



# AMERICAN JOURNAL OF ARTS AND HUMAN SCIENCE (AJAHS)

ISSN: 2832-451X (ONLINE)

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 2 (2022)

INDEXED IN



PUBLISHED BY: E-PALLI, DELAWARE, USA

## New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the Challenges of Good Governance in Africa: An Appraisal of the Nigeria's Democratic Journey in the Fourth Republic (1999-Date).

Tukur, Mustafa Adedeji<sup>1\*</sup>

### Article Information

**Received:** July 25, 2022

**Accepted:** August 09, 2022

**Published:** August 11, 2022

### Keywords

*Democracy, Good Governance and Development.*

### ABSTRACT

Though, Nigeria's attempt to democratize its political space in the wake of the virtual continent-wide embrace of democracy following the demise of the cold-war was greeted with some attendant political stalemates. The impasse of the June 12th 1993 and the elongated transition to civil-rule programs of the Nigerian military government marked some turning points in the Nigeria's journey towards democratic governance. The eventual departure of the Nigerian military from the political stage in 1999 and the birthing of democratic government only came into after the abrupt end of the cold war and the bipolar world system which, marked the triumphant emergence of the western liberal democracy, the final withdrawal of the Nigerian military from politics in 1999 and the formation of a democratic administration took over a decade to materialize. However, Nigeria, a leading proponent member-nation of the African home-grown initiative of NEPAD is today, challenged by a myriad of contending problems, arising paradoxically from some of the agenda with which NEPAD as a multilateral platform for the African nations has been put in place to address. This paper is essentially literature-based and therefore, attempts to historicize the Nigeria's journey and its travails of democratization, as well as, the contradictions, which have also put to interrogation, the country's democratic credentials amidst its crises of governance. The paper noted that, for Nigeria as a leading country on the continent, there is need for the self cleansing of its domestic polity and the civic space in keeping faith to the sacred creed of sowing the seed of democracy and consolidating such on the African continent.

### INTRODUCTION

The Nigeria's preeminent position on the African continent is no doubt, an incontrovertible fact. Its role conception as a leading country on the continent can be rightly traced to the formation of the then Organization of African Unity (OAU), in 1963. Nigeria's commitment to the organization was far beyond its foundation membership, but its visible engagements and active participation in the actualization of the mandates upon which the OAU was founded. The OAU as the apex continental organization for the independent African countries had been founded on some thresholds which were germane to the survival of Africa as a post-colonial entity. Aside the decolonization agenda, the OAU had to contend with other unfolding post-colonial challenges of socio-political and economic dimensions. More generally, the phenomenon of one-party states, tight-tight leadership and personal rule syndromes became highly symptomatic of the African political system. These undemocratic practices and authoritarian tendencies persisted on the continent, notwithstanding the vague preponderance of multi-party elections, democratic institutions, and even the existence of the OAU (Tukur, 2011: 2).

The disbandment of the OAU in May, 2002 became compelling in the face of the emerging realities of the international system particularly, with the total emancipation of the remaining previously colonized countries in Africa. The African leaders were obviously faced with the need to reconsider the fate of the erstwhile

OAU, and the alternative option of the search for a new focus came as the only tenable possible panacea. Prior to its disbandment, the OAU as a continental organization was unarguably, painted in its image of an ineffectual multilateral platform with a pathetically chequered dossier of poor governance profile. With the dominant agenda of participatory democracy and the promotion of good governance once initiated again at the instance of the Western International Financial Institutions (IFIs), there was an informed concern as regard the need for collaborative strategies for addressing the Africa's many hydra-headed challenges of socio-economic and political crises. The era of the widely-adopted and externally imposed Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), was also identified to have witnessed somewhat of negative impacts in the lives of many African countries.

For instance, contrary to the intended objectives, the inability of the externally propelled SAP to spawn good governance and promote the desired economic prosperities of the African countries in their wide embrace of the externally imposed SAP, it became a serious watershed with the consequences of epic proportions, spiraling into deeper crises of governance across the African continent. Rather than promoting good governance, SAP degenerated into domestic mis-governance and blatant abuses of human rights within the adopting countries and pointing to its incapability as a policy measure suited to ease the continent's socio-political and economic crises. As evidently documented,

<sup>1</sup> Department of Political Science, Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos, Nigeria.

