

DEMOCRACY AND NATIONAL INTEGRATION IN NIGERIA: ISSUES AND PROSPECTS

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Abstract

Democratic government has been with us for over two decades, several mechanisms to ensure national integration has been put in place. Such as establishment of federal character commission, National Youth Service Corps, adoption of multi-party system, creation of states and local governments, adoption of several fiscal allocation formulae among others; yet, national integration remains a mirage. Inter and intra communal conflicts, inter and intra state clashes, religious and tribal conflicts, regional and sectional disharmony, majority and minority agitation has clouded the Nigerian polity and threaten national unity and integration of Nigeria. It is against this back drop that this paper seeks to examine democracy and National Integration in Nigeria: Issues and Prospects. The paper adopted documentary method by way of employing only secondary data in the course of conducting the study in question. The paper is pinned on the sociological theory of federalism as adopted by Living Stone, (1954) and Sharada, (1984). The results reveal among others the adoption of the federal system of government that is meant to accommodate the multi-ethnic setting of Nigeria had failed to promoted national integration among Nigerians. The paper recommends that: True federalism should be incorporated and adopted in the Nigerian polity, so that all the segments of the country will have sense of belonging and fairness.

Keywords: Democracy, federalism, national integration, diversity.

Introduction

The evolution of Nigerian state can be traced to the 1914 amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates by the erstwhile colonial masters in their attempt to perpetuate the exploitation of Nigeria's human and economic resources. Upon the regain of national political independence in October 1st 1960 the country's first political leaders opted for federal system of government which allowed each and every region to be autonomous with the government at the centre Dawood, (2014) The idea for the adoption of federalism as a system of government was majorly for national unity and integration of Nigerian nationalities. The founding fathers of Nigeria like Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe, Alh. Sir Ahmadu Bello, Chief Obafemi Awolowo and so on, subscribed to the notion of federalism as a form of government that best suits Nigeria. The choice of federal system of governance was born out of the desire of the founding fathers to nurture and preserve "unity in diversity" Kurfi, (2014), Gambari, (2016). This however did not provided the smooth terrain needed for national unity and nationhood to thrive, instead, it provided a highest regional tension, ethnicity, and sub-regional agitation in the country Hassan, (2006). The plural nature of the Nigerian society and the apparent 'cold war' among the different competing ethnic nationalities has tended to aggravate the situation. This has been more compounded with the emergence of a new politico-educated elite on whom the mantle of leadership has fallen and who, in order to further their individual personal and selfish ambitions, have largely sown, and continue to nurture, the seed of discord among Nigerians Ajayi, (2006). It has been observed by Ahmed and Dantata (2016) that democracy as a system of government has a universal acceptability. They noted that Nigeria as a nation has had several democratic regimes which were somehow truncated by several military coups. However, Nigeria was fully integrated into a democratic dispensation on the 29th of May 1999. Nigeria has accepted democracy as a symbol of development, modern civilization, unity and stability.

Democracy by its tenets served as a driving force for national unity, integration and development of any country. Democracy in Nigeria has no doubt increased very significantly the freedom of association, religion and participation. Ahmed and Dantata, 2016; Idowu and Satuyi, 2016, contend that, Nigeria attain fastest growth in democracy compared with the United State of America, the mother of

liberal democracy, the growth is observed to be mostly in the people's participation in electioneering processes.

However, the prevailing realities in Nigeria's democratic practice jeopardize national integration and national development. Despite passing the post-transition election trial test, Nigeria's democracy is still considered as 'nascent democracy'. This trial started for more than twenty years now, by now the attention should have been on the quest for a better democratic practice that will guarantee sustainable national integration. The concern now should have been on the quality of democratic practices rather than the type of democracy in operation (Dawood, 2015).

Democracy in Nigeria by implication has instead of promoting national integration ended up promoting disunity, regional tension, secession and national question. The quest for self-determination by the so-called marginalized group in the Southeast of the country and the subsequent ultimatum given to the Igbo people living in the Northern part of Nigeria, the rise of farmers/herders conflicts in the North central part of Nigeria, raised a fundamental question as to what is happening to the quest for Nigerian national integration? What went wrong with the mechanism for national integration? How has democratic governments guaranteed or undermined national integration among Nigerians?

Conceptualizing Democracy

The evolution of democracy is associated with the politics of Athens city state of Greece, where all male adult citizens were allowed to participate actively in the policy making and implementation Dawood, (2014). Political scientists associated this type of democracy with classical liberal democracy that fights against dictatorship, monarchy, oligarchy, aristocracy and feudalism (Ibodje and Dode, 2007). However, with the growing population and increased complexity of modern states, the Athens style of democracy becomes practically impossible to operate. Thus, modern day democracy in turn refers to elected representative government, who comes to power as a result of the popular will of the electorates (i.e. the political community).

Lincoln defined democracy as the government to the people, for the people and by the people Ake, (1992). In spite of the fact that this definition has many deficiencies, it has however sends a strong message on what democracy should

be, because it take into cognizance of people in all its processes. Oyovbaire (1987) defines democracy as a system of government which seeks to recognized and respect popular will of the people and ensure that policies are made to address common and collective needs and aspirations of the people. Democracy within the context of this study refers to a system of government that comes to power through political party activities and an electoral process. The elected representatives that emerged from the electoral process are the political actors and actresses that steer the affairs of government.

It is understood that the concept of democracy has universal appeal. In fact, as a principle or style governance, democracy is considered as the best way of ruling in contemporary global community and therefore should serve a mechanism of national unity and integration.

