



Vidyodaya Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences

VJHSS (2025), Vol. 10 (01)



Twenty-Five Years of Democracy in Nigeria, 1999- 2024: A Reality or a Sham?

T. T. Ityonzughul^{1*} and T. M. Gboko²

¹Department of International Studies and Diplomacy, Benson Idahosa University, Benin City, Nigeria, ²Department of History, Benue State University, Makurdi, Nigeria

Article Info

Article History:

Received 21 Aug 2024

Accepted 16 Jan 2025

Issue Published Online

01 January 2025

Key Words:

Twenty-Five Years

Democracy

Nigeria

Reality

Sham

ABSTRACT

There are several studies on Nigeria's democracy. However, such academic inquiries have not debated whether the last twenty-five years of democracy are a reality or a sham. This study was conducted to fill the knowledge gap that the existing literature has created. Using secondary sources consistently with interdisciplinary methods, the study delves into the history of democracy in Nigeria. It analysed the benefits of democracy in Nigerian society in the previous twenty-five years. The infelicities linked with the practice of democracy in Nigeria during the time under evaluation are also espoused. The study recommended solutions capable of restoring democracy in the country. It concluded and maintained that democracy has not provided adequate dividends to the Nigerian people within the period under review.

*Corresponding author

E-mail address:

ityonzughult@gmail.com



<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7197-7714>

Journal homepage:

<http://journals.sjp.ac.lk/index.php/vjhss>

<http://doi.org/10.31357/fhss/vjhss.v10i01.06>

VJHSS (2025), Vol. 10 (01),
pp. 99-110

ISSN 1391-1937/ISSN
2651-0367 (Online)



Faculty of Humanities and
Social Sciences 2025

1. Introduction

Every country or state in the world yearns for democracy. This is because democracy, in general, is a system that ensures public involvement, accountability, and transparency for the sake of peace and progress. However, the developing countries of the global south have been unable to realise the actual meaning of democracy due to some internal causes, including fundamental problems with human and social existence like sustainable statehood, national cohesion, security, poverty, diseases, employment, literacy, and so forth. It was long believed that the chances of (liberal) democracy in developing nations were minimal or nonexistent, according to the "prerequisites of democracy" perspective, which maintained that only societies with a respectable degree of socioeconomic development were the most likely candidates for democracy (Osaghae, 2022).

This view was somewhat empirically supported by the assertion that the "developmental dictatorship" (also called modernising or developmental oligarchy) was a successful model for democratisation in the 1970s and early 1980s, the existence of authoritarian regimes in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, their apparent resistance to democratic change, and the repeated failures of democratisation, civilisation, and other popular modes of democratisation (Osaghae, 2022). That was before the "global democratic revolution" that spread democracy throughout the world in the late 1980s and early 1990s after sweeping through authoritarian strongholds in Asia, Africa, and Eastern Europe (Osaghae, 2022).

Scholars have the chance to reconsider long-held notions about democracy and democratisation as a result of the "revolution." The relationship between democracy and development from an African and Nigerian viewpoint was arguably the most significant aspect of the reexamination

and the one that most directly challenged the sequential assumptions of the prerequisites of the democratic approach. One of the pioneers of the new school of thought, Sklar (1987), maintained that democracy promotes development and that socio-economic progress is not a pre-requisite for democracy. This kind of idea is of benefit to the global south in her aspirations for purpose and significance in the pursuit of total democracy. In other words, the democratic movement seeks to establish a genuine capacity for growth that permits the unhindered exercise of rights related to participation, the unhindered flow of entrepreneurial and creative energy, and, most importantly, responsibility. This argument aims to steer clear of the "fallacy of electoralism," which is the tendency to equate successful elections with those in which incumbents lose with democratic growth and to overlook the larger contextual and utilitarian aspects of democracy in favour of focusing only on elections as the most important aspect of democracy. This is in no way intended to minimise the importance of free and fair elections, the right to vote, or the reality that elections serve as a barometer for the state and evolution of democracy (Karl, 2000).

