



Multi-party system and the predicament of political development in Nigerian democratic dispensation

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Abstract

Many countries rely on party system as instrument for democratic development. In a multi-party system, political parties as part of the democratic system constitute the main tool of political development irrespective of their various ideological learning. Multi-parties system set a face for political development through healthy political competition to unite Nigeria. Therefore, this paper examines the nexus between multi-party system and political development in Nigeria, and the political consequences of multi-party system in Nigeria. The research adopts an explanatory approach for analysis in this work. The design exposes the researcher to mainly secondary data. The study suggested that a multi-party system fosters variety and ideological divisions, resulting in a sense of ethnic politics. It would lead to political uncertainty to the electorate on which party would join or to vote for in order to ensure even development. Political parties, according to the study, should have a clearly defined philosophy and ideology that allows them to adhere to their manifestos. The internal democracy should be entrenched to all political parties in order to enhanced democratic development and electing credible leaders.

Keywords: Multi-Party System, Political Development, and Democracy

1.0 Introduction

Democracy generally subscribes to guarantee the satisfaction of people's welfare through their chosen representatives. For democracy to thrive, viable Political Parties are essential instrument. In a democratic society, political parties' tasks include educating citizens, proposing candidates for election, and ensuring national integration. Democracy in the world owes a lot of its accolades to the party system; the party system is the backbone of democracy and growth, according to literature.

Since the return to democratic governance in Nigeria, multi-party system has been seen as

a panacea for democratic development. This is because its acceptability was based on the ability to help a political system and its leadership to sustained efficiency in all developmental processes particularly in the areas of security and justice, reduction of poverty, inequality and unemployment. This implies that any society that build up all these areas of developmental concerns will be regarded as developed society (Adeleye, 2015).

However, inadequate governance, with its concomitant socio-economic and political issues, has mainly undercut the great hopes of most Nigerians several years after democratic rule. Poverty, rising economic



inequality between the rich and the poor, inadequate investment, inflation, de-industrialization, mass unemployment, and a debt crisis, for example, have overwhelmed the Nigerian economy. Furthermore, widespread breakdown of social norms and infrastructure, illiteracy, insecurity of lives and property, political corruption, authoritarianism, electoral malpractices, politically motivated violence, and fragile government institutions continue to weaken the socio-political realm in Nigeria (Mohammed & Kuna, 2001).

This paper is an attempt to ascertain the impact of multi-party system and its predicament to political development in Nigerian democracy.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Political Elite Theory

This paper is guided by the political elite theory. The elite theory as reflected in the writings of Wilfredo Pareto (1848-1923), Gaetano Mosca (1858-1941), and Robert Michels (1876-1937) believes that there are two classes of people in any society: those who dominate and those who are ruled. According to their consensus, society is dominated by a small group of people (elites) who possess the attributes necessary for full social and political power. As a result of their privileged position in society's power strata, these are those who are successful and hold command positions in every institution; they influence public policy to reflect their views and preferences rather than those of the majority. The elites are the policy makers who wield significant power and influence in the allocation of values and scarce resources in society and share common consensus on the maintenance of the status quo. The political elites are cabinet of people that control the reign of government (Awojobi, Oyadiran and Nweke, 2014). The political elites in

Nigeria are a group of persons who dominate government machinery and apparatus at the state level. They may be found in government institutions such as the Presidency, National Assembly, and Federal Executive Council. Governors and members of the State Houses of Assembly are among them. They have some authority over the military, economy, administration, politics, religion, and traditional society life.

To put it another way, political elites build political structures and then urge the masses to join them. The elites in Nigeria's society develop and direct political parties because they believe that controlling government is important and political power should be their private sanctuary. For instance, the activities of the Nigerian elites are potentially led to de-capitalization of the core value of democratic existence. Their leadership, culture and strategies are anti-development and anti-democratic, with illegal accumulation of stupendous wealth through government contracts and other deals as well as massive rigging of elections. They are also responsible for socio-economic incapacitation and political instability such as crisis of discords, unresolved political issues, threat of impeachment and breach of party rules, inter-communal rivalries and youth's resurgences in the country (Adeyemo, 2002, Eze, 2009). This situation is rightly captured in the work of Avidime and Usman (2016) who stated that

Nigerian state by virtue of its historical, socio-economic and political conditions is fashioned to perpetuate elite exploitation of the socio-economic and political space and resources, protect foreign interests, promote ethno regional and religious antagonism and undermine popular participation in the development and governance processes.



