Democratization process and its Challenges in Nigeria's Fourth Republic: Election in perspective

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Abstract
The focus of this paper is to adequately evaluate various challenges confronting the enthronement of genuine Democracy in Nigeria with particular reference to elections in the current republic. The collapse of the previous Republics in Nigeria has been attributed to a number of factors such as ethnicity, religious bigotry, corruption and lack of political will on the part of Nigerian leaders to galvanize good ideas in order to harness dividends of Democracy that can better the lives of majority of the citizens among others. Methodologically, qualitative method of data collection was employed in the analysis of this work, while Structural Functional Approach was used as a theoretical framework. This paper revealed that almost two decades down the track, Nigeria is still far from the democratic destination due to bad governance as a result of poor, irresponsible and irresponsible leadership the country has produced over the years. The paper recommended among others that, stakeholders of the Nigerian Democratic institutions in particular and Nigerians in general need value re-orientation, conscientiousness and patriotism if the country must achieve the goal of democracy in this fourth Republic.

Keywords: Challenges, Democracy, Election, Nigeria, Fourth Republic

Introduction
In spite of the complexity in the understanding of the term democracy both in theory and practice, it is a known fact that democracy has one fundamental objective, which is improving the lives of the people. From whatever perspective democracy is viewed, be it political, participation, rule of law, etc, these positive attributes of democracy revolve around the human person. Thesing cited in Nathaniel (2010), states that “because, democracy has come to be accepted more as a way of life than a mere political ideology, the human person becomes the centre of attraction of democracy”, and also therefore becomes the assessing yardstick of measuring the values of democracy and its preferability” (Buber, cited in Nathaniel, 2010 ).

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The challenges facing democratization process in Nigerian Fourth Republic appear to be more complex, devastating, unfortunate and disastrous. After the long occupation of political arena by the military, Nigeria is now on the path of transforming civil rule into full democratization. Though, the problem of democratic transition, nurturing and consolidation are daunting and the challenges must be faced. For democracy is an avenue through which members of the society possess the right of choosing their leadership through election (Ojo, 73). The collapse of the past Nigerian republics came as a result of weak foundations of democracy paving the ways for military incursion into politics and governance. The demise of the First Republic in 1966 marked the beginning of ‘soldier go, soldier come’ syndrome which was detrimental to the process of democracy in Nigeria.

In a democratic nation like Nigeria, good governance, effective leadership, efficient and workable institutions that will provide, deliver and offer equal opportunities to individuals should be indicators of enthronement of true democracy. Good governance is a product of leaders that are freely and properly elected and not imposed as against the proper rules of democratic processes. Elections play significant roles in deepening democracy; it enables the governed to decide who governs them. Credible elections therefore remain a silent indicator of democratic consolidation and peaceful means of changing government. Thus, it is a universally accepted tool for selecting representatives. This shall be expressed in periodic genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures (Godwin-Gill in Kamel and Bello, 2014:48). In Nigeria, the fundamental problem of democratization process is the conduct of free, fair and acceptable elections. Virtually, all the elections conducted so far in the history of Nigerian politics have been characterised by irregularities. For instance, the 1959 election was unaccepted by most of the opposition parties. Meanwhile, the determination to gain independence reduced the tension that would have arisen from such outcome. The 1963/64 elections were also beset with irregularities especially in the Western region and Middle Belt which contributed to the collapse of the First Republic (Anifowose in Kamel and Bello, 2014). They asserted further that, misinterpretation of constitutional provision by political parties and failures of politicians to obey the rules of the games created crisis which eventually led to collapse of the Second Republic in 1983. The 1993 elections adjudged as freest and fairest were annulled by the military government of General Ibrahim Babangida. The reason behind this annulment coupled with the economic crisis left Nigerians with no choice than to end military rule by ushering the 1999 elections that gave birth to Fourth Republic. It is against the foregoing that this paper analyses challenges and prospects of democratic process in the Nigerian Fourth Republic with particular reference to elections.