The people of Nigeria welcomed the historic return to civil rule in 1999 with much optimism and enthusiasm. Expectations were reasonable considering what Nigerians had to go through under military rule starting in December 1983, but as the new democratic state failed to provide the material and immaterial benefits of democratic governance, frustrations grew (Olaniyi and Hassan, 2022). Even while there hasn't been a democratic reversal in the nation 25 years after (re)democratization, discussions over the nature and extent of democratic governance have persisted. It would be uncharitable to suggest that 25 years of continuous democratic rule have not resulted in democratic gains, even though it is readily acknowledged that Nigeria is still far from achieving the status of a consolidated

democracy, 25 years after the military dictatorship ended and despite civilian transitions and party power changes.

Essentially, the study interrogates the previous twenty-five years of democracy in Nigeria, to determine whether it has been a reality or a sham. To achieve the aim of the study, the following questions were raised. What is the conception of democracy? What is the historical trajectory of democracy in Nigeria? Have democracy brought tangible dividends to Nigerians in the past twenty-five years? What measures would help in restoring democracy in Nigeria? These questions are the crux of the argument raised in this study. In as much as this paper is an analysis of democratic governance, it is based on the method of contemporary history with a special use of extant literature.

1.1 The Concept of Democracy

Democracy as a term is a concept/term and also a system of governance. However, to give a proper perspective and vivid understanding of the term democracy, there is a need to bring up the word's etymology. *Demos*, which means "the people", and *Kratos*, which means "the rule", are the two Greek roots from which the word democracy is thus formed. "Rule by the people" is what the two terms signify when combined. Democracy, which derives from Ancient Greece's political experience, is hard to describe. Democracy is a Greek word that means "rule by the people". Democracy is a system of majority rule in which the people hold the ultimate power, which they may exercise directly or indirectly through representatives chosen at regular elections (Alonge, 2005).

According to Abraham Lincoln (cited in Goshit, 2006), democracy is commonly defined as "government of the people by the people and for the people." A political system that uses free and fair elections to elect and replace the government; active citizen participation in politics and civic life; protection of all citizens' human rights; and

the rule of law, which guarantees that all citizens are treated equally under the law are the four pillars upon which democracy is built, according to Diamond (2004). Furthering the analysis, Oke (2005), democracy offers the opportunity for all adults to participate in decision-making; one of the key characteristics that contemporary democracies are emphasising is the principle of adult suffrage; democracy offers a genuine platform for the establishment and strengthening of good governance through institutional arrangements and citizen participation. Okeke (2017) posited that democracy is a people-centered form of governance. However, ignorant politicians sometimes mistake this importance for election domination, especially in developing democracies. Following the election, the avaricious politicians would start to personify democracy by choosing to control the political process and their antics, thereby gaining control of the political arena under the guise of democracy. In the words of Appadorai (1975), democracy is a system of government where the people themselves, or representatives they elect regularly, exercise their right to rule.

Similarly, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance defines democracy as a political system based on political equality and public control (2017 qtrd in Goshit, 2006). It sees democracy as an ideal and seeks to guarantee equality and basic freedoms, empower common people, settle disputes through peaceful dialogue, value individual differences, and usher in a time of political and social renewal free from social or economic turmoil. According to Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the legitimacy and power of sovereign nations are derived from the "will of the people," which is a basic democratic premise. It demonstrates a consistent and widespread desire for safety, justice, and peace. Human rights and democracy are inextricably linked because democracy

represents the core moral precepts of human equality and dignity (Onyalo, 2020).

In the context of this study, democracy is the government based on the will of the people rather than by the "barrel of the gun" (Goshit, 2006). A democratic society is characterised by a set of norms and values such as freedom of speech, religion, association, press, and human rights (United States Information Agency, 2024). In short, democracy is based on the principles of equality, fraternity, and freedom. Consequently, democracy is referred to as the "institutionalization" of freedom (Goshit). United States Agency (2024) further stipulated that "democracy itself guarantees nothing. It offers instead the opportunity to succeed as well as the risk of failure". This implies that democracy is both a promise and a challenge. It is difficult since citizens alone are responsible for the prosperity of democratic business.