As a result, they are neither mass or branch parties with members from a variety of backgrounds and interests. They pursue parochial interests centered on elite aspirations and their realization.

3. Methodology

The method employed to conduct this research will be explanatory, and the data gathering source will be secondary. Data was gathered through analyzing relevant government papers, library materials, and online resources, and by logically assembling evidence drawn from documents and records on topics relating to Nigeria's multi-party system and political evolution. Before formulating a conclusion, the content analysis will be employed to translate reports and evidence into meaningful results.

4. Literature Review and Conceptual Clarification

4.1 Democracy

Democracy is a non-violence system of governance which provides for a regularized system of periodic elections, free choice of candidate and competitive political parties with concrete ideology. As a result, democracy strives to achieve the ideal of equal freedom for all members of society or the state; it achieves political autonomy through legitimately reached majority decisions; and it necessitates a well-structured society in order to provide everyone with opportunities for participation (Chimee, 2011, Guaba, 2003) in governance. These essential characteristics are crucial to democratic governance's ability to foster and strengthen the social compact, popular trust, state legitimacy, and socio-economic and political progress in society (Mohammed and Kuna, 2001). This connotes that multi-party system as potential ingredient to democracy will enable a political system to meet its historic task in

the area of development if adequately practice.

4.2 Multi-Party System

Multi-party system has been seen as viable instrument for political development and national integration through political parties. Multi-party system is the system of political domination by the some or coalition of parties who hold governmental power (Aliyu, 2018). In other words, multi-party system is “a network of relationships through which many political parties interact and influence the political process” (Mato and Jacob, 2011). To have a viable multi-party system the political interests and historical experience must play a dominant role. The real essence of multi-party system in the developing and pluralistic society is search for national integration but unfortunately to the system the mechanism for fostering political stability and development had failed repeatedly particularly in Nigeria because clear manifestations of lack of collective principle and ideology.

4.3 Political Development

Political development is concerned with the process of nation-building and the formation of national structures, with particular attention paid to political involvement, welfare, and distribution. It also entails structural differentiation, democratization of the political system, universalization of laws, equality in the recruitment process, the weakening of traditional elites and their replacement by modernized elites, recognition of merits in role distribution, and the political system's ability to deal with challenges (Karimi, 2014). Political development refers to the overall performance of the entire system in forming an integrated society based on equality, political system capacity, and distinction.



Political development can only be achieved when all activities of the multi-party system are control and coordinate the various processes of change in society. Doubly, political development remained lifeless and weak in Nigerians political system due to the fact that political development and political parties are subjected to the interests of few individuals who hijacked the wealth of the nation, causing political disputes through electoral manipulations.

4.4 Multi-Party System and its Historical Development in Nigeria

Political party system emerged out of passion for self-government during and after the Second World War (Ujo, 2012). The political parties in Nigeria were patterned along the party system of British Colonial power and characterized by electoral organization and psychological affiliation which encompass shared ideology and common issue orientation (Izah, 2003). The Nigerian political party systems were the reflection of colonial style derived from Richard constitution of 1946 which centered on regionalism and major dominance ethnic group. At the inception of multi-partyism in Nigeria first republic, we have National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) formed in 1944 for Eastern region of Igbos and other peripherals tribes of South-South; Northern People's Congress (NPC) formed in 1951 for Northern region of Hausa/Fulani and minority tribes as well as Action Group (AG) formed in 1951 for Yoruba of the western region. However, later we have the emergence of minority parties such as Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) formed in 1950 of Mallam Aminu Kano, United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) formed in 1955 of Joseph Tarka from Benue Plateau, Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) formed in 1937 of Ibrahim Imam of Baro as well as Benin

Delta Political Party (BDPP) formed in 1953 of Anthony Enahoro of Bendel State (Ujo, 2012).

Africa as a countries shares similar problem of multi-party through colonial system of governance. In Nigeria at independence in 1960, the political system was made and designed to accommodate multi-partism. Ujo (2012) rightly observed that there is no proper analysis of politics especially political parties that can be done without looking at the history. To him, the political history of Nigeria right from its inception had produced many expressions by Nigerians as people who interact among themselves in the political and electoral processes.