Conceptualizing National Unity and Integration

Paul (2015) refers to national unity and integration as the attempt at uniting or bringing together the hitherto multi-ethnic groups of people with diverse cultural, historical, language, religions and beliefs systems into one which would remove primordial and subordinate loyalties and sentiments to ethnic nationalities. Onifade and David (2013), define national integration in a rather comprehensive way:

As a process that produces an omnibus of initiatives put in place by a state, its representatives or institutions guided by respect for the unique traditions and cultural backgrounds of ethnicities sharing the same polity with the goal of harmonising all interests through a form of dialogue and representation and addressing differences that may be divisive and conflictual using the instruments of fairness, justice and equity in the sharing of resources, benefits, opportunities and responsibilities in order to guarantee stability, longevity and prosperity of the polity as long as the inhabitants decide to remain within the polity.

Accordingly, Earnest, (1991) as cited in Dawood (2014) opined that national integration is a process whereby political actors in distinct national setting are persuaded to shift their loyalty specification and political activities to a new centre, whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing nation state. In the context of this study national unity and integration refers to the notion of one Nigeria despite its ethnic, religious and regional diversities. It is also, about possessing national consciousness and the feeling of national identity, in the spirit of one nation, one people and one destiny. From the foregoing development we can deduce that democracy as a principle of governance ought to promote national unity and integration.

Empirical Review

Dawood (2015b) in his paper “the fragility of the Nigerian federal system and the quest for national integration: some contending issues and way forward” notes that in spite of the fact that Nigeria operates federal system of government however, the inadequacies of the federalism have continue to endanger the cooperate existence of the polity not only because of the artificiality and haphazard nature of its arrangement but also due to the failure and collapse of the state apparatus in ensuring democracy and good governance. He notes that Nigerian govern have put forward different policies, programmes and institution capable of promoting national unity and integration. The study recommend that minority-majority, indigene-settler issues must be addressed to give all and sundry sense of belonging in the national affairs. In another study conducted by the same Dawood (2015a) “Fifteen years of democracy, 1999-2014: Reflections on Nigeria’s quest for national integration” the researcher reveals that democracy in Nigeria fails to promote national unity and integration. He observes that the ruling elites were unable to comprehend and understand the political system they are managing or operating. The author recommends the adoption of welfarist policies that will provide economic and social relief to common Nigerians. He posits that a popular democracy that is people oriented will ensure national unity and integration, he furthers by advocating for institutionalizing democratic tenets that will inculcate the idea of national integration.

Paul (2015) in his study on “National integration: A panacea to insecurity in Nigeria” notes that several internal forces has militated against national unity and integration in Nigeria. Despite the fact that the struggle toward national unity and

integration has been an unrelenting task in Nigerian state, its achievement however, has remained illusive. Thus, Paul (2015) identified insecurity, conflict and crime, and insurgency as bane to national integration in Nigeria. He then recommends the establishment of what he called the “New Crusade on National Integration (NCNI)”. The focus of the crusade is preaching the doctrine of unity in diversity based on the principle of collective responsibility in tackling all issues of national unity and integration. This propaganda machinery should use the existing institutions and structure of government to actualize their goals. In study by Asaju and Egberi (2015) on “Federal character and national integration in Nigeria: The need for discretion and interface” show that federal character principle has failed to achieve the aims and objectives of promoting national unity due to the elitist interest. They recommend however, that for federal character to achieve its objective of national unity, it is important for Nigerians to appreciate the beauty of unity in diversity and see themselves as one nation, one people and one destiny. Democracy should ensure the reign of justice, equity and fairness in the distribution of resources, guarantee freedom and respect for the rule of law so that all and sundry will have a sense of belonging and feeling that he/she matters irrespective of their tribe, religion, sex, section etc.

All these literatures focused on issues surrounding Nigerian national unity and integration but failed to touch on the nexus between democracy and Nigerian national unity, more specifically the effect of the fourth republic democratic regimes on Nigerian national unity and integration. This paper therefore intends to fill that gap.

Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by the theoretical expositions of the theories of federalism, from the modern category of it, as different from classical expositions of federalism which sees federalism as purely jurisdictional matter.

The modern era is an age of cooperation and a joint venture in all walks of life. These theorists believe in cooperative federalism between the center and the federating units in a very positive way. The essential features of “cooperative federalism” are cooperation and interdependence upon one another. Cooperative federalism is also called marble-cake federalism whereby both the center and the units through cooperation and collective efforts strive to solve problems

rather than make policies disjointedly. The meaning of federalism today lies in a process of joint action, not in a matter of legal status. It lies not in what governments are but in what but they do. It is a matter of action rather than structure. Modern federalism is very clear in describing the actions of the state. It refers to joint action in almost all spheres of life. It does not stress upon what the government is but refers to what the governments do. Tariq, M. (et.al) (2021)

Modern federalism is characterized by cooperativeness and interdependence, it does not believe in what the government is but rather believes in what the governments do under the umbrella of joint action (Satyanarayana, 2011). Several theories were formulated by the modernists; prominent among these is the sociological theory.

Sociological Theory of Federalism

Livingston (1954) and Sharada (1984), are some of the key contributors to the formulation of this theory. The theory that takes into account the sociological aspect of the nature of society, a society that is federal by nature results in the creation of a federal system or a federation. In such a society, the elements of a diversification play a key role in bringing the people together. Livingston is the driving force of this theory (Verma, 1986), who extricated federalism from the clutches of the legal orthodoxy of K.C. Wheare and A.V. Dicey. According to Livingston, the diversity may be due to the gap in the economy, interest in the field of economy, religious affiliation, racism, and affiliation to a particular nation, social distances, chronological milieu and previous nature of existence of the state such as colonial position Livingston, (1952), reprinted in 1967. Another important point of this theory is the federal political system in which the division of powers between governments is made based on territory. According to Livingston, federal society is one in which diversity is made based on territory. Livingston opines that the federal form of government is the direct result of society being federal. He defines the federal form as a political contrivance in which the various diverse groups, ethnic groups, and groups claiming different languages, religions, races, and cultures unite into a single whole to make a federation Sharada, (1984).