1.2 Historicity of Democracy in Nigeria

Historically, Nigeria was not a democratic entity. The colonial government introduced the people to this Western style of government. When a nation's population has complete control over its democratic institutions and the ability to choose representatives for every elected office, true democracy has occurred. However, the Hugh Clifford Constitution of 1922 was Nigeria's first democratic effort under Sir Hugh Clifford's reign (1920–1924). A key feature of democracy is shown in the electoral principle included in the constitution, which was the first of its kind on the African continent. There was space for the election of legislative representatives, giving Nigerians the chance to cast ballots and be cast in the process of bringing democracy to the country (Alonge, 2005).

Because it also ushered in the emergence of political parties, another hallmark of democracy, the Clifford Constitution is hailed as the pivotal moment that ushered in democracy in Nigeria. A provision in this

constitution allowed Herbert Macaulay to establish the first political party, the Nigeria National Democratic Party (NNDP), in 1923. The party went on to win three seats in the legislative council. The John Macpherson Constitution of 1951, which cleared the way for the successful holding of the 1951 Western Election, became increasingly important as the years went by in the historical development of democracy in Nigeria (Alonge, 2005). It is important to remember that Nigerians later experienced issues with the Macpherson Constitution, and their dissatisfaction with the earlier document prompted the 1953 London Constitutional Conference and the subsequent 1954 Federal Constitution. The enactment of this new constitution set the stage for the significant shifts in Nigeria's political history that would eventually occur. The 1954 General Election, which was the first of its kind in Nigeria, was the catalyst for the main shift. While the North used an indirect method to choose its members, the West and East could hold direct elections for seats in the House of Members (Alonge, 2005).

Following the general election of 1954, democracy finally became more deeply ingrained in Nigerian history with the country's independence in 1960. This led to the appointment of Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa as Prime Minister and Dr Nnamdi Azikwe as President; this initial period of government, known as the First Republic, was short-lived as a result of military intervention after six years. Later, during what is known as the Second Republic, democracy would once more come to the nation. Thus, Lt. Col. Dimka conducted a coup on February 13, 1976, during which General Murtala Mohammed was killed. Under his leadership, the military administrator was his Chief of Staff, General Olusegun Obasanjo, who was the second in command. He finished the process of transition that his predecessor had started, and he then elected Shehu Shagari to be the nation's first executive

president, ushering in the Second Republic (Ediagbonya and Aluko, 2020). Anjorin (2022: 307), explains that the military ceded control of the country to a democratically elected administration led by President Shehu Usman Shagari on October 1, 1979, marking the beginning of the Second Republic. Alhaji Shehu Shagari's National Party of Nigeria (NPN) secured a majority in the election, while Chief Obafemi Awolowo's Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), which received the second-highest number of votes, emerged as the opposition party.

Even when democracy was restored, the nation soon saw another instance of military intervention because of various issues that the coup plotters believed made the Shagari administration inadequate. To Yaqub (2002), the Second Republic's demise was partly caused by the Shagari administration's lack of openness. He provided more details when he proposed that the anti-democratic actions of the party leaders were the reason behind the Second Republic's fall on December 31, 1983. Through government contracts and other agreements, these officials unlawfully amassed enormous money, and they also heavily manipulated elections. Despite all the measures taken to avoid or prevent anomalies, the Second Republic's multi-party system saw the fastest rate of political expansion and treasury thievery (Yaqub 2002: 12).

The second republic fell because of the military takeover of General Buhari's military administration, which was also short-lived due to the palace coup planned by General Babangida. Although democratically elected civilian governors and lawmakers were in office during General Babangida's tenure, democracy suffered a severe setback that had a long-lasting impact on the country's political and democratic history, making his administration a significant chapter in Nigerian democracy's history. Therefore, the administration had promised to support a transition program that would return control

of the government to civilians. However, General Babangida called for the cancellation of the June 12, 1993, presidential elections after they had cost a lot of money, which exacerbated national tensions and hurt the already sluggish progress Nigerian democracy was making at the time (Alonge, 2005).