\* Corresponding author's e-mail: [mustafaadedejitukur@gmail.com](mailto:mustafaadedejitukur@gmail.com)

SAP exacerbated the growing tendencies for authoritarian regimes as witnessed in Ghana under Jerry Rawlings (Amnesty International, 1999), in Uganda under Yoweri Museveni (Ayittey, 1992: 148), and Nigeria under General Ibrahim Babangida (Tukur, 2011: 2).

However, in the further efforts to seek some alternative options to Africa's many challenges of governance, and the search of new focus to the erstwhile continental organization of the OAU, a decision to transmute the OAU into the African Union (AU) was mooted possibly also, and as argued earlier, in conformity with the unfolding realities of the international system as regard similar occurrence within European continent with the transmutation of the erstwhile European Economic Commission (EEC) into the European Union (EU). The birth of the African Union (AU) no doubt, was received with some optimism.

The contention of the coming of the AU brought the hopeful desire of a changing narrative for the African continent most significantly, with the accompanying institutional mechanism of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD). The idea of NEPAD is premised among other objectives, on the need to enhance the governance credentials of the member-nations as a major yardstick for development and economic prosperity which became the sustained inferences for the adoption of the home-grown and African based initiative of NEPAD. Importantly, it is noteworthy to remark that the dual initiative of the AU and NEPAD equally incorporated a self regulatory measure of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), deliberately infused to ensure a periodic surveillance and review of member-nations domestic policies, to ascertain their conformity with the best practices on good governance.

On the contrary, observers and scholars alike have also noted with dismay, the many unfolding crises of governance and the inherent contradictions which have continued to play out on the African continent despite the dual initiative of NEPAD and APRM as conceived by the African leaders within the newly formed African Union continental-wide agenda. Similarly, the recent unfolding events on the continent have not provided the effectiveness of both the NEPAD and APRM in anyway as useful mechanisms for promoting good governance on the continent.

The rising resurgence of military interventions, most especially in countries like Chad, Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea, and the failed attempts in Niger and Sudan has, on one hand legitimized the argument of the obvious failure of the African leaders to deliver good governance while on the other hand, some of the recent military interventions have also proved to the fact of the failure of NEPAD and APRM as ineffectual institutions in their inability to benchmark and evolve a workable template for good governance and enforce such, when there is non-compliance. While it could be asserted further that the rising resurgence in military interventions in their occurrences could be seen as signposts of discontentment

by the citizens of the affected countries, such military disruptions in governance could as well be received more as part of the many contradictions which have continued to posit the African continent in that paradoxical order.

The inherent contradictions of governance, despite the existence of NEPAD and the APRM, are not limited to the rising military interventions. There have been pockets of incidences of sit-tight leadership syndrome, non-transparent and flawed electoral conducts and processes in the favour of the status-quo political leadership, victimization of political opponents and gross violation and abuses of human rights, all in the repudiation of the tenets and objectives of NEPAD. There are similarly, cases of unwarranted politically-precipitated internal civil-strives by the African political leaders and many other recorded cases of post-elections violence in some African states, have further put to questioning, the continued relevance of NEPAD and APRM.

In a more historical reference to this position, Akporari (2004: 244) corroborated the contention of the contradictions of political governance in Africa in that, the claims and platitudes of the proponents of NEPAD and APRM are much reflective in their inability to generate and entrench the requisite frameworks for the promotion of good governance on the continent. In a more pragmatic assessment, democratic practices and functioning in Africa have been characterized largely by deficits than the expected dividends. Similarly, Oche (2004) concludes that the practice of democracy in Africa has become largely exhibitory of those tendencies inimical to the process of governance and the desired economic benefits much in the need by the African nations.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Conceptualizing Nepad and Aprm in the Pursuance of the Agenda for Good Governance in Africa

Beyond the need for economic development and the prosperity of the African continent as regard the philosophical underpinnings of NEPAD, the focus on democratization and good governance also remain on the front burner of its agenda as could be found in the Democracy and Governance Initiative of the compact of NEPAD. Presumably, the initiative is predicated on the assumptions that democracy, respect for human rights, peace and good governance are essential conditions for the appropriate germination of development on the African continent. However, with the hindsight of some of the particular obstacles to democratization in Africa, NEPAD as a multilateral institution entrusts the responsibility of consolidating democracy and cultivating good governance on the participating member-nations. In furtherance of the determination of the NEPAD compact as an abiding document, the Article 81 expresses some of the fundamental elements of the Democracy and Political Governance Initiative, as pointedly highlighted by Oche (2004) including the following:

1. A series of commitments by participating countries to create or consolidate basic governance processes and

practices;

2. An undertaking by participating countries to take the lead in supporting initiatives that foster good governance;

3. The institutionalization of commitments through the New Partnership for Africa's Development to ensure that the core values of the initiative are abided by.