The Concept of Democracy

The Encyclopaedia Britannica (1971) defined democracy as the “philosophy of government in which supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodic free elections. Today, democracy has come to imply universal suffrage competition for office, freedom of speech, the freedom of press and the rule of law”.
According to Mba as cited in Ali and Ismaila (2012), democracy is defined “as the government that is based on popular participation and desire to bring economic life under public control”. Hornby (1995) defined democracy as the government of the people exercised through elected representatives. Abraham Lincoln, the 6th American President (In Gettysburg Address delivered in 1864) defined democracy as “the government of the people by the people and for the people”. Conceptualising Democracy from Lincoln’s definition, Democracy means government is regarded as people and people. On the other hand, people are government (i.e, government is expected to be exercised at individual and group levels in the society) (Unumen and Oghi, 2016:31–46).

Theoretical Framework

The Structural-Functional Approach

The structural-functional approach is derived from earlier uses of functionalism and systems models in anthropology, sociology, biology, and political science. Structural functionalism became popular around 1960 when it became clear that ways of studying U.S. and European politics were not useful in studying newly independent countries, and that a new approach was needed. Structural-functionalism assumes that a bounded (nation-state) system exists, and studies structures in terms of their function(s) within the system. For structural functionalists, the question to be answered is what does a structure (guerrilla movement, political party, election, etc.) do within the political system (of country x)? The goal is to find out what something actually does in a political system, as opposed to what it is supposed to do. Thus, structural functionalists would not waste time studying constitutions in Third World countries if they found that the constitutions [structures] had little impact on political reality.

Almond claimed that certain political functions existed in all political systems. On the input side, he listed these functions: political socialization, political interest articulation, political interest aggregation, and political communication while outputs were rule-making, rule implementation and rule adjudication. Other basic functions of all political systems included the conversion process, basic pattern maintenance, and various capabilities (distributive, symbolic, etc.). Structural functionalists argued that all political systems, including Third World systems, could most fruitfully be studied and compared on the basis of how differing structures performed these functions in the various political systems.

For analytical purposes, the political system is considered to be the nation-state, and the environment is composed of the interactions of economic, social, and political variables and events, both domestic and external. The idea is that there are a number of actors in the national political system (political parties, bureaucracies, the military, etc.) and that the actions of these actors affect one another as well as the system. The political analyst must determine the importance of these actors in a particular political system. This is done by analyzing the functions performed by the various actors. Any changes in the system also affect all the actors. The feedback mechanisms allow for constantly changing inputs, as actors react to outputs.
Structural functionalists, like systems analysts, have a bias toward systemic equilibrium. Such a bias tends to make this approach conservative, as stability, or evolutionary change, is preferred to radical, or revolutionary change. A problem which arises with this system-based model is that the nation-state's boundaries are often permeable in the real world, rather than being the neatly bounded nation-state conceptualized by structural functionalists.

Challenges of Democratization process in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

The challenges that are more peculiar to the Nigerian Fourth Republic are (Parkins, 1999)

Elections and Succession Challenges

The beginning of the Fourth Republic in Nigeria was viewed as a dream come true to many Nigerians and international observers due to historical antecedents of Nigeria's democratic attempts in the last three collapsed Republics. Political liberalization and rapid democratic development are undoubtedly parts of the expected objectives of the Fourth Republic in Nigeria. However, these aspirations of Nigerians are susceptible to dangerous reverse. It is worrisome that the democratization space in Nigeria is not expounding or deepening as rapidly as expected. Some of these areas where democratic ethos is visibly lacking include the scant regard for the rule of law or constitutional rule, stifling of critics and oppositions especially from other political parties thus, hindering effective multipartism, controversial and fraudulent elections and political corruption (Yagboyaju, 2011).