Another important issue in this theory is that in a typical federal system the distribution of powers is made on the basis of territory. So, diversity and territory are the two important ingredients of federalism according to Livingston. They neither alter the existing ethnicity nor change the territorial position of a country but make room for the smooth functioning of the federal society. Here, a distinction must be made between 'structural federalism' and 'social federalism'.

Sociological theory of federalism has also been subject to criticisms. Firstly, this theory describes diversity only but does not describe to explain the factors, which can help in creating harmony among the various ethnic groups for the establishment of the wide-ranging government within the federation. Secondly, it is noteworthy to point out that a society based on ethnic diversification may not result in the creation of a federal political system. The Welsh, the Scots, the Ulster Irish are some of the examples of ethnic diversification connected by the specific geographically demarcated area but still, they co-existence under the umbrella of Unitary form of government of the U.K. The same is also true of France, Ghana, South Africa Ceylon and Indonesia. Thirdly, social attitudes and diversities do not always lead to federalism; and may result in the creation of any type of government-specific to a particular region having its respective constitution or system of politics from a confederation to a system based on the centralization of power with a good bargain of de facto insurrection Sharada, (1984).

In this respect, sociological theory comes in handy in line with the thrusts of this study; as we can see, one of the mechanisms for ensuring national integration in a federal state like Nigeria, is ensuring fair distribution of power and resources among the diverse components of a federal setting; items such as the principle of federal character, rotational presidency and so on, are been put in place to further integration among the components of the Nigerian federation. Sociological theory also, sees diversities among federating components as merely territorial and not in ethnic, regional, religious among other elements; in a typical federal setting the assumption is that all these elements are watered down to give room for efficient and functional federal system.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study is documentary and exploratory where existing works on the subject matter were consulted and analyzed. Specifically the

paper relies on secondary information which is generated from journals, periodic, articles in Newspapers and magazines as well as online material. These data were presented and critically analyzed via content analysis technique.

Findings and Discussions

This section present discussion along a number of themes in an attempt to provide answers to the research questions rose in the background of the paper, i.e. what is happening to the country's quest for National unity? What went wrong with the mechanism for national integration? How has the Nigerian democracy guaranteed or undermined national integration

Nigeria's Quest for National Integration

The evolution of Nigerian state can be traced to the amalgamation of Northern and Southern Protectorates in the 1st January 1914 by the then British colonial administration. The practice of Federal system of government started 1954. The federal system of government was bequeathed to Nigeria as a viable option to govern multi-ethnic setting like ours. Over the years, there was convergence of opinions as to the desirability of political union in Nigeria. In 1948 for instance, Sir Arthur Richards acknowledged that ".... It is only the accident of British suzerainty which has made Nigeria one country. It is still far from being one country or one nation socially or even economically..." Dawood, (2015b), Idowu & Satuyi, (2016). Again Sir Abaubakar Tafawa Balewa argued during the Legislative Council debate in 1948 that: "many Nigerians deceived themselves by thinking that Nigeria is one. This is wrong. I am sorry to say this presence of unity is artificial and it ends outside this chamber" (Nigeria 1948 in Ojo, (2009). These assertions are akin to what Obafemi Awolowo said in 1947 that:

Nigeria is not a nation. It is a mere geographical expression. There are no 'Nigerians', in the same sense as there are 'English', 'Welsh', or 'French'. The word 'Nigerian' is merely a distinctive appellation to distinguish those who live within the boundaries of Nigeria from those who do not. There are various national or ethnical groups in the country It is a mistake to designate them 'tribes'. Each of them is a nation by itself with many tribes and clans. There is much difference between them as there is between Germans, English, Russian and Turks for instance. The fact

that they have a common overlord does not destroy this fundamental difference (cited in Dawood, 2015b).

The above brief look into Nigeria's political records offers rich historical narrative in comprehending the intricacies of national integration in Nigeria. The problem does not just happen today. Even the founding fathers seemed to have contentions with the unity of Nigerian state.

However, several policies and programmes were put in place by successive Nigerian governments as effort to ensure national integration. For instance, immediately after the civil war, the regional governments were resolved and 12 states were created to break the hegemony of the three dominant tribes that control the regional administration and give the minority tribes some sense of belonging. Kurfi, (2014) noted that the creation of states has reduced the domineering tendencies of the dominant ethnic groups and secured some measure of autonomy for the minority groups. Often, members of the dominant ethnic groups now find themselves as minorities in some new states, while those who were minorities in the old states are now majorities in some of the new states. This explains why the agitation for the creation of more states is still ongoing despite increases by successive regimes.

Also, the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) was another measure established to ensure national integration. It was conceived in 1973 to permit university graduates to serve for a one (1) year period in a state other than his/her own in order to appreciate the unity in diversity of the Nigerian state. Later the federal character principle was enshrined in the 1979 Constitution of Nigeria aimed at accommodating the diverse linguistic, ethnic, religious and geographic groups in the decision-making, political and economic affairs of the state. The movement of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) from Lagos to Abuja was seen as an integrative policy of government to further unite Nigerians. Some scholars opined that the new FCT in spite been at the center of the country it is still claimed by a section of the federation as belonging to them which was one of the main reason for the movement in the first place.