It should also be added that, in the obvious case of the inability of NEPAD document to address the necessity to inculcate democracy and good governance agenda, its focus has been much centred essentially on institutionalist approach, with Article 83 emphasizing the following:

1. Administrative and civil services;
2. Strengthening parliamentary oversight;
3. Promoting participatory decision-making;
4. Adopting effective measures to combat corruption and embezzlement;
5. Undertaking judicial reform.

Apparently, the above thematic areas of focus are not only ancillary criteria to the overall agenda of NEPAD, but they are also germane to enhancing the democratic profiles of member-nations and the promotion of good governance agenda as embedded within the NEPAD initiative. For instance, as part of the required institutional reforms of the member-nations domestic polity, the public services must be enhanced to deliver on their mandates to the citizens and equally serve to compliment the executive roles in the implementation of the functional state duties for effective and smooth running of the affairs of the state.

The African public services, in their existence and material conditions, could be better regarded as inept and highly inefficient to deliver on their expected mandates of service delivery to the overall detriment of development in Africa. Similarly, the parliaments whose mandates are not only limited to the law making duties, but the effective checks and balances on the other arms of the state, must live to their other critical roles as regard oversight functions on the state institutions for effective control measures particularly, in the areas of compliance to budgetary system in the overall delivery of good governance. In terms of promoting participatory decision-making, this is also centred on the need for enhancing open government initiative whereby, policy and decision-making processes become transparent while critical stakeholders are equally allowed to make their inputs into such policy and decision-making processes for the general wellbeing of the society.

This again, will encourage the active engagement of the non-state actors such as the civil society groups and other well-meaning organizations in the participating member-states to be pro-active in their roles towards strengthening the state institutions and in promoting democratic norms and values, and good governance within the context of NEPAD agenda. As a corollary to these thematic areas of focus, there is also the need for the adoption of strict measures to combat corruption and all its vices if democratic values, as well as, the agenda for the promotion of good governance are to be achieved. Though, aside the

existence of traditional policing system operating within the domains of the member-nations, prominent countries like Nigeria has in place some anti corruption agencies such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Independent Corrupt Practices and Related Offences Commission (ICPC), the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) and the Code of Conduct Tribunal (CCT), to address the growing tendencies of official graft and corrupt related matters as part of the institution-building for promoting democracy and good governance.

In a related manner, the judiciary as a major arm in the tripod arrangement of any government plays vital roles in the strengthening of democracy and good governance. Its place in any society is even more critical in promoting rule of law and the liberty of the citizens at large, and this therefore also implies that, as an institution of the state, its condition must be put to some evaluations with a view to examining its performances in the context of those roles it is expected to perform in upholding the tenets of democracy and good governance. The reform of the judicial system of the participating member-state is not only limited to the court system as a whole, but this also includes the entire administrative machinery that makes up the judicial system and guarantees its true independence.

Imperatively, as an essential component of NEPAD democracy and political governance initiative, the Africa Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) serves to be a unique instrument more likely at the disposal of the of the Heads of State and can be appropriately deployed in benchmarking and standardizing democracy and governance in Africa. The Article 84 is much explicit about the necessity of the need for the entrenchment of democratic ethos and values, as well as, the promotion of good governance as key elements to achieving economic development and prosperity for the African continent. The APRM as a self regulatory measure ensures a periodic monitoring and assessment of domestic policies and programmes of the participating member-nations in their strict compliance to the laid down guidelines of the NEPAD Article. The Peer Review as a mechanism of self regulation and assessment can be described as the systematic examination and assessment of the performance of one states by other states (Alex de Wall, 2002).

However, in the opinion of Oche (2004), the entire process of peer review could appear more frivolous and bogus, if there is no existence of effective machinery for some enforcement and compliance. In that further contention, the idea of peer pressure is a sine-qua-non for APRM to become an effective instrument within the closet of NEPAD agenda. By peer pressure, this presupposes the idea that formal recommendations, informal dialogue by fellow leaders, