rights are guaranteed and protected. Such rights, include freedom of association, religion, movements, speech, etc.
- (vii) it is normal in a democracy that the provisions of the constitution are supreme. If any law is inconsistent with the constitution the provisions of the constitution always remain and that other law shall to the extent of the inconsistency be null and void [9].

These features are integral to every democracy because they make possible free discussion on the continuous participation of the people in government, not only at the time of elections. The features are important, because democracy is based on a belief which places great value on individual personality and individual freedom. Where power is conferred permanently or where on account of an atmosphere of fear and coercion, people do not feel free to discuss, vote and displace the existing government if they want to do so, democracy cannot be said to exist.

intermittent flop by authoritarian rule. It consists of overlapping behavioural, attitudinal and constitutional dimensions through which democracy becomes routinised and deeply internalised in social, institutional and even psychological life as well as political calculation for achieving success. [9], on the other hand argued

that democratic consolidation is an identifiable phase in the process of transition from authoritarian to democratic system that are critical to the establishment of a stable, institutional and lasting democracy. Similarly, [11] cited in [20], sees democratic consolidation as the challenge of making new democracies secure and extending their life expectancy beyond the short term of making them immune against the threat of authoritarian repression and of building dams against eventual reverse waves. For [13], democratic consolidation refers to "a firm establishment and successful completion of the process of political democratization". According to [17], democratic consolidation is about regime maintenance and about regarding the key political institution as the only legitimate framework for political contestation and adherence to the democratic rules of the game. In the same vein, [8], define democratic consolidation as the acceptance by all political actors that democratic procedure dictate government renewal.

Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria

The yardstick to measure democratic consolidation in any country is tied to the effectiveness of democratic institutions and the capacity of those institutions to carry out their functions with little or no encumbrances. These institutions are looked at vis-a-vis their functionality in Nigerian democracy.

Legislature: At the inception of the current democratic dispensation in the country in 1999, the hallowed chambers of the central legislature became an auditorium of monumental political dramaturgy. Extant literature on this episode is humongous. We shall only

We have proved in this descriptive analysis that the upper house of the Nigerian National Parliament that sat from 3 June 1999 to 29 May, 2007 produced financial scandals as well as a leadership crisis as its major defining attribute. In conclusion, we submit that whenever the history and politics of Nigeria's Fourth Republic are examined/re-examined, the Senate will face a rather critical review for some unparliamentarily attributes.

According to [8], who reported the submissions of Emeka Ihedioha, former Deputy Speaker of Nigeria's House of Representatives, the political leadership that emerged in 1999 was coming from a

Put differently, democratic consolidation entails widespread acceptance of rules that generate political participation and competition. [8], contend that in a consolidated democracy, "democracy becomes the only game in town" and offer a framework encompassing behavior and attitudinal and constitutional means of determining democratic consolidation. Behaviourally, there are no significant socio-economic, political, institutional or national actors trying to achieve their aims through unconstitutional means, violence or in attempt to secede from the state. [15], on his part, postulates a "two- turnover" thesis as an indicator of democratic consolidation. He argues that democracy becomes consolidated when an entrenched regime delivers free, fair and competitive election by which the party that wins power at the initial elections during the transition phase loses in subsequent elections and hands over power to the winning party and when the winning party also in turn hands over power peacefully to another party at subsequent elections

sample the aspects that had to do with leadership instability and the meddlesomeness of the executive branch of government, personified by the then President Olusegun Obasanjo, in the affairs of the two arms of the National Assembly in Nigeria: the Senate and the House of Representatives. In [8], we see a well-documented effort in chronicling the Nigerian Senate's leadership embarrassment between 1999 and 2007. In most cases, the executive branch of government was behind this leadership imbroglio. In conclusion, Banjo posits:

military background where the idea of a legislature was totally unknown or greatly detested. Under succeeding military regimes, Ihedioha highlighted, the ruling military High Command always combined executive and