Another measure is the unifying National Policy on Tertiary Education that talks about quota system of admission and recruitment aimed at fostering national integration. The JAMB, (2020) report revealed that most federal universities have exceeded the 30% quota for the catchment area criterion enshrine by the national

policy, favouring individual states where the universities are located. The same scenario applied to staff recruitment. The proportions range from 44% for the University of Calabar to 65% for Bayero University, Kano. Although there are some exceptions such as University of Ilorin that draws 2% of its students from the North and university of Benin drawing 51% of its students from the South west. Generally, the percentages of Northern students enrolled in Southern universities are extremely low. In the East, it rarely exceeds one percent, and in the West, it varies from two to seven percent. On the contrary, the percentage of Southern students enrolled in Northern universities is quite substantial, ranging from three percent at Bayero University, Kano, to fifty-seven at the University of Ilorin (JAMB, 2020). Other measures include the Establishment of unity Schools run by the federal government, introduction of a uniform Local Government system in Nigeria, federal character principle among others.

However, there are a lot of challenges affecting the implementation of most of these policy programmes. Onifade et-el, (2013) are of the opinion that the major hurdle in the path of national integration in Nigeria has been a regenerative breed of selfish and greedy political actors who either seize power through the barrel of the gun or through stolen electoral mandates. These breed of political gladiators in a bid to secure the support of members of their own ethnic groups install ethnic and religious differences and demonize members of other groups. Ahmed et-el, (2016) argue that federalism as it is presently practiced in Nigeria suffers because of lack of fiscal federalism, over-centralisation of power at the centre, laidback or non-viable states, absence of state police, among others. Some other challenges include corruption, nepotism and fear of leaders losing political control among others. Further discussion on the mechanism for national integration and the challenges associated with them are presented in later part of this paper.

Mechanisms Adopted by Nigerian Government for National Integration

The Nigeria's federation has been played by instability of war, cases of insurgency and other numerous outbreaks of ethno-religious conflicts across the country. In spite of the setback, Nigeria has remained one country. Successive regime in Nigeria have put in several efforts, established institutions, formulate policies and implemented programmes and schemes that will promote national unity and integration among Nigerians. Ahmed and Dantata, (2016). Some of these mechanisms are discussed below:

Adoption of federal system of government: As noted by Dicey, federalism is political machinery that tends guarantee national unity and balanced power to accommodate the right of all citizens (Dicey cited in Aderonmu, 2010). As opined by Obafemi Awolowo, “if a country is bilingual or multilingual, the constitution must be federal and the constituent states must be organized on linguistic basis”. He further stressed that it is only true federalism that will ensure unity, integration and harmony among the diverse racial and linguistic groups of Nigeria. Fagbamigbe, (1981), cited in Dawood, (2015b). Historically, it is the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorate in 1914 that form the basis of federalism in Nigeria. The position to adopt federalism as the best system of government in Nigeria was further strengthen and affirmed by successive national dialogue and reports of constitutional conferences organized by several regimes. This assertion is further confirmed by Gambari (2016) where they noted that federal system of government was adopted by the founding fathers with main aim of ensuring integration in Nigeria. Although federalism was adopted as the system of government which recognizes the needs and aspiration of every Nigerians including the minorities, cries for marginalization, suppression etc does not come to an end.

Establishment of federal constitution: The adoption of federal constitution was considered by many scholars as a measure to promote national unity and integration of Nigerian state. According to Dawood, (2015b) the establishment of federal constitution and the abolition of regional constitutions was a measure to ensure national unity as against regional loyalty. Every region within Nigeria is expected to adopt and use the single document. Thus, it served as a unifying factor that integrate the people of Nigeria as one nation, united under one constitution. Equally, several provisions for national unity and integration were enshrined in all the constitutions adopted thereafter including the current 1999 constitution, such as articles that are expected to promote national integration (Dawood, 2015b). For instance, section 2 (1) of the 1999 Constitution as amended 2011 says “Nigeria is one indivisible and indissoluble sovereign state...” Oyadiran and Adeshola (2017), shed more light along this conviction thus:

Since the inception of fourth republic in 1999, the national assembly has not been able to amend the constitution...

Until the opinions of Nigerian people are sought before we can have legitimate constitution drafted. Issues that required urgent attention by the constitution include: the kind of federalism to operate, local government autonomy... rotational presidency, federal character, legislative list, revenue generation and sharing formula

Establishment of National Youth Service Corps: This scheme was established by General Yakubu Gowon's administration in 1973 after the longest Nigerian civil war. The scheme provides for one year compulsory national service for all graduates in states other than theirs. The main focus of the scheme was promotion of peace, national unity, national integration and national development. Specifically, the objectives are to promote unity and understanding, develop togetherness and spirit of co-operation, inculcate entrepreneur skills to make them self-reliant, expose them to different cultures for them to appreciate the beauty of unity in diversity and also learn to accommodate others from different cultural background (Ahmed and Dantata, 2016). NYSC scheme has resulted in the encouragement of inter-ethnic marriages and domiciliation in ethno-regional areas other than one's own. However, Odunnuga (1999) in Ahmed and Dantata (2016) observed that there are some negative aspects of this scheme which hinder national integration. For instance, many of the graduates are either not employed or are themselves unwilling to take up appointments in the area they served because of the uncertainty of future prospects in those states, for reason of statism arising from the vexed issues of Indigene and settler struggle (Odunnuga, 1999 in Ahmed and Dantata, 2016). Another disturbing problem of contemporary NYSC scheme is corruption, which makes a number of the corps members to pay off their ways away from their areas of primary assignment, poor social infrastructure made corps members to prepare urban area to rural communities, even when posted to one. Also, insecurity in particular pose more threat to the scheme in the sense that a number of locations are practically not safe for the corps members; due banditry and kidnappings in some parts of the north west region, ISWAP and Boko Haram threats in the north east, IPOB and unknown gunmen in the south east and may more across the country, and laziness among the youths thus members prepare to serve in their state's of origin. These problems have successfully defeated the objectives NYSC scheme.