The Fourth Republic, which has been Nigeria's longest democratic term since gaining independence in 1960, is undoubtedly another crucial stage in the nation's historical evolution of democracy. Nigeria returned to party politics in 1998 when the Abubakar military regime established the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), which ultimately led to the inauguration of the Obasanjo civilian administration on May 29, 1999, following a protracted military intervention in the country's political system that began with the military overthrow of democracy in 1983 and numerous military transition programs that failed since 1989. Since then, there have been five general elections: in 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, and 2015 (Erameh and Oladejo (2017). From 1999 to 2023, the fourth republic experienced a stable degree of democracy that was demonstrated by the holding of multiple regular elections. Because the country's previous republics were short-lived and frequently overthrown by the military, political analysts, historians, and academics found it challenging to accurately evaluate the benefits of democracy in Nigeria. But with the establishment of the fourth republic and the amount of success, it consistently attained military non-intervention. This makes it feasible to evaluate Nigeria's democratic experience, and it is in this context that the following portion of the article evaluates Nigeria's democratic dividends.

2. Materials and Methods

The main crux of the study is the reality or shamness of democracy in Nigeria, 1999-

2024. Covering 25 years the study investigates how democracy has impacted the nation. Accordingly, a qualitative method of research was adopted to interrogate the available data. Two instruments of data collection were used. These include consultation with secondary sources and observation. The secondary sources were meant to appraise the views of various authors on the nature and character of Nigerian democracy. The observations were a means of finding out the contributions of democracy in the country.

3. Results and Discussion

Going by the conceptualisation of democracy, it is a form of government geared towards activating development in all facets of life within human societies. Proceeds of democracy in the political lexicon are referred to as dividends of democracy. This section of the study evaluates the benefits of democracy in Nigeria over the last 25 years because any nation that chooses democracy as its form of government is typically evaluated to determine whether democracy has benefited the nation or not.

3.1 Assessing the Dividends of Democracy in the Last Twenty-Five Years in Nigeria

The phenomena of democracy's dividends have been hotly debated among academics and members of opposing parties. Proponents of the idea that democracy has produced so many benefits tend to agree, which is why detractors are always inclined to disagree, and so on. However, as observed by Omotala (2007), dividends of democracy refer to the benefits and constructive actions that democracy bestows upon the state and society. In other words, the dividends of democracy are essentially associated with the advantages of democracy to a certain society. Given the foregoing, several developments in the country validate the fact that democracy has contributed to the well-being of the citizenry of the country. Usman and Avidime (2016: 147), for example, contend that as

compared to what was possible under military rule, the majority of Nigerians, civil society organisations, and the media appear to enjoy better freedom and liberty with the democratic experience. Notwithstanding concerns over their vitality and democratic credentials, the Fourth Republic's political parties' operations mostly highlight the democratic governance's commitment to political freedom.

They added that in addition to the freedoms that Nigerian citizens have experienced under democratic governance, other democratic benefits have materialized in the form of economic and welfare initiatives by the government that are intended to improve the social and economic well-being of the populace. A portion of the achievements are the result of certain policies and initiatives implemented by the government as a result of the democratic atmosphere that exists. The Global System for Mobile Telecommunication (GSM), the creation of a new civil servant pay scale, and the debt relief secured for the country under the Olusegun Obasanjo administration are some examples of these achievements. The enactment of the Freedom of Information Bill, a certain measure of deference to the rule of law, and the focus on economic growth reflected in the late Umar Yardua's seven-point plan are more instances of democratic dividends. Two benefits of democratic governance include the creation of nine federal colleges and the administration of Goodluck Jonathan's dedication to and determination to deregulate the downstream petroleum business. States like Jigawa, Lagos, Kano, Rivers, Edo, and Akwa Ibom are said to have partially attained a specific level of social, human, and infrastructure development at the state government level (Usman and Avidime, 2016).

Suffice it to say, the sustained democracy that has been enjoyed over the years in the country, especially in the fourth republic calls for curiosity for citizens to expect that the

Nigerian democratic experience should be a problem solver for the ever-increasing population in the country. The contrary is true, too, since Nigerian democracy has exacerbated certain diseases that have contributed to the nation's decline. People today struggle to support themselves with the fundamental social amenities that the state should typically offer. Among other things, wealthy Nigerians create their power, arrange for their security, and use privately run clinics and schools.