Consequently, Adeyemo (2002), Olarimoyi (2008) and Ujo (2012) argue that political parties in Nigeria emerged as a result of European influence. The nationalist found it necessary to form political parties out of the desire to strive for self-government. Therefore, the parties that existed between 1922 and 1960 were: the Nigerian National Democratic Party (1923), the Union of Young Nigerians (1923), the Nigerian Youth Movement (1937), the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (1944), the Northern Elements Progressive Union (1950), the United National Independence Party (1953), the United Middle Belt Congress (1955), the Bornu Youth Movement (1956), and the Dynamic Party (1955). (Ujo, 2012). The Action Group (AG), the Northern People's Congress (NPC), and the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons were the most powerful political parties among them (later National Council of Nigerian Citizens; NCNC).

These political parties were formed to challenge the political problems that hindered the progress and development of Nigerian political system such as class,



religion, language, ethno-communal and rural/urban divide, ideology, educational levels and uneasy relationship between the dominant party and those opposition political parties (Ujo, 2012, Anifowoshe, 2004). The breakdown of the first republic, on the other hand, highlighted the Nigerian elite's failure to unite the country. Because the Northern People's Congress (NPC), which dominated the Federal Government, lacked recognition in the West, it was unable to reestablish social order. As a result of the manner in which the elections were won and lost, the Nigeria National Democratic Party, which won the polls in the West, also lacked legitimacy in the area. These events marked the start of the Nigerian democratic system's political tragedy, which has resulted in a significant legitimacy issue for the government and a widening distance between ordinary Nigerians and their leaders (Izah, 2003, Ujo, 2012).

Significantly, the return of party system in Nigeria in the Second Republic constituted a great relief to the yearnings and aspirations of citizens after a protracted and highly repressive military regime. They opted to hand over the baton of leadership to a civilian democratically elected administration after ruling for roughly thirteen years. Five political parties were approved to operate as political parties during the period, out of about fifty political associations that applied for registration. These parties included the Great Nigeria People's Party (GNPP), National Party of Nigeria (NPN), Nigerian People's Party (NPP), Peoples' Redemption Party (PRP), and Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) (Ujo, 2012). The return of democratic dispensation was built to change the colonial political characteristics so as to merge with world democratic system, but the political parties were seen as

reincarnation of colonial political parties with ethnicity as core value combined with anti-democratic practices of the party leaders (elites), illegally acquisition of stupendous wealth through government contracts and other deals as well as massive rigging of elections especially the 1983 election (Adeyemo, 2002, Jonah, 2008, Unobe, 2003).

In the aborted third republic of Nigeria 1992-1993 there was a change in the political system from multi-party system to two-party system which saw the birth of National Republican Convention (NRC) and Social Democratic Party (SDP) with the Late Chief MKO Abiola as its flag bearer and the National Republican Convention (NRC) with Alhaji Bashir Tofa as its flag bearer. After an almost successful election which was adjudged to be free, fair and credible by international observers, the election was annulled on 12 June, 1993. The annulment of the election institutionalized political crises that led to the end of the regime. The Yorubas saw the annulment as an affront and day light robbery of the mandate of their son, Chief MKO Abiola (Unobe, 2003, Jonah, 2008).

Consequently, Abacha's regime came up with five political parties that were screened and registered to contest elections. These included: United Nigerian Congress Party (UNCP), The Congress for National Consensus (CNC), The National Centre Party of Nigeria (NCPN), The Democratic Party of Nigeria (DPN), and Grassroots Democratic Movement (GDM). The problems began when all the five political parties adopted Abacha as their sole presidential candidate at their various conventions. These actions portrayed by the political parties made the late former attorney general of Nigeria and one-time governor of Oyo state, Bola Ige, described