Establishment of Federal Character Commission: The commission was established to entrenched Federal Character Principle in the area of appointment of Federal Civil and Public Service, political appointment, infrastructure services and anything that has national appeal. Ojo (2009) noted that the Federal Character Principle is another measure adopted to promote national unity and integration. This principle means that political and administrative appointments at federal level should and must reflect the six geo-political zones that make up Nigeria and where need be the respective States that make up the zone. By extension, the States and Local Governments should ensure that the distribution of appointments follows the same principle, by taking into cognizance the number of Local Governments, wards and of course the ethnic groups there in. The central focus is to ensure that every community and ethnic group is carried along in the process of governance.

Table 1: Stating the number and percentage of political appointees excluding Ministers and Ambassadors of Buhari's administration per region from 2017-2021.

| S/N | Region | Number of Appointees | Percentage |
|-----|---------------|----------------------|-------------|
| | North Central | 21 | 13.2 |
| | North East | 24 | 15.1 |
| | North West | 30 | 18.9 |
| | South South | 20 | 12.6 |
| | South East | 22 | 13.8 |
| | South west | 42 | 26.4 |
| | Total | 159 | 100% |

Source: Premium Times Newspaper, Monday, 4/11/2017

The above is the table stating the number and percentage of political appointees of Buhari's administration per region as at 2021, these appointees comprise of Services Chiefs, Directors General and Chief Executives of Federal Parastatals and Agencies of the government including Special Assistants/Advisers. The table shows that the South West has the highest number of political appointees 42 (26.4%) followed by the North West with 18.9% of the total number of political appointees whereas, South South and North Central have the least number of

political appointees 20 and 21 political appointees representing 12.6% and 13.2% respectively. From this table one might think that there were no major discrepancies in the distribution of the political appointees per regions looking at the region's population.

However, the state by state distribution is skewed such that one state takes larger share of the appointees. For instance, Ogun state has the highest number of the appointments with 21 out of the 42 appointees from the region. Also, Imo state has 15 political appointees, meaning that it takes 68.2% of the total political appointees assigned to that region. The same thing with Kano State with 15 numbers of political appointees representing 50% of the total appointment made to the region. The worst case scenario is that The Federal Capital Territory, which has no appointee. Ebonyi and Abia states got the least with each having only two appointees.

The foregoing shows that the principle of federal character was not adhered to, thus cries of marginalization and clamor for creation of more political structures such as state creation and local government. Ayoade (1998) noted that: "as long as the application of the principle of federal character discriminated against one group and favours another, no unity can result from such an exercise".

Establishment of Unity Schools and FGCs: The establishment Unity Schools and Federal Government Colleges across the country was born out the desire to inculcate national unity among the youths in the country. This assertion was noted by Ahmad and Dantata (2016) where they posit that these schools and colleges were established to ensure unity in diversity at early age by bring youths from different states within Nigeria under one umbrella, to learn, to trust and to love one another. This will go a long way to reduce prejudices and mistrust among Nigerian at early age. However, Gambari (2016) and Dawood (2015b) opined that unity schools as strategy of integration has instead of promoting national unity and integration, has ended of creating discrimination of children of the so-called educationally advantaged states and promoting elitism. The so called national unity schools and colleges are mostly populated by the sons and daughters of the bureaucrat, politician and their associates. Thus, rather than promoting unity it end up promoting and re-enforcing the existing power structure.

State and Local Government Creation: The creation of states from 1967 to 1996 was born out of the contention that when states are created there would be reduced marginalization, national unity and speedy economic growth and development. Accordingly, Gen. Yakubu Gowon on May 27, 1967, by the Decree No.14 of 1967 created twelve states, six in the north and six in the southern part of Nigeria. The essence, is to do away with the regional orientations and install the sense of national unity as well as to move away from the colonial creations of regional loyalty that engulf the country into a bloody civil war. Since the creation of the 12 states in 1967, the quest for more states continued, from 19 states in 1976, 21 states in 1987, to 30 states in 1991 and now 36 states in 1996. This same scenario applied to creation of local Governments in Nigeria. From 301 to 449 in 1989 and 589 in 1991 and later increased to 774 in 1995. Despite, all these developments there is still serious agitation for the creation of state and local government across the country. For example, the Cable on line newspaper (August 11, 2021) reported that:

While some Nigerians are calling for the return to regionalism, currently there is a proposal before the senate for the creation of new states. Some of the requests are: Itai state from Akwalbom, the status of state for the FCT, Katagum state from Bauchi, Okura state from Kogi East, Adada state from Enugu; Gurara state from Kaduna and Ijebu from Ogun state...

Movement of Federal Capital from Lagos to Abuja: As part of integrative mechanism the Federal Capital Territory was moved from Lagos to Abuja. This largely was aimed at achieving administrative convenience looking at the terrain of Lagos. Ojo (2009) noted that, the movement of the federal capital to Abuja was symbolic and intended to be an integrative policy. He however, lamented that the whole idea of the movement is to make Abuja, being the center of the nation geographically to serve as a symbol of unity and nationhood. However, Ajayi (2006) holds the notion that the creation of Abuja is nothing more than what he called 'a revenge project' to change the site of power from the west to the Northern part of the country by the Northern elites.