Armed bandits frequently harass, injure, or kill the less fortunate rural residents, who make up the vast majority, live in glaring darkness, drink tainted water, and come into contact with various water-borne illnesses. The Nigeria Police Force's Inspector-General only recently acknowledged in public that the Force was severely underfunded, making it difficult for it to defend Nigerians' lives and property. While many impoverished school-age children are either not attending school or are taught in state-owned schools under appalling conditions, malaria fever, which has been "conquered" in some countries, still kills hundreds of thousands of children whose parents cannot afford to send them to private hospitals. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) released a damning report about Nigeria's education sector. Nigeria has more than 10.5 million out-of-school children. Only recently, in a State of the World Mothers Report published by the Save the Children International, about 89,700-day-old babies are said to die in Nigeria annually (Ajayi and Ojo, 2014). It is further reported that Nigeria has the 12th highest rate of first-day deaths in the world and the highest in Sub-Saharan Africa (Ajayi and Ojo, 2014). According to Olatubosun and Ayooluwa (2017:8), Nigeria lacks the accountable and responsible leadership that would define effective administration. Nearly every member of the Nigerian political class has an unquenchable appetite for plundering the commonwealth and further depriving the populace. Since

1999, numerous elected politicians who were brought to office through rigged elections have participated in widespread plundering of public resources and abused their constituents without any real responsibility to the people. The gap between the affluent and the poor is therefore quite large.

The idea that the Nigerian democracy is one in which the masses of Nigerians live in poverty and the politicians in the corridors of power live in luxury is supported by additional figures. Research shows that more than 70 percent of Nigerians are impoverished, and the World Bank listed Nigeria as one of the world's poorest nations, home to 7 percent of the 1.2 billion people who live in extreme poverty (*Daily Independent*, 2014). The aforementioned was supported by Toyo's (2002) perspective, which stated that a country cannot have a true democracy if its citizens are unequal in their wealth and material resources, leaving the majority of the poor masses dependent on the wealthy. In such a situation, political power inevitably shifts to the wealthy. In this case, democracy becomes a plutocracy and stops being a democracy in practice. The public's concerns about Nigerian democracy being geared towards the empowerment of a small number of politicians at the expense of the majority are further highlighted by the aforementioned points of view.

The Nigerian democracy has largely succeeded in widening the socioeconomic divide between the affluent and the poor. The elected officials typically exhibit autocratic tendencies while masquerading under the safeguards afforded by the principles and regulations of the democratic establishment. For them, adhering to democratic norms only makes sense in cases where doing so benefits an elected official; in other cases, however, the leaders haughtily disregard democratic requirements about the treatment of the general public. This has culminated in the country's poor realization of the dividends of democracy.

Besides, there is the issue of corruption that has been very prominent during the different phases of democratic dispensation in the country. Corruption is a cankerworm that robs masses of the dividends of democracy should bring to a nation. A general overview of the Nigerian nation reveals that corruption can take many forms, including political, electoral, bureaucratic, judicial, bribery, embezzlement, extortion, fraud, nepotism, and many other unholy activities that impede social order, peace, growth, and development. For example, corruption can be defined as the use of public offices for private gains, particularly through bribery and theft of government financial resources. The way corruption manifests itself in the political sphere gives the impression that it is yet another aspect of Nigerian democracy. By using public funds to profit themselves and their friends, political officeholders frequently misuse their positions. They show blatant disrespect for the rulings of the courts. They put their interests ahead of those of the people they are supposed to represent (Oluwayemisi, 2015).

Corruption impedes the expansion and advancement of any democracy. Tales of massive corruption that is tolerated by the ruling political administrations abound in the African democratic experience, particularly in Nigeria. Corruption is so widespread in Nigeria that the public has little faith in the anti-corruption institutions that are supposed to prevent it, and they frequently express concerns about their transparency. In addition, the public regularly files complaints claiming that members of these alleged anti-corruption authorities have harassed them. In conclusion, if properly directed, the money lost to corruption and the incompetence of the anti-graft institutions could have been the foundation for the distribution of democratic dividends, but this has not been the case in the country.