In Nigeria, the slow space of the process of democracy raises doubt in the minds of the generality of the people who for instance, are confounded as to why such basic aspects of democracy like elections and legislative duties still lack significant purposefulness about eighteen years into the commencement of the Fourth Republic. More disheartening, both executive and judicial arms at different levels of government across the country have also performed abysmally that discerning minded Nigerians and foreigners alike now wonder how long it will take for democracy to flourish in the country.

Elections and successions are means through which an orderly transfer of political power from one political party or group to another is carried out peacefully without cohesion. Orderliness in the process of power transfer is also used in determining the level of state maturity. It also acts as barometer for accessing both the consolidation and quality of democracy in a polity at any particular point (Ojo cited in Kamal and Bello, 2014).

Democracy is about free choice, it is about given people the opportunity to choose their leaders without hindrance, but where obstacle exists, the people can hardly exercise their freedom of choice and in such situation, they can hardly gain anything from their rulers (Egwemi, 2010). The strength of the idea of democracy lies in the principle of people's participation in their governance. Thus, democratic regime tends to be responsive to collective needs of society due to periodic changes in governments and personalities (Hameso cited in Kamal and Bello, 2014).
To validate these assertions, Ojo (2007) compassionately posited that democracy has an educative value and there is no better way of educating citizens than given them the opportunity to participate directly in the elections of their representatives. And for representative government to be democratic, it must be accompanied by universal free suffrage, elections, short-terms in office and individual liberty.

Once these basic standards are met, then, the succession is orderly. Elections provide the best means of orderly leadership succession in liberal democracy. In their opinion, elections serve as platform for popular participation in political development adding that it will also make government more responsive and responsible. But when government fails to be responsive and responsible and block mechanism for peaceful transition, then people engage in violence.

The 1979 transition program produced the so-called (2/3) controversy. Given the fact that the military supervised the transition program, there was not much violence, but the result of the elections attracted criticism as the Supreme Court delivered a controversial judgement on the winner (Iyayi, 2007). The second phase of the crises was seen during the civilian to civilian transition in 1983 where the results of the elections were distorted in many parts of the country. The results of the elections were rejected by the parties and the crisis provided the opportunity for the military to stage another coup on December 31, 1983.

Again in 1999, because the military coordinated the transition, there was little violence despite irregularities recorded during the election that brought Chief Olusegun Obasanjo to power on the 29th May, 1999. This was attributed to the determination of both the people and politicians to end the military rule in Nigeria. The preceding general elections which were conducted under civilian government were characterised by fraud. The Transition Monitoring Group (2003) reported that as voters waited to cast their votes in polling stations, the political class and political parties had different ideas. The voters wanted their votes to determine the winner of the elections, while the political class wanted to corrupt the process and rig their ways into elective offices. The elections both at the federal and states as well as local governments levels according to the Transition Monitoring Group (TMG) cited in Kamal and Bello (2014) were characterised by threats of assassination of several political opponents. As they noted further, strangely, some political parties' candidates who did not stand for elections were returned as having won elections. These irregularities were accompanied by multiple ghosts and underage voting, violence, intimidation and harassment, stolen of ballot boxes, vote buying, disruption of votes, absence of electoral officers, etc. Since the recommencement of democratic journey in 1999 up-to-date, all elections conducted were not free of tension, violence, inducement of voters and controversy. For instance, the tension before the 2015 general elections was so high to the extent that, the date for the elections was rescheduled from February 14, 2015 to March 28, 2015. Although, the 2015 general elections has little cases of violence with the exception of Rivers and Akwa-Ibom States.

**Elections and Political activities of godfathers in Nigeria**

Elections into various political offices since the beginning of another democratic journey in 1999 which marked another republic in the history of Nigeria have been judged by both domestic and international observers as undemocratic, full
of irregularities, violence and accompanied with huge waste of lives and properties resulting from the persistent activities of political godfathers who always employ, engage and equip youths with sophisticated weapons before, during and after elections to ensure that their imposed choice of candidates win and remain protected from any lawful prosecutions. The roles of these godfathers in the electoral process have greatly undermined smooth conduct of elections in Nigerian Fourth Republic. Elections are not just a product of democracy. It has long become a tool, process and method of modernization and development.

Conventionally, democratic politics regards periodic elections as an instrumental value which must be institutionalized. This is because, without them being held regularly and seen to be conducted in a transparently free and fair manner, democracy remains a sham. Free and fair elections promote accountability in elected officials, socialized political activity and expand citizens’ involvement. They guarantee a stable polity, reduce conflict and restore confidence in the government and state. The requirement for the conduct of free and fair election is the state capacity to achieve it. In a situation where the state is weak, the hope of an orderly succession becomes a mirage (Eneojo, Ijim cited in Kamal and Bello, 2014)

Many political leaders in Nigeria did not comply with legal framework for successful elections and transitions since 1999. It is an established fact that most politicians deliberately ignore laid down rules and procedures in some cases, it becomes undemocratic to even discuss succession plans. Democratic leaders are so tense and violent about power to the extent that existing constitutional provisions, party rules and procedures are always altered. At the top, this problem is the scant respect that many of these political leaders have for the constitution and constitutionalism (Hameso, Rawlings cited in Kamal and Bello, 2014). For instance, in 2007, the then President of Nigeria Chief Olusegun Obasanjo attempted to change constitutional provisions aimed at paving his way for a third term in office. This action of the former president created tension and violence within the National Assembly and among the populace before, during and after the 2007 general elections to the extent that, those who opposed his (Obasanjo) decision were subjected to series of victimizations.

In addition, zoning political configuration was designed by the then ruling party for smooth leadership succession at the inception of the Fourth Republic. This arrangement according to the party is to cater for the interest of the minority ethnic groups in the country. The beneficiaries of this political arrangement refused to observe and abide by the zoning rules as entrenched in the party’s constitution due to their selfish interest. As Nigeria prepared for presidential elections in 2011, the political arena was engulfed by tension, discrepancies among various godfathers from each geo-political zone of the country as the then President Good-luck Jonathan jettisoned the zoning arrangement principles which denied the northern zone of the country of producing another candidate under the platform of the PeoplesDemocratic Party to complete the late President Musa Yar’Adua’s second term as stipulated by the constitution of the party. That invariably generated a lot of debates, quagmire and litigations in the country.
The then President and his allies argued that Nigerians should opt for competence and merit instead of sectional leadership which the zoning was assumed to present. Others based their arguments on the fact that zoning is antithetical to both constitution and fundamental human rights of the then President Goodluck Jonathan to exercise his franchise irrespective of his ethnic origin. It can be recalled that the zoning principle which was jettisoned by President Jonathan served as the ladder he padded to the top. The aftermath of zoning jettison is the rejection of election results which eventually led to the post election violence in some parts of the country in 2011 (Kamal and Bello, 2014). Perhaps, he (Jonathan) had his way because he was the legitimate successor as Vice-president to late YarAdua as provided for in the country’s constitution.

The cultural attitudes towards power in Africa hindered smooth elections and political succession. Leaders see themselves on top of the people they govern and also see themselves as people who were born to rule till death. The people also aid these undemocratic attitudes as they see these so-called political leaders as ‘fathers of the nation’ or God’s appointees. More tragically on the other hand, these political leaders see opponents as enemies of the nation and anti-people. Some politicians justified the actions by equating the political kingdom with heaven. These attitudes prompted politicians to conclude that there is no vacancy in the presidential villa, governor's houses as it was the case in Nigeria whenever election approaches. They prevent competition to fill the vacancy; they encourage violence to achieve their end; they use police and other security agencies to rig, if need be (Omoruyi, 2007).

The ideology of political leaders is another factor that hinders smooth elections and succession in Nigeria and other African countries. Recall from the past, majority of politicians today are one time in the cabinet of undemocratic government who at initial stage had no passion for democracy. They did everything to undermine democracy in the past. The behaviour of politicians has given the impression that, they are not tolerant of opposition parties. The politicians’ behaviour, conduct and even their statements suggest that the rule of the game and opposition parties do not exist. The political parties’ determination to hold power forever is a classical example in Nigeria. (Samuel cited in Kamal and Bello, 2014).