Formation of National Political Parties: This is another integrative mechanism adopted by the federal government to ensure the unity and integration of Nigerian

state. It was hitherto known that political parties were the creation of respective regional government during the first republic. Each region has its political parties with regional appeal, for instance in the First Republic northern Nigeria was dominated by Northern Peoples' Congress and Northern Element Peoples' Union, while in the west and East there were Action Group and National Council for Nigeria and Cameroon respectively. However, section 223 (2b) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria provides room for the formation political parties that have national appeal. Thus, executive committees must reflect the geo-political setting of Nigeria for it to be registered as a political party. The essence is to ensure wide spread and representation of the geo-political setting of the country and its people. However, many if not all the political parties today seem to have regional or geo-political connotation and thus enjoy favour and sympathy from those regions and zones. The two leading political parties in Nigeria; APC and PDP for example have more or less regional colouration. APC comprises mostly the northern States and the south western States while the PDP housed the south east and south southern States with very few selected northern States. In fact, APGA is even a south eastern political party in outreach. Even then, it was only able to secure Anambra state, at the 2022 general election of the state. Many other political parties have not win even one seat at the State's Assemblies. Most of these other political parties don't have structure at even state levels not to talk of owning local structure to register and mobilize people. This defeats the essence of the formation of political parties.

Another major challenge of political parties today is lack of distinct political ideology that will categorically differentiate it from another. For instance, during the second republic one can differentiate NPN housing programme from UPN free education policy and the PRP is for removal of head and cattle tax. But today's PDP and APC political ideology are not different even in theory not to talk on practice. These explain why some time the electorate does not look at the party but the individual candidate contesting. This negates the whole essence of party formation

Zoning of presidency and rotation of power: Although it is not enshrined in any section or subsection of the constitution of FRN or any extant law, the zoning of presidency was aimed at tackling cries for marginalization and promoting national integration among geo-political zones of the country. No wonder, section 229(4) of the 1995 Constitution made provision for zoning and rotation of the

presidency between the geo-political zones in the country. The six geo-political zones are presented thus:

1. North-Central: Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau and FCT.
2. North-East: Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, and Yobe.
3. North-West: Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara.
4. South-East: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo.
5. South-South: Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross-River Delta, Edo and Rivers.
6. South-West: Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo.

The above shows the breakdown and the compositions of States under the zoning arrangement. However, there are some intricacies with zoning over time. According to the World Bank Group, (2011) report shows that the southern zones still feel marginalised politically despite their economic (resources) potentials and contributions whereas, the north continue to debate against the zoning and rotation of political office, saying it is against the tenant of democracy. Going by our history of disunity in Nigeria, zoning seems like a great idea to ensure 'principle of inclusion and equity.' Unfortunately, it was jettisoned by the political elite. For instance, Shagari went for second term despite poor performance, Obasanjo wanted third term while Jonathan run for second term in 2015 despite the initial agreement of one term. This implies that zoning has gone against practical politics due to naked ambition and excessive greed of the politicians. Zoning has also proven to be a limitation to merit and quality leadership.

The 2023 general elections is another litmus test for the zoning and rotation formula. The south is waiting for the presidency to be zoned to them since they were extremely instrumental in the ascendancy of Buhari administration and the fact that it is their turn going by the zoning formula. Are they likely to win at the general election?

Importantly, looking beyond 2023 elections is what matters. Nigerian elites must begin to realise that the zoning formula or policy is not a one for all size solution to the disunity of the Nigerian state. They must abstain from widening the existing divisions, emphasised on our similarities, be sincere with the people on our differences and truly preach unity in diversity so that we all can look beyond the limitations of state, geo-political zones, ethnicity and religion. It is only then we can progress as one country. Other countries like America and Singapore that have

more population, with multiracial and multi religious have achieved that thus it is certain not impossible for Nigeria.

Revenue Allocation: Resources or revenue allocation is another integrative mechanism adopted to check the excesses of national unity and integration in Nigeria. The Federation Account was created to further strengthen national unity and integration. It is an account where all revenues accruing to the federal government are generated and pooled into one single account known as Federation Account to be shared monthly to the three tiers of governments based on agreed formula. As an affirmation, section 162(1) of the 1999 Constitution of the FRN as amended 2011 says: "The federation shall maintain a special account to be known as 'the Federation Account' into which shall be paid all revenues collected by the Government of the Federation..."

The current revenue sharing formula gives the federal government 48.50 per cent while states get 26.72 per cent and Local governments receive 20.6 per cent. However, there is a proposal that seeks to review the current revenue allocation formula. If the proposal is approved, federal government will receive 45.17 per cent of the money from the consolidated revenue fund of the federation, made of oil and gas sales proceeds as well as tax and revenue from Customs. The 36 states will receive 29.79 per cent while the 774 local governments will receive 21.04 per cent of the funds. This is the vertical formula; the more controversial formula that excites ethnic tension is the horizontal sharing of 26.72% by the states. The formula is currently pinned on five principles: (1) equality of states, 40% (2) population, 30% (3) landmass/terrain, 10% (4) internal revenue effort, 10% (5) social development effort, 10%. Again the constitution has give 15% to oil producing states via the derivation principle. This is put in place to address the agitation for states control of national resources and promote national integration.

Inekwe, (2014) urged that revenue allocation in Nigeria has led to lack of solid diversified revenue generating base, and dependence on mono-economy dominated by crude oil production and exportation. Also, revenue allocation encourages multiplication of states and local governments that are revenue allocation dependent, rather than being revenue generating fiscally and self-reliant. Many states are simply contented with what they collect as allocation from the federal government and thus, not making any effort at revenue generation.