One of the fundamental principles of democracy is the holding of free and fair elections, which in turn produces the benefits

of democracy for the people living in any given country. It is important to highlight that Nigeria does not adhere to this democratic principle, which makes it extremely difficult for Nigeria to have a functioning democracy. In light of the aforementioned, Omodia (2009: 1-2) noted that a regular, credible, free, and fair election process is one of the fundamental principles of democratic administration. Since Nigeria's fourth republic began, elections have been held regularly and government transitions have been peaceful. Three distinct civilian governments arose between 1999 and 2011, and there have been three consecutive changes from one to the next (Obasanjo regime, 1999-2007; Yar' Adua/Jonathan regime, 2007-2011, Jonathan regime, 2011-to-date). The legislature has duplicated the same. Three legislative houses at the federal and state levels have been successfully passed by the nation since 1999: 1999-2003; 2003-2007; and 2007-2011. However, there have been contentious discussions in the current national discourse over the legitimacy, impartiality, and fairness of the elections that led to this process.

The number of elections that petition tribunals and courts have declared to be inconclusive since democracy was restored in 1999, according to Idada and Uhummwangho (2012), is a sign of the challenges in holding elections in Nigeria. Multiple voting, ballot box hijacking, vote buying, electoral violence, political intimidation, manipulation of the electoral commission and security services, and the inability of the National Electoral body to manage logistics are some of the issues that have dogged Nigerian elections ever since.

From the foregoing, it can be inferred that the absence of the election process, which is a fundamental component of democracy and allows the populace to choose their leaders, has denied them access to the benefits of democracy. Election petitions typically remain in courtrooms for the duration of their term, which has detrimental effects on

the democratic system. Firstly, the incumbent leader is prevented from serving the people by constant court summonses, and secondly, the petitioner often encourages the growth of dishonest elements who pose as opposition members to sow discord in the political system. It is important to remember that one of the main obstacles to Nigeria's democracy's expansion and development has been the absence of openness in the election process.

Additionally, dividends of democracy are not obtainable in the country. What democracy has produced so far as dividends is not appreciable enough to suggest that Nigerian democracy has contributed to overall national development. It is on the premise of the failures of the democracy practiced in Nigeria that this paper alludes that democracy in Nigeria is rather a sham than a reality. Having assessed the dividends of democracy in the country during the military regimes, the next section is tailored towards advancing plausible solutions geared towards the restoration of democracy in Nigeria.

Similarly, Nigeria has witnessed corruption, the abuse of authority and the rule of law, the suppression of human rights, the emasculation of political institutions, poverty, unemployment, insecurity, intolerance towards different religions and communities, a lack of basic amenities, and more since embracing democracy in 1999. Nigerian democracy is thus in danger and at a crossroads, in need of guidance from a democratic traffic warden (Bako, 2006). Part of the issue with our political system stems from the fact that both politicians and citizens view democracy as limited to the establishment of political parties and the struggle for political dominance. They are unable to comprehend and value the fact that democracy entails the cooperative efforts of every member of society in the intricate interactions between concepts, institutions, duties, rights, and behaviours (Bako, 2006).

In addition, Nigeria is a democratic country; there is no freedom from fear. Every animal has a natural fear response, and humans are no different. Our children are afraid of the real dark, so we try to reassure them as much as we can so that their minds won't be plagued by imagined horrors as they grow and develop. This comfort, this feeling of safety and security, is a crucial aspect of our existence. No peace structure, no act of goodwill, can have any solidarity, power, or even significance until it dispels fear and gives men and women confidence—not just for themselves, but also for their children and their children's children (Bako, 2006).

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study x-rayed democracy in Nigeria in the last twenty-five years. It argued that democracy, though not perfect has been accepted the world over as the ideal system of government. Hence every nation aspires to achieve democracy including Nigeria. Nigeria made many attempts to build itself after achieving independence from the British in 1960 but was unsuccessful because of military intrusions into its internal affairs. The study noted that democracy is a Western phenomenon that in theory guarantees the liberty of the common man and the overall socio-economic development of a society. However, it argued that the case of democracy in Africa is different from what is obtainable in the West where true democracy is being practiced rather than hypocrisy. Nigeria's democratic history has been studied. The study argued that there are benefits accrued from the democratic administrations in Nigeria. However, it emphasized that the societal maladies associated with democratic governance in Nigeria such as unemployment, corruption, poverty, food crises or hunger, and lack of freedoms, amongst others, have surpassed the dividends of democracy as has been noticed in the last twenty-five years of uninterrupted democracy in Nigeria. Based on the aforementioned and many other related societal ills that are not observable in

developed countries where democracy is already at an advanced stage, one can not hesitate but to conclude that democracy as practiced in last twenty-five years in Nigeria is a sham rather than a reality. It then recommended some rescue approaches for the restoration of a true democratic Nigeria as stated below.