The implication of these inherent activities of electoral officials, politicians and godfathers are that, they would alter the process of succession once they do not trust the successor; engage in gerrymandering to anoint a successor whom they hope to control etc. To justify this assertion, President Moseveni declared:

*I’m not ready to hand over power to people or groups of people who have no ability to manage a nation... why should I sentence Ugandans to suicide by handing over power to people we fought and defeated? It’s dangerous despite the constitution allowed them to run against me... at times, the constitution may not be the best tool to direct us politically, for it allows wrong and doubtful people to contest for power (cited in Kamal and Bello, 2014).*

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Almost other African countries and the ruling parties in Nigeria share the
same position. In the same vein, most African countries’ Presidents assert that, the
reform programme which they have started need to continue by those taking over.
The utterance of succession procedures is also attributed to the attempt on the part of
politicians to cover the atrocities they have committed while in office. They do
everything possible to ensure the victory of their anointed candidates.

These undemocratic activities of the Fourth Republic politicians that are
usually seen as impediments to the conduct of smooth elections and transfer of
powers were captured by Omoruyi cited in Kamal and Bello (2014) as follows:

- Nigerian politicians generally do not have faith in the ballot box.
- Nigerian politicians do not believe that they could lose in an election.
- Nigerian politicians who glaringly lose or were rejected by voters in
  their various communities still go to the tribunal and cry foul that
  their opponents or the management of the election or police robbed
  them of victory for their opponents.
- Nigerian politicians believe that winning is the only option in an
  election even if it is very obvious that voters do not want them.
- Nigerian politicians believe that all is well in elections.
- Nigerian politicians believe that election officers are purchasable and
  could be bought to deliver victory to the losing party.
- Nigerian politicians do not believe that there will be another election.
- Nigerian politicians believe that they are only involved in the last
  election.
- Nigerian politicians do not believe that one could work for and
  actually earn votes in an election based on one’s appeal.
- Nigerian politicians do not believe that democracy is anchored on a
  series of elections.
- Nigerians especially, those calling on Allah and God to show them
  the way do not seem to have faith in tomorrow and subsequent
  elections.

Drawing generalization from the above captured by Omoruyi (2007), one
would not hesitate to state that African politicians and Nigeria in particular see
electorate as immediate tools needed by the first-aiders to offer necessary assistance
to accident victims. They only remember that electorate are useful only when next
election approaches and they only use that opportunity to affirm their previous
empty promises and lips services to gain their support for the next term. As soon as
they succeed, their next program on the agenda is to create more cleavage between
the electorate and their respective offices, heavy security apparatus within their
official and private residents because, political elites no longer empathize with the
electorate, they are too far removed from the realities of their environments and they
have total disregard for those they are supposed to serve. They only form
associations and allied with contractors and financial speculators to inflate contracts
and siphon such excesses to their foreign accounts for private projects (Omoruyi,
1994).
Institutional Paralyses
It is imperative to understand that in this Nigerian Fourth Republic, there are many democratic institutions pretending to be democratic but lack basic elements of democracy. Constitutional biasness is one of the major challenges in this Republic. This biasness, due to the attitudes of institutional manipulators (institutional operators e.g. politicians, judges, lawyers, etc) has made politicians more powerful than other citizens in the country. Excessive power which the constitution seems to have given political leaders in Africa, especially Nigeria, remains another great salient challenge to virile democracy. This excessive power according to what Bassey cited in Kamal and Bello (2014), as ‘Prebendal Politics’ is meant the political offices should be competed for the personal benefits of office holders and their supporters. The behaviour of these leaders clearly illustrates Bassey's position. Beside the award of contracts as well as manoeuvring the security agencies, the control of electoral management bodies constitutes another challenge that hinders the enthronement of the expected democracy in the Nigerian Fourth Republic. It equally hindered the process of smooth transition from one government to another. The constitution entrusts the appointment of principal electoral officials to the president. This made the manipulation of the electoral bodies by the ruling parties easier. Therefore, the succession issue in the Fourth Republic becomes a do or die affair with politicians resolutely determined to 'win' at all cost (Baffour cited in Kamal and Bello, 2014).