How democracy guarantees or undermines national integration in Nigeria

Empirically, national unity and integration has been for years the concern of many multi-ethnic and multi-religious countries of the world. The experience in Sudan, India, Rwanda, Kenya and Yugoslavia posed a serious concern for national integration. As multi-ethnic country, Nigeria has been grappling with the issues of national integration for decades. In line with this fact, Gambari (2016) notes that quite a number of multicultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious societies constantly have to contend with tension and conflicts arising from the ramifications of their diversity. He furthered by saying it usually requires “the highest level of statesmanship, patriotism and astute brinkmanship to maintain the requisite delicate balancing that keeps the whole together”. At the time of independence in 1960 one of the greatest challenges which the founding fathers had to deal with is the problem of national integration. In affirming to the above Paul (2015) posited that the issue of ethnic conflicts is the major challenge to Nigerian democracy. Nigeria being a country of over 250 different ethnic groups is likely to pose a threat to national unity if not carefully managed. Whereas Idowu and Satuyi (2016) contend that factors such as political crisis, corruption, tribalism, and insecurity among others hinder true democracy and national integration in Nigeria. In their view, ethnicity, tribalism and corruption are the major impediment to national unity and integration. Nigeria is a country of over two hundred and fifty ethnic groups with different backgrounds.

It true that during democratic administrations Nigeria as a country seems to register increased violence, tension and conflict of different nature and form; ranging from communal, tribal, religious, sectional conflicts etc. Most of these conflicts seem to be identity driven, where one community feel superior while other are inferior, some people are regarded as indigenes while others are settlers, some feel that they are the majority while others are the minority. These identity conflict breed enmity, hatred and mistrust among people. Dawood (2015b) noted that it this identity driven notion of lack of tolerance, respect for one another and accommodation that are responsible for many of the conflicts Nigeria has witness. Gambari (2016) opined that this identity driven conflicts further aggravate intolerance, and exclusion and as well ethnicity and religious jingoism, constantly

perpetrated by selfish 'politicians' and 'leaders' whether religious or secular in order to meet their ulterior motive.

Furthermore, Lanre (2007) argued that successive ethnic rivalries are what challenge government efforts of national unity and integration. He emphasizes that it is this identity divide that give birth to the creation and of course sustenance the so called ethno-regional groups in Nigeria. He identified groups such as; Arewa Peoples' Congress (APC), O'odua Peoples' Congress (OPC), Ohaneze Ndigbo, Ijaw Youth Movement, Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), and Egbesu. He posited that these groups will continue to find popular support from the people of their respective ethnic group in as long as our elites are using the identity divide as a political weapon to remain in power. This singular support in my opinion is a symptom of an unstable democracy, and thus, the point of departure is that democracy in spite of its enduring legacy in promoting good governance, popular participation, due process and discipline, does not in Nigerian case promote national unity and integration which is one of the symbols of democracy in the country.

The political experience of Nigerian Fourth Republic as relate to democracy and national unity and integration has been characterized by corruption, embezzlement of funds, ethno-religious conflicts, master/servant relationship, tribalism, insecurity and misplacement of national priority occasioned by absence of patriotism by political leaders. In fact, leadership in Nigerian state, at all level appeared to be the cause of Nigerian national disunity, regional tension, agitation for self-determination by the secessionist in the Southeast and preponderance of insecurity across the regions of the country. Gambari (2016) noted that General Murtala Ramat Mohammed had captured the characterization of Nigerian political experience more succinctly thus:

Despite our great human and material resources, we have not been able to fulfil the legitimate expectations of our people. Ethnicity, religiosity, tribal and divisive considerations have denied us of the focus that was the promise at independence to build a respectable

democratic and economically vibrant nation deserving
the respect of all

Unfortunately, this observation remains very relevant even after the 20 years of return to civil democratic rule; our political leaders at all level are yet to imbibe the spirit of nationalism and patriotism driven by the principle of democracy and good governance devoid of ethno-religious sentiments. Specifically, Hassan (2006) identify weak democratic institutions, corruption, power shift and ethno-regional tension, clash of political interest or differences and ethnic and religious differences are the major challenges of democracy on Nigerian national unity and integration.

The activities of the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) a hitherto armed group based in Niger Delta region which emerged from 2005 to 2009 had threatened the unity and integration of corporate existence of Nigerian state. Although the main motive of the group was rather economic, it had caused a lot tensions and suspicions within Nigerian state. (www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/mend.html). The rise of Boko Haram insurgency which transform into terrorism has created a negative impression on the unity and integration of Nigerian state. Looking at the early attacks of the sect, majority of the Nigerian Christians have been accusing the group of deliberate attempt to decimate if not eliminate completely the Christians population and Christianity in the Northern part of Nigeria. For instance, Nweke (2015) argued that;

The truth remains that Boko Haram poses greater challenge to the problem of integration in consideration of the dichotomy between the reality and the perception. Whereas could mean that Boko Haram is an international terrorist group, it is perception by the citizenry could assume various dimension. For perceiver, the fact that Boko Haram is an Islamist sect already couches it in an ethnic garb. The spate of attacks of Christian dominated areas in Northern Nigeria and burning of churches presents an ethnic undertone to the situation" (Nweke, 2015).