To restore and revive true democracy in Nigeria, a lot of ills need to be corrected. First, the national assembly needs to make a law which discourages politicians from thinking that occupying a political office is a money-making venture and family inherited business. This law can reduce the overlordship of politicians who overstay in the corridors of power and constantly use the excuse of experience or the tested and trusted slogan to elongate their tenure in office.

Secondly, in order to establish strict adherence to the rule of law—a crucial component of modern democracy—the nation's governmental institutions of accountability must be strengthened. The country's socioeconomic and political progress will be made possible by upholding the rule of law, which may also hold political leaders responsible and foster a democratic culture.

Thirdly, legislation should be made to promote equality and equity in the country. This should be in tandem with the revolution of the Nigerian judicial system which is currently not to the liking of the Nigerian public given the kind of electoral dispute verdicts that have been granted by the judiciary. This is important because the judiciary is an important institution in the sustainability of democracy in any nation, and to promote efficiency in this arm of government, executives should give the judiciary total independence which will bring about fairness in the dispensation of duties and obligations.

Fourth, patriotic participation by the citizens should be prioritized because statecraft

strives on the principle of social contract, and by this contract, the citizen also contributes his/her quota to the growth and development of the state. However, it is worrisome that in Nigeria, citizens rather contribute to hurting the chances for the provision of dividends of democracy by participating in clandestine activities like thuggery, racketeering, tribalism, and vote selling just to mention a few.

Nevertheless, people must learn and value what democracy is, what it means to live in a free society, and what institutional setups and individual behaviours are required for such a society to survive and thrive if the ideals that drove Nigeria's popular struggles for democracy are to be realised and remain secure over time. Members of society must learn to develop the habits, attitudes, and values that make democracy possible, and the commitment and enthusiasm necessary to nurture and sustain it (Bako, 2006).

Finally, wars, sudden armed attacks, police brutality, state terrorism, and so on must be checked and stopped. Freedom from fear personifies freedom of expression, freedom of religion, and freedom from want. True democracy seeks to revive these freedoms by guaranteeing freedom, peace, security, and the chance for individuals to live fulfilling lives.

5. References

- Ajayi, T.A. and E.O. Ojo, (2014), "Democracy in Nigeria: Practice, Problems and Prospects" in *Developing Country Studies*, Vol.4, No.2, Pp. 107-125
- Alonge, K.A. (2005), *Principles and Practice of Governing Men: Nigeria and the World in Perspective*. Ibadan: University Press.
- Anjorin, J.B. (2022), "Nigeria's Second Republic (1979-1983) and Plato's Notion of Philosophical King" in *Sapientia Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and*