the political parties as the “five fingers of leprous hands”. As the elections were about to be conducted, Abacha suddenly died (Unobe, 2003, Mohammed 1999, Ujo 2012). In 1998 Abdulsalam came up with significant and realistic transition process which began with Local Government elections and ended with the transfer of power to the civilian on May 29, 1999. The political parties that were registered include Alliance for Democracy (AD), All Nigeria People’s Party (ANPP) and People’s Democratic Party (PDP). Chief Olusegun Obasanjo became the presidential candidate of the PDP while the AD and ANPP formed an alliance that produced Olu Falae as their sole candidate. These political platforms in their nature opposed ideologies, philosophies and orientations that will build a formidable political national outlook. The parties members allowed themselves to be wrangled with political crises and elite’s domination (Eze, 2009; Akinboye, 2004). According to the foregoing political historical antecedents, the multi-party party system has dominated since independence, although political crises and misdeeds have also increased. It was believed that creating a level playing field for political competition would help the country avoid electoral crises and overcome party system or development issues, but the opposite was true.

In the Nigerian experience of democratic system right from first republic, political perception by politicians consistently is that, election is a matter of life and death (Akinboye, 2004). Politicians tend to belief that the only way to accumulate wealth is through the instrumentality of the state and this can be achieved through electoral victory by their political parties. Therefore, they apply all means in their disposal to outwit their opponents in any capacity in elections. Some of their strategies include

stuffing of ballot boxes with illegal papers, frustration of opponents in all aspects of democratic process, inflation of voters register, arson and killing of political opponents in various capacities (Animashaun, 2010). These situations occurred in First Republic, and continue to manifest in the present democratic dispensation (Akinboye, 2004). One can argue that, Political parties were formed for the purpose of acquiring power without any clear ideological position or organization. Hence, politicians and the elite right from colonial time formed political parties just to disengage colonial master and later to disengage military (Mohammed 1999). This ill-fated situation came as a result of lack of political culture of the political class to imbibe the tenets of democracy. As seen from the history, Nigeria right from the colonial time, multi-party system was in practice except during the Babangida regime when the country introduced two party systems of Social Democratic Party (SDP) and National Republican Convention (NRC).

4.5 The Nexus between Multi-party System and political developments in Nigeria

Development is not in the name by which a political system is being called, but depends on how political successes are put in place by the political leadership to achieve societal progress through good governance (Omotola, 2006). In a multi-party system, political parties are very critical in the developmental process irrespective of their various ideological learning because political parties are viewed as agents of unity, peace and integration. This means that the political parties must adhere to the democratic principles such as fundamental human right and the consolidation of the principles of the rule of law. Party system is



the network of relationship where people with diverse interest regulate their political interests by sharing ideological values. As a result, the greater the citizen input and, thus, the more democratic the government should be, the broader the representation or interest aggregation. The only difference between a multi-party system and other types of party systems is that constituencies in a multi-party system are more likely to have their interests represented than in any other party system (Awopeju, 2011, Chukwuma, 2018). Thus, the main reasons most countries prefer multi-party system is its ability to help a political system and its leadership to achieve greatness particularly securing of justice, efficient administration of common affairs, reduction of poverty, closing the gap between the rich and the poor, reduces high level of unemployment and bestowal of aid to individual citizens in their several occupations (Awopeju, 2011). This implies that the common good of the entire citizenry is the chief target of the political leadership. Conversely, Multi-party system creat a gap in the determent process to achieve democratic development via institutionalization of division and persistence diversity within the society (Aliyu, 2018, Chukwuma, 2018, Ezeh, 2009).

Abah, et al (2005) sees development as a multi-dimensional process of positive change in the social structures, attitudes, institutions, as well as the general acceleration of economic growth through reduction of unemployment, inequality and poverty. Rebecca et al (2005) defined development as a “process of structural transformation of the national socio-economic system which in the long term is expected to secure high and self-sustained economic growth; and a distribution of nation income which acceptable to all

parties in the society”. This affirms that democracy constitutes development.as rightly pointed out by Mato and Akintola, (2011), it is not about the name; thus any political party system can adopt any name in governance. It is therefore, important that democracy should stand to provide necessary inputs for development. Little wonder Jerry Rawlings once argues that:

There can be no democracy of the economic framework does not exist for the development of the people. This very fact is borne out by the very history of liberal democracy itself in the west (cited in Mato and Akintola, 2011).

From the above submission, it is crystal cleared that democracy evolved because man’s originally quest for development. Therefore, political development consists of meeting basic needs of life of people like health, education, food, water, sanitation and housing activities of the elites, socio-economics and progressive political culture propensities. In this regard, political development entails the political system’s ability to manage public affairs, resolve conflicts, and respond to popular demands. Rebecca et al. (2015). As a result, this understanding emphasizes how political development affects people’s political beliefs and feelings. Political development, on the other hand, necessitates a greater differentiation and specialization of political structures, as well as a greater secularization of political culture, effectiveness, efficiency, and capability (Rebecca et al, 2015).

Dudly Seers (1969) aptly viewed development as total elimination or reduction in unemployment, inequality, poverty, disease among others. Until these are adequately addressed and redressed that, society cannot claim to be developed (cited in Ujo, 2012). This idea emphasis that, quality of life and living standard of people



can be improve only when these indices of development are put in proper manner. This may be true, but the question is that can living standards of most citizens improve where high level of corruption pervert administration or legislation, and the situation where politics have become trade, entered for gain and not for service or matters that are of national importance are reduced to party affairs? Or can poverty, unemployment and inequality be reduced without a corresponding improvement in the decent political system? The fact still remain that, the decent political machinery is required to be put in place so as to meet the desire needs of the well-being of citizenry. This will enhance and promote their political participation and trust to the government.

In a multi-party system of governance where there is high level of unemployment, inequality and poverty, development is at stake or absent (Ujo, 2012). In a real context of it, democracy promises to be people focused but the party system does not always have good and perfect conditions to sustain development (Mato and Jacob, 2011, Rebecca, 2015). As opined by Omotola (2006) multiparty system does not connote to development rather depends on the character of party system (political leadership) and direction of good governance. Mato and Jacob (2011) also argue that:

The nature of party politics requires that the demands of the majority of the people be met in order for the government to restrain its support base. Consequently, government in such societies tends to concentrate more on redistributive measures/policies which are antithetical to economic growth and development.

Therefore, for party to achieve any form of political development and to have a change in structural and social dimension of their

society it must be well coordinated in various process of change such as 'commonalisation' of governance (Mato and Jacob ,2011). This is to say that the common good of the entire society is common target of the political leadership. This can also be contested that, the institutionalization of parties' politics and development by their relationship are not structured in the manner to achieve a common value of citizenry due to non-ideological front and deficiency of intra-party democracy (Anderson, 2018, Ukaeje, 2011). Obviously, the economic wellbeing of most Nigerians has continued to worsen since the return to democratic governance. But as Ukaeje, (2011) noted, the policies/measure remained antithetical to economic growth and development. The security and welfare of the majority are shattered; the people live in constant fear of Bandits, Boko Haram, Fulani Herdsmen's, armed robbers, Kidnapping, Rape and host of others. This situation happened in Nigeria because government policies and programme of the government especially since the return to democracy in Nigeria are elitist in nature. Development however becomes a day-dream in the country since the political landscape is yet to show clear evidence of good governance.

4.6 The Implication of Multi-party System in Nigeria Political Development

According to Laswell (1964) politics is all about who gets what, when and how (Cited in Ujo, 2012). It is an idea which expresses the need to plan and strategize to achieve political goals and objectives. It is within the function of the political parties to join other similar associations with similar ideology to establish a viable socio-economic policy that will help in the growth and development of the society. It is clearly to mention that, no political party can succeed in terms of development without concrete and



sustainable party system (Ujo, 2012). Party system is a useful guide for political development of every democratic society. This is because party influences the range and nature of choices available to the electorate, affects cohesion and stability of the government, and allows free space and share in the electoral campaign by politicians for the people's votes during elections. It also shapes the general character of the political culture and helps in public consensus and stability. From these features therefore, it shows that to achieve political development, political parties must have effective collaboration in their functioning and duties.

The Nigerian political system and institutions, on the other hand, have been able to implement policies and programs aimed at achieving a worldwide track of democratic growth in Nigeria. The government's initiatives include the implementation of a new civil servant compensation scale, deregulation of the communication industry, which resulted in the adoption of the Global System for Mobile (GSM), and debt relief secured for the country during the Olusegun Obasanjo administration. More specifically, the passage of the freedom of information bill, some sort of respect for the rule of law, and the economic development goal embodied in late President Umaru Yardua's seven-point strategy.

The transformation agenda by Goodluck Jonathan administration was meant to tackle challenges of insecurity, unemployment, inequality and poverty. The program also aimed to improve fiscal and monetary policies, job creation, public expenditure management, proper financial management, and fiscal prudence, as well as improve justice and the judiciary's speed of investigations and effective enforcement of

judicial decisions, as well as improve the legislature for optimal and proactive performance. In August 2015, President Muhammadu Buhari administration started implementation of the Treasury Single Account (TSA) in order to centralize the revenue collection from the various government parastatals, and anti-corruption war which he believes was hindering economic growth and development. All these policies and efforts of the various governments were made to build out perfect condition for sustainable development in Nigerian political environment.

The political reality of Nigeria has been in trauma of civilized development because constant resistance to change by the political players of the game whose smart action is to create divisions within the society and the extent of diversity continues to manifest in all institutions of governance. Their constant use of political parties to promote diversity and differences engendered the feeling of ethnic politics. However, this paper contends that a society that practice multi-party system affects its political development in diversity, and voter's confusion of which party to join and to vote for. This situation has been further buttressed the fact that the problem of multi-party system is self-interest and irresponsibility of power by party leaders (Mato and Jacob, 2011). Corruptions have become pervasive where fighting against it has been jeopardized by the politicians who are within and outside the system. Several cases of corruption manifested during the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari, among them was the case of recovery loot of N500b (about \$1.4b) by the EFCC, the case of Diezani Alieson-Madueke alleged of siphoning hundreds of million dollars, the \$2b arm deals where Sambo Dasuki was indicted and the case of



misappropriation of N162b by Joshua Dariye and equally alleged re-looting of looted fund by Magu which led to his suspension and eventually relieved from office (Adeshoka, 2020, Adesina, 2020, .Okakwu, 2019).

Consequently, the nature of political party system Nigeria operates makes corruption in the high and extremely viable. The issues of party funding become the major sources of corruption. All donations to the parties were received in a flagrant violation of the constitution. Most political parties funding came from individuals/groups that later used the machinery of their funding influences to control the party to the direction of their selfish interest. Ojo (2006) argues that for an aspirant to contest political office at any level must be able to muster quite a sizeable amount of money to ensure an effective campaign. This on several occasions has been manifested in various part of the country where most aspirants spent huge amount of money in purchases of cars, monitoring and campaign teams and sponsoring others aspirants which will make it possible for them to manipulate the result of elections. In fact they spent more than their wealth and to the extent that most of them go as far as collecting loan from banks to sponsor their political ambition. It is a known fact that corruption derailed party system in Nigeria. To confirm this, the first and second republic were shattered and truncated by high level of corruption (Ujo, 2012).

Moreover, political parties in Nigeria lack coherent structures. Most of them exist haphazardly with no define structure or the structure only exists in name or abandoned and ignored, while the drive of the party became a tool for manipulations of self-agenda by few individual or groups who were called cabals, inner caucus, party

stalwarts, king-makers or godfathers. Political parties in Nigeria are controlled by either the president or governors of various state, or groups/institution such as governor's forum, for example, the consistent ouster of PDP National Chairmen, Barnabas Gemade, Audu Ogbe, Ahmadu Ali, Okwesilieze Nwodo and Vincent Ogbulafor during President Olusegu Obasonjo (Ojo, 2006). In a similar vein, political parties lack internal democratic process. Political parties devoid from operating within the ambit of the law by engaging in different form of violence or manipulation of electoral process, election management bodies, the judiciary or the security agencies in order to consolidate power. In the trends of these problem of political party, the Publicity Secretary of the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) Lagos Chapter, Olumede Adefusi in his interview with Daily Independent Newspaper of August 30th 2012 as cited in UKaeja (2011) posits that, "Most political parties do not practice internal democracy because their leaders hardly emerged democratically hence the rising culture of political violence and assassination especially in some section of the community".

In most cases, this violation to some extent reach to the level where popular candidates were sub change or substituted with the ones considered as anointed or favourable choice. For example, in Jigawa State, Governor Saminu Turaki under the platform of All Nigeria People Party (ANPP) stood for election without primaries (Ukaeji, 2011). Another typical example is the presidential election that brought President Umar Yar'adua and Dr. Goodluck Jonathan under the platform of PDP which was seen as flagrant rape of the internal party democracy and also the replacement of Mohammed



Sani Abacha who emerged winner of the primary election with Alhaji Lawal Jafaru who lost out in the election against the wishes of the people (Ukaeji, 2011).

Equally and significant, political parties lack goal orientation and guiding principles. Parties were formed and registered without concrete political identities that will marshal out considerable ideology for political development. The parties were formed without common shared value and ideal to pursuit own image by individuals for quest for power and also to mainly facilitate primitive accumulation of wealth. This idea made it favourable for some of them to move from one party to another in search for their all times interest. Indeed all political parties in Nigeria operate in similar political programme and ideology. In political campaign processes, their messages and orientation are far from each other which are always an empty sloganeering. National interest is not in their pages of development because they promote sectional, ethnic, or religious interest using machinery and process of the party. These trends lead to the fractionalization of party and cause internal fraction and general discontent in the society such as re-curing crisis, political assassinations, and flagrant violation of fundamental human rights. These situations however engender multi-party system to be unhealthy competition among political parties (Chukwuma, 2018).

The intra-party crisis is also another major problem of the multi-party system. Right from colonial period to the 4th Republic, there had been intra-party crisis bothering on leadership tussle. For instance, the failure of NYM in 1934 to consolidates which was as a result of ethnic/tribal and other internal crisis. Also the crisis of Action Group (AG) in 1962, the clash between Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Sir S.L. Akintola which later

led to the formation of Nigeria Nation Democratic Party (NNDP). In a usual manner, political party's crisis manifested during primary election and national convention. For example, the leadership tussle of National People's Party (NPP), the disagreement between Nnamdi Azikwe and Alh. Waziri Ibrahim which later led to the formation of Great Nigerian People Party (GNPP). In a similar vein, in 2017, there was a leadership tussle between sheriff and Makarfi where Shariff's PDP declared that all the activities and programme done by the Makarfi Group in name of PDP, are illegal and ultra-vires (Chukwuma, 2018).

Political parties are in all manners of these undemocratic ideologies thus making the mockery of Nigerian democracy. When party undermined their principles for development, that despises ethical standards, peace and unity become obscure and thereby affects the entire society. Maikasuwa (2015) collaborates this view and observes that democratic development can only be achieved when there is equal participation, understanding of intra and inter party politics, obedience and respect to the electoral laws, and also the social economic and cultural conditions that allow free, fair, and equal practice of political self-determination.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

In multiparty System, people must be prepared to work together regardless of their political affiliations. It is therefore important to have rules that allow cooperation among the parties to avoid a situation where political parties strangle development.

From the above analysis, the paper argues that the problem of the Nigeria political system is not the form of the government as perceived by Nigerians, but rather the style of multi-party leadership by the political leaders. These situations are not healthy to



the growth and development of the Nigeria political system.

The paper however, recommends that

a. Our political parties should have a clearly defined philosophy and ideologies that will enable them conform to the dictates of their manifestoes.

b. In multi-party System people must be prepared to work together regardless of their political affiliations. It is therefore important to have rules that allow cooperation among the parties to avoid a situation where political belonging stifles development.

c. Citizens should be taught about their rights, responsibilities, and the government's role. They should be taught to demand accountability from those who have been elected to positions of power. They should be able to recall those who have failed to deliver on their promises. Because they will be protected from being used as puppets by ethnic leaders if they have a thorough awareness of numerous political issues.

d. Internal democracy must be strengthened. The parties must be internally democratic and committed to expanding the scope of democracy in the country.

e. The government should focus on institution that will stand and ensure the right of everyone in the society. The government must be fair, just and accountable to the electorates.

f. The survival and sustenance of democracy is to a greater extent, dependent on the ability of the electoral body to conduct free and fair elections through a transparent process. For this to be viable, the existence of an electoral body which is independent in its function is needed.

g. Many people believe that the government should investigate the urgent need to reform political parties in Nigeria in order to sanitize the democratic process and ensure the survival and growth of the country's hard-won democracy for political development.

h. Finally, there is also the need to strengthen the institutions of anti-corruption such as EFCC, ICPC and other sisters' organizations in order to checkmate the corrupt activities manifested within the political parties and their cohorts. This would aid sanity, accountability and transparency to reign in party politics in Nigeria.

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