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is one of the most important institutions that its abysmal performance has many diverse effects on the entire life of the country. Therefore, most of the challenges facing the Fourth Republic are results of the shaky foundation upon which the commission is formed. Section 153 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria established the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to conduct elections within the general framework of the law. The commission was accused of being part of the monumental frauds that characterized the Fourth Republic elections. INEC therefore, exhibited partisanship in handling of electoral matters (Iyayi in Kamal and Bello, 2014).

The reverse effect of this situation is that, once the rules of elections and roles of the commission are successfully manipulated, the manipulators become operators of the manipulated rules and principles and thereby breeding mediocrity in the public institutions such as National Assembly through the manipulated electoral laws and principles. Non-compliance of the INEC with some rules also shows that the constitution can provide directions for the national development and self-realization, but the pace at which the development takes place depends on the institutional operators and society (Ghali in Kamal and Bello, 2014).

The analysis of the challenges confronting the Fourth Republic cannot be concluded without exposing the lackadaisical attitude of the National Assembly (The Legislators). The National Assembly remains the indispensable bedrock for development of any democratic nation. The composition of its members, the foresightedness of those occupying the assembly's seats, the commitments and willingness of the legislators to serve in accordance with the rule and regulations other than the rules guiding their personal interests such as allowances and salaries, remain the necessary tool for development in a democratic nation like Nigeria.
However, since 1999, the Nigerian legislators occupying National Assembly have always struggled for their benefits rather than passing bills and enact laws that could have positive effects on the common citizens they claimed to represent.

The deficiency suffered by the National Assembly is another challenge that paralyzed some features of democracy in the Nigerian Fourth Republic. The lacklustre performance of legislature as one of the public institutions almost two decades now has been a source of worry in the current democratic dispensation in Nigeria. In view of its central role, especially being the most indispensable feature that differentiates democracy from other forms of government in Nigeria. Critical examinations of its activities since 1999 will help to enhance an in-depth understanding of the scenario about some key aspects of its obligations such as policy formulation and oversight functions.

In terms of policy formulations, it should be noted that, the quality of life and standards of living of the entire citizenry can easily be traced to the types of policies formulated by the legislature, while the oversight functions of the same body require it to monitor and ensure that the executive arm implements the policies efficiently and effectively (Yagboyaju, 2011:99).

To justify these assertions about the lacklustre performance of the legislature in the Fourth Republic, several instances will be cited in this part to support clear understanding and to avoid any doubt thereof. Firstly, the legislative arm at different times since 1999 has frequently engaged with the executive in squabble over their sitting allowances, constituency projects and other such mundane issues. It is on record that at the national and regional levels, the demands by the legislators are often too completely out of tune with the country's economic realities. For instance, legislative duties at the National Assembly were suspended for several weeks in 1999 before the resolution that each legislator could earn between N14,000 and N21,000 ($156 to 234) as daily accommodation allowance. The furniture palaver in which the legislators demanded to equip their new official quarters by awarding the contracts by themselves also erupted before the end of their first year in office. More than 10 years later, there were still strong evidences of unrealistic and unreasonable demands from law makers.