legislative powers. Government policies and programmes were carried out with “immediate effect”. The military had no patience for “too much grammar” and debates often associated with parliamentary democracy. So, for a former military leader who was used to issuing out orders and getting things done, it was inconceivable for former President Obasanjo to be sharing powers with “idle civilians” who constituted the legislature in a democratic setting.³ The tendency to assert total control was ever present. This mental construct or military hangover was primarily responsible for the adversarial relationship that existed between the Executive and the Legislature, between 1999 and 2007 in Nigeria. Ihedioha further submitted that the desire of the Executive to exercise total control over the Legislature led to the imposition of leadership in the two chambers of the National Assembly, against the preferences of majority of the members. Hence, the two chambers of the National Assembly: the Senate and the House of Representatives, similarly witnessed crises of leadership, which had their origin in the meddlesomeness of the Executive [7]. Within the specific context of democratic consolidation, it is highlighted in this study that as the administration of President Goodluck Jonathan came to an end in 2015 and Retired General Muhammadu Buhari was sworn in as the President of Nigeria, such executive meddlesomeness was no longer presentable as a feature of Nigeria’s democracy. Both the Senate and the House of Representative had freely elected their leaders, who were successfully leading them to the end of the tenure of Nigeria’s seventh National Assembly. In the case of the Senate President, David Mark, who had served for an unprecedented two terms of four

years each, as Senate President, he maintained a reciprocally cordial relationship with the executive branch of government. In the case of Alhaji Aminu Tambuwal, who had also completed a single term of four years as Speaker, he actually emerged Speaker against the evident wishes of the executive branch of government. Throughout his tenure, he retained the strong support of a majority of the House Members while disagreeing most times with the policies and administrative tendencies of the Executive. Even when he (Tambuwal) decamped from the then majority party in the House, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), under which platform he became Speaker and moved to the opposition All Progressives Congress (APC), he still remained Speaker, (in contentious circumstances) but with the evident support of his colleagues in the House (across party divides) [12].

Freedom of Speech: It is instructive to point out that this subsection of the study is not called “Freedom of Speech” in error. It was not meant to be captioned “Freedom of the Press” which is equally a necessary condition for democratic consolidation. We specifically underscore by this caption, the notion of the right of the citizen to freely express his views as his contribution to democratic consolidation. This is conceptually different from freedom of the press, even where the two concepts may overlap. Freedom of speech entails that the citizen expresses his views without being abused by the person he elected into office. We are of course already alluding to the Presidency of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo in Nigeria. According to [8], with regards to Chief Obasanjo:

Nigeria’s President, Olusegun Obasanjo has become an institution or rather a wild thorn that is uncontrollable ... There are many reports in the news media both locally and internationally of his convulsive and abusive tempers which is unbecoming of a leader. It is still fresh in our mind the insult he hurled on the victims and families of the Ikeja military cantonment hardware explosion. Hundreds of people died in that explosion and the President was reported to have insulted the victims and their family, calling them stupid as they attempted to find an answer to their calamities. And now in Plateau State, the Nigeria President has thrown the temper

tantrum again, calling the Chairman of the state chapter of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) an idiot in an open forum.

[7], also has a record of Chief Obasanjo's abusive methodologies. By 2015 however, under the Presidency of Dr Goodluck Jonathan, for a President to abuse a Nigerian citizen would be unthinkable. To demonstrate the extent to which Dr Jonathan liberalized the public space for the citizens to freely express their concerns and contribute to the democratic process, he once declared that he was the most criticized President in the world [9]. Further to our democratic consolidation thesis, the freedom of speech that is currently available to Nigerian citizens is a positive development. Another positive dimension to the freedom of speech characterization of the current democratic tendencies in the country is that those who express some otherwise provocative views are not even molested by government, knowing that the hunting of some of such characters

Justice Ephraim Akpata and Sir Abel Guobadia served as the Chairmen of Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in 1999 and 2003 respectively. During these periods (1999 and 2003), it was reported that election results were widely condemned by the opposition, and the European Union Election Observers. The elections were marred by poor organization, lack of essential transparency, violence, widespread procedural irregularities and significant evidence of fraud, particularly during result collation process.