- Development Studies (SGOJAHDS), Vol.5* No.1 March, 2022; Pp. 305 – 315;
- Appadorai S. (1975). *The substance of politics*. (11th Edition). Oxford: University Press.
- Bako, R.B. (2006). "Learning 'The Four Freedoms': A Lesson from the American Democratic Heritage", in Maduagwu, M.O. and Mohammed, A.S. (eds.). *The Challenges and Prospects of Democratisation in Nigeria* (Fullbright Alumni, Nigeria, Book of Readings, No.2). Kuru: National Institute Press, Pp.204-205.
- Diamond, L. (2004): What is Democracy [http://www.standard.edu/~diamond/1raq/ what is Democracy 012004.htm](http://www.standard.edu/~diamond/1raq/what%20is%20Democracy%20012004.htm) (Accessed on 10.4.2024)
- Daily Independent* (2014). Democracy Day: What Benefits for Nigerians? (Online), Retrieved From: [http://dailyindependentnig.com/2014/05/democracy-day- benefitsnigerians/](http://dailyindependentnig.com/2014/05/democracy-day-benefitsnigerians/) on October 28, 2014. (Accessed on 10.4.2024).
- Ediagbonya, M. and Aluko, Y. E. (2020). "The Fall of the Second Republic of Nigeria, 1979-1983: A Lesson for the Future". in *International Journal of Scientific Research and Engineering, Development, 3(3)*, Pp. 807-827. India
- Esaghae, E.E. (2022). "Foreward", in Olaniyi, R. and Hassan, I.(eds.), *Democracy in Two Decades, 1999- 2019: Reflections on Nation Building and Development in Nigeria*. Abuja: Swift Bools, p.xi.
- Goshit, Z.D. (2006). "Food Security and the Entrenchment of Durable Democracy in Nigeria", in Maduagwu, M.O. and Mohammed, A.S. (eds.). *The Challenges and Prospects of Democratisation in Nigeria* (Fullbright Alumni, Nigeria, Book of Readings, No.2). Kuru: National Institute Press, Pp.180-181.
- Idada, W, and Uhunmwuango, S.O. (2012), Problems of Democratic Governance in Nigeria: The Way Forward. In *Journal of Sociology and Anthropology, 3 (1)*: 49-54
- International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (2017), "Supporting Democracy World Wide" (Accessed on 10.4.2024)
- Karl, T.L. (2000). "Electoralism", in Rose, R. (ed.) *International Encyclopedia of Elections*. London: Macmillan.
- Oke, L. (2005), "Globalization, Democracy and Women Empowerment: Issues and Challenges in Nigeria" in Olufayo, O.O. (Ed.) *Perspective on Globalization and Africa Development*. Bolabay Publications, Lagos, pp. 72-81.
- Okeke, R.C. (2017). "Political Culture, Democracy and Development in Nigeria". In *Specialty Journal of Politics and Law, 2 (4)*, 1-9
- Olaniyi, R. and Hassan, I. (2022). "Introduction", in Olaniyi, R. and Hassan, I.(eds.), *Democracy in Two Decades, 1999- 2019: Reflections on Nation Building and Development in Nigeria*. Abuja: Swift Bools, p.1.
- Olaniyi, R. and Hassan, I. (2022). "Preface", in Olaniyi, R. and Hassan, I.(eds.), *Democracy in Two Decades, 1999- 2019: Reflections on Nation Building and Development in Nigeria*. Abuja: Swift Bools, p.xv.
- Olatubosun F.O. and A.O. Ayooluwa, (2017), "An Assessment of Democratic Governance in the Nigerian Fourth Republic" in *International Journal of Politics and Good Governance, Vol. VIII, No.8*,
- Oluwayemisi, A.O., (2015), "Democracy and National Development in Nigeria" in *Journal of Philosophy, Culture and*

Religion: An International Peer Reviewed Journal, Vol. 12,

- Omodia, S.M. (2009), "Elections and Democratic Survival in the Fourth Republic of Nigeria". *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 3, (3), PP.34-42
- Omotola, J, (2007), Democratization, Good Governance and Development in Africa: The Nigerian Experience. In *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, Fayetteville State University, Fayetteville, North Carolina, 9, 59-72.
- Oni, E.O., N.I. Erameh and A.O. Oladejo, (2017) "Nigeria's Fourth Republic: Electoral Administration and the challenge of democratic consolidation" in *African Journal of Governance and Development*, Vol. 6 No 2, December 2017, Pp.39-73
- Onyalo, P.O. (2020), "Democracy or Liberal Autocracy; The Case of Africa" in *International Journal of Humanities, Art and Social Studies (IJHAS)*, Vol. 5, No.1, February 2020
- Sklar, R.L. (1997). "Developmental Democracy", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. Vol. 29 (4).
- Toyo, E, (1994), Crisis and Democracy in Nigeria: Comments on the Transition from Babangida Regime, Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University Press
- Usman, S.O. and S.S. Avidime, (2016), "Assessing Democratic Governance in the Nigerian Fourth Republic, 1999 -2014" in *European Scientific Journal*, Vol.12, No.29, 2016, Pp. 142-155
- Yaqub, N. (2002) "Political Parties in the Transition Process in B. Onuoba and F. Kunle (eds.) *Transition Politics in Nigeria, 1970-1999*. Lagos: Malt House Press. Ltd.