The position taken by Nweke has been with myriad of Non-Muslim Nigerians. To further buttress this Akpogena (2012 cited in Nweke, 2015) advised that all Christians be sensible of people around them especially 'your guard', 'your driver', 'your domestic staff'...get necessary information on security and "activities of terrorist especially Boko Haram and Islamic Jihadist". The abduction of over 270 Chibok secondary schools girls in 2014 by the sect adds intense pressure to the already dichotomized country. There is no denying the fact, activities of Boko Haram created distrust and disunity among already divided lines, thereby threatened the country's national unity and integration.

The resurgence of agitation for Indigenous People of Biafra led by Nnamdi Kanu has further threatened the corporate existence and independence democratic state. It should be noted that, in an attempt to secede Kanu came up of with Biafra Independent Radio Station, Biafra national anthem and Biafran currency and even declared Nigeria as "Zoo". This no doubt prompted the Nigerian state to launch a military operation to be known as "Operation Python Dance" in Abia state the home Nnamdi Kanu which had received condemnation by the leadership of Igbo and some so-called human rights lawyers. For instance, Dr. John Nwodo and Femi Falana faulted the decision and described it as illegal (<https://punchng.com/ipob-and-the-national-question/>).

The intensity of farmers/herders conflicts in the North central states and its subsequent movement to the Southwest of the country has degenerated to yet another issue of national concern. The accusations put forward by many non-Hausa/Fulani and Christian community of Islamization and Fulanization agenda of President Muhammadu Buhari administration caused serious concern on national integration. For instance, former President Olusegun Obasanjo while given a keynote address at the 2019 Synod of the Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion held in Oleh, Isoko South Local Council of Delta State said "It is no longer an issue of lack of education and lack of employment for our youths in Nigeria, which it began as, it is now a West African Fulanisation, African Islamisation and global organized crimes of human trafficking, money laundering, drug trafficking, illegal mining and regime change" This comment elicited harsh criticisms on one hand and encomiums on the other hand. For example former governors of Kaduna and Jigawa states Alhaji Balarabe Musa and Sule Lamido criticized him heavily while pan-Yoruba socio-political organization, Afenifere, Ohanaeze Ndigbo, the pan Niger Delta Forum and former Aviation Minister, Femi

Fani-Kayode said he was right (www.vanguardngr.com/2019/05/storm-over-obasanjo-stance-on-fulanisation-agenda/).

Accordingly, Eyoboka and Akinferon (2017) cited in Ele (2018) opine that National Christian Elders Forum which comprises of top government official has insisted that the Federal Government was planning to “Islamise” Nigeria through Jihad. The forum maintains that Islamists have been interfering in the governance of Nigeria using “Takiyya (approved deception)” while Boko Haram and Fulani Herdsmen as violent Jihad were more aggressive in their objective of destroying democracy in Nigeria. He buttress that the aim is to remove democracy as an ideology and entrench Sharia ideology as a source of legislation in the country Eyoboka and Akinferon cited in Ele, (2018). The declaration of Rivers State as Christian state and subsequently the alleged demolition of mosques by the governor of the state challenged the democracy and unity of the country. Like many other republics and military regimes, the fourth republic witnessed far reaching problems bordering, national integration and national development.

Conclusion

This paper sought to examine the effect of democracy on Nigerian national integration. From the foregoing, we understand the problem of Nigerian national integration does not start with the present democratic dispensation. It was clearly presented in the previous sections that problems of national integration started with the amalgamation of Nigeria in 1914 and of course the subsequent handover of power to the indigenous political leaders after the attainment of independence in 1960. The study reveals further that the adoption of the federal system of government which is meant to accommodate the multi-ethnic divides of the country has failed to ensure national integration in Nigeria.

Also, in spite of the several mechanisms adopted by government to ensure national integration through the establishment of various structures and new institutions of government, schemes as well as constitutional amendments and other extant laws, Nigerian national integration still remains unfinished business. Until present time, the quest for self-determination and secession by Indigenous People of Biafra is still noticeable, the cries for marginalization by one group or the other is still in existence, ethno-religious conflicts is on the rise as day passes by and the rise of mutual distrust among the already divided society is skyrocketing.

More so, the study has established that democracy that is supposed to guarantee national unity and integration among Nigerians has succeeded in undermining it.

Recommendations

In view of the above, the paper recommends thus:

1. True federalism should be incorporated and adopted in the Nigerian polity, so that all the segments of the country will have sense of belonging and fairness; in the sense that the units will take charge of its economic resources and activities and each should develop at its own pace in accordance with its peculiarities. In this sense cooperation will be at the front burner among the units pertaining issues concerning the country as a whole
2. The current constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria should as a matter of seriousness is reviewed to look into seriously in to national questions threatening further the continuous corporate existence of the country. Also, unlike the 1979 and 1999 constitutions which were merely the handiwork of the military, the reviewed constitution should be born out of consensus by the people' it should be made by the people and for the people
3. As against the current agitations from some quarters calling for bestowing state status on the Federal Capital Territory, its current status should be maintained and strengthened, in such a way that it will play its role as a centre of Nigerian unity in its true sense.
4. There is need to encourage both the state and local governments to generate their revenues internally like granting them relative control over natural resources found in their domain. This will make them less dependent on the federal government and look inward for fiscal sustainability as well as restoring social contract and improving service delivery in the sub-national government.
5. Nigerian government should ensure the fair distribution of power and resources among the diverse components of the federation in line with trust of the sociological theory of federalism, which tends to see diversities in a federal setting, is not mean weakness but strength due to concerted efforts of all for the good of the whole.
6. Rotational Presidency should be enshrined in to the constitution so that none of the sections of the country will feel alienated and marginalized. Further with rotational arrangement the disruptive clamour by the sections

to clinch power at the centre will be taken out. Each section will simply wait for its turn with little or no rancor among the section.

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