In 2005, Professor Maurice Iwu became the Chairman of Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). His tenure was perhaps the most controversial, when compared to his successors. The 2007 election he conducted was marred by massive irregularities and blatant favoritism and he was criticized by Nigerian and foreign observers for conducting election that fell below acceptable democratic standards and this statement was also admitted by the late President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, the ostensible winner of the 2007 election [9]. On June 8, 2010, Professor Attahiru Muhammadu Jega was nominated by President Goodluck Jonathan as the new Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), subject to Senate confirmation as a replacement for Professor Maurice Iwu, who vacated the post on April 28, 2010. Professor Attahiru Jega's nomination as INEC

in the past ended in wild goose chase [10].

Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC): The professional and administrative capacity of an electoral umpire is critical to the credibility of the electoral process in particular and the overall assessment of electoral democracy in a specific polity. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Nigeria, under the leadership of Justice Ephraim Akpata in 1999, Sir Abel Guobadia in 2003 and Professor Maurice Iwu in 2007 were usually perceived to be deficient in professional and administrative competencies. It was actually these deficiencies, which manifested as INEC-induced irregularities in the elections conducted by INEC, under the leaderships of these Chairmen. [12] and [15] EU Election Observer Mission highlights as follows:

chairman followed approval by a meeting of the National Council of State called by President Jonathan and attended by former Heads of State ... Before the April 2011 elections were conducted (in Anambra State), the much maligned Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) had undergone an internal overhaul, under its new boss, Professor Attahiru Jega. INEC claims that a great deal of time and money had been invested in technology, for a high-technological registration process, and in staffing, in order to ensure that the elections were free and fair [8]. The elections in Anambra State were largely adjudged free and fair and subsequent elections conducted in Nigeria under the leadership of Professor Attahiru Jega as the Electoral body's Chairman were usually adjudged largely free and fair by nonpartisan commentators. The cumulative successes in the conduct of such elections in the

different states of the federation (where gubernatorial elections became due) culminated in the success recorded by the Jega-led INEC in the 2015 general elections. The truth is that, the professional and administrative capacities of INEC

witnessed immense boost under the leadership of Attahiru Jega. This competent disposition of the electoral umpire, in an electoral democracy, is a *sine qua non* for democratic consolidation.

The Challenges of Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

Electoral Malpractice: One of the tenets of democracy is orderly change of government through credible free, fair and periodic elections. Since restoration of democratic rule in the country, elections have been characterized by monumental irregularities and malpractices which magnitude increases with every election. Institutions of state such as the police, the military, and the electoral body collude to manipulate the electoral process in favour of certain candidate. Apart of election being one of the cardinal principles of democracy or democratic process, free, fair and credible elections are central to the consolidation of democracy. This is because, it defines the degree of freedom exercised by the people in selecting who represent them in government. But this has not been the case in Nigeria as the system is manipulated in favour of certain individuals and political parties [15].

Poverty: Poverty is another factor that constitutes grave challenge to democratic consolidation in the country. Nigeria is blessed with abundant human and natural resources and yet its people are poor. The nation is rank among the world's poorest country. According to [7], in Nigeria hunger exhibits its ugly face in most homes where the average citizen contends with a life of abject poverty. Thus, the average Nigerian is alienated from himself as he lacks the wherewithal to afford the basic necessities of life such as education, medical facilities. According to [13] cited in [16] about 70% of Nigeria population are poor. The consequence of this is that the poor masses are easily brainwashed and their right of choice terribly manipulated making an objective choice seldom to consideration. Besides, various forms of inducements and gratification which provide temporary relief from the scourge of poverty are given central attention in making democratic choices.

Poverty has also been identified by some scholars as one of the causes of security challenges confronting the nation [11].