For example, in May 2010, majority of the legislators in the lower chamber of the National Assembly demanded a new quarterly allocation N42 million ($277,000) each. Obviously, the request of the upper chamber of the same Assembly should be higher and more provocative in a country where the vast majority of the citizens earn less than $2 or N300 per day. Incidentally, in view of the fact that such allowances were not considered in the budget of the National Assembly, the most probable way to accommodate this may be to collapse capital vote of the chambers. Surprisingly, all of these seem not to be enough to discourage lawmakers from various forms of malpractices such as contract scans, bribery in connection to oversight functions, sundry activities that have led to the removal of most of the principal officers of various legislative chambers across the country between 1999 and 2010. In a similar vein, the then speaker of the House of Representatives, Hon Dinnaji Bankole was arrested in June 2011 shortly after the expiration of his tenure over serious allegations of abuse of office and financial mismanagement (Yagboyaju, 2011:100).
Secondly, one of the most disheartening and abysmal performances of the legislature since 1999 was that, the annual budget, both at the national, states and local levels were unnecessarily delayed by the legislators during the statutory processes of approval. Since 1999, no national budget was approved before the end of March in any particular year that such budget was meant for. Incidentally, most of these delays were caused by the legislators’ regular requests for upward review of allocations directly affecting their allowances and other privileges by the virtue of their political offices. Recently, the alleged padding of the 2017 Budget by both Houses of the National Assembly is a good exemplification (Madu and Osaghae, 2017:76).

Like every other weak arm of government in the Nigerian Fourth Republic, the Executive arm has also been caught for not performing the expected roles. The act of insensitivity of the governors, ministers and local government chairmen have evoked the negative memories of the military when the executive with its huge vote to disburse was the most attractive arm of government. Up till now, the president and the governors still have access to certain unspecified amount of money which they referred to as security votes; they often spend without given an account. Late President Umar Musa Yar’Adua, once called for a cut down in the salaries and allowances of political office holders though, it was not implemented before and after his death. President Muhammadu Buhari and his Vice, Professor Yemi Osinbajo have cut down their official earnings by 50% shortly after they assumed office in 2015. The legislators at the National Assembly are currently deliberating and are yet to arrive on a consensus whether to cut their earnings or to increase. The deliberation to cut down jumbo salaries and allowances of the federal legislators was stimulated by agitations from Nigerians and the promises of some legislators to make a positive move from the previous earnings by lawmakers in the National assembly over the years.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

Realistically speaking, any nation operating a democratic system without effective functioning of the three arms of government is heading for a self destruction. That nation would be running like a car without break or an aircraft flying without destination. Linking the above descriptions with the topic of analysis, it becomes glaring that these three basic institutions in Nigeria's Fourth Republic are in most cases responsible for lack of effective and efficient performance of other government establishments or institutions. Looters of the nation’s resources and treasury have continuously exploited the advantages of the delay tactics of the judiciary to perversely the economic and political activities of the country since 1999.

Undoubtedly, the ostentatious and flamboyant lifestyle of politicians and top government officials in the Fourth Republic portrayed them as being too far from the realities of their environments. It is therefore, not surprising that many Nigerians over the last decade have been frequently pilloried into sycophancy, while others are engaged in robbery, abductions, kidnapping, electoral violence, and illicit drug trafficking among other criminal activities that have risen over time. All of these can invariably, be linked to different reports on the national economy and the general living conditions of Nigerians (Yagboyaju, 2011:102).
Finally, the sixteen years of democracy since 1999 in Nigeria is yet to fulfil the hope and aspirations of the generality of the citizens. Obviously, it seems to have created more anxieties in the minds of ordinary Nigerians in such areas of security of life and properties, incessant decay of values and qualities in the education, electoral violence and fraud, assassinations and kidnapping of political opponents regularly, bomb blast and abduction of students and business men and women across the country, reckless statements of politicians and their supporters before, during and after elections each year are examples that the country is yet to attain full democracy as expected by many Nigerians.

However, this paper recommended that war against corruption must be dispassionately pursued vigorously. Moreover, government must ensure that the polity is marked by credibility by organizing free and fair elections. Also, meritocracy must not be sacrificed at the expense of favouritism, nepotism and tribalism in the appointment and or recruitment of professionals in the business of the country and lastly, stakeholders of the Nigerian Democratic process in particular and Nigerians in general need value re-orientation, conscientiousness and patriotism if the country must achieve the goal of democracy in this current Republic.
References


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