Corruption: Corruption constitutes one of the greatest challenges and threats to the democrat consolidation in Nigeria Fourth Republic. The incidence of corruption in the country reached a crescendo in 2004 when a German based non-governmental organisation called Transparency International in its 2004 Corruption Perception Index (CPI), report projected Nigeria as the 2nd most corrupt country in the world (132nd out of 133 countries surveyed). Nigeria has also been ranked as the 3rd most corrupt country in the Sub-Saharan Africa and 143rd out of 183 countries surveyed around the world in 2011. According to the Transparency International (2011), the level of corruption and other related crimes in the country attracted between \$4million and \$8 million dollars loss on daily basis and a loss of about \$70.58 million dollars to the national economy annually and that the country has lost more than \$380billion to graft since the country attained independence in 1960.

Incumbency factor: Incumbency gives the incumbent an undue advantage over other participants in the electoral process through the means of manipulating the entire electoral process. The manipulation can take different forms ranging from compilation of voters' register, the appointment of electoral officers, members of electoral tribunal to protect stolen mandates, use of state instrument of coercion and apparatus to intimidate opposition parties and denial of access to state owned media houses, etc, to ensure they regain or elongate their tenure against popular will as well as the use of state funds for campaign. The cumulative effect of incumbency factor on democratic consolidation is that it leads to the erosion of the

principle of democratic governance which has led to the emergence of political godfather and family dynasty [9]. Lack of viable Opposition Parties: Since the inception of this republic, there has been no viable and credible opposition party capable of checkmating the ruling party. Opposition parties are vital in every functional and people oriented democratic government. This is because they checkmate the excess of government or its agencies by highlighting constitutional rules and appropriate principle and practice in democratic governance. Nigeria's political environment has been dominated by the People Democratic Party since restoration of democratic rule in 1999. Although the country has over fifty political parties, most of them are very weak to provided needed opposition to the ruling party at the centre. Thus, the absence of viable opposition in today's Nigeria democratic system left the ruling party to call the shots on most national affairs [11]. Insecurity: One of the daunting challenges confronting the present democratic dispensation is insecurity. Since the return of democracy, the country has experienced ethno-religious crises, sectarian mayhem, etc., questioning and shaking the survival of

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

Firstly, through the help of the democracy, so many issues have been put on the front burner of public discourse. These issues affect Nigerians directly or indirectly and in most cases negatively. They include lack of adherence to the rule of law, violation of fundamental rights of citizens, corruption, poverty and insecurity. Secondly, since the advent of this Fourth Republic, democracy in Nigeria one of the most vibrant in the world but there are so many internal and external factors that militate against its effectiveness and efficiency. They include lack of internal democracy in the political parties, manipulation of election results and terrorism. Thirdly, that the level at which the people are disillusioned with governance in Nigeria especially with the political party that formed government in power has degenerated into unprecedented status,

the country. Some of these crises include: Yoruba/Hausa-Fulani disturbance in Shagamu, Ogun State; Aguleri, Umuleri and UmuobaAnam of Anambra State; Ijaw/Itsekiri crisis over the location of Local Government headquarter; the Jukun, Chamba and Kuteb power struggle over who control Takum; incessant turbulence in Jos; the 2011 post-election violence in the northern part of the country as well as the constant sectarian crisis exemplified by the activities of the Boko Haram. The analysis of the above upheaval will reveal that our democracy is under siege prompting [9], to argue that the current security situation in the country is a major obstacle to the consolidation of democracy. It is important to note that despite these challenges there is a light at the end of the tunnel. After fourteen years of uninterrupted democracy, the longest in the history of the country. Nigeria can be said to have arrived democratically. There abound significant elements of democratic consolidation in the political system and these are: vibrant press, independent judiciary and a budding civil society as well as widespread acceptance of elections as a means of choosing political leaders.

thus, forcing the citizens to become apathetic and it is not good for any democracy. By way of recommendations, the following are put forward:

- i. The government should provide an enabling environment for the political parties to thrive and elections should always be free and fair in the country without unnecessary intervention.
- ii. The issue of poverty should be tackled with immediate alacrity to discourage.
- iii. The civil society organisations should sit up to always checkmate the excesses of democratic institutions in the country.
- iv. The political parties should always insist on the practice of internal democracy because by so doing, the whole country will witness democracy the true sense of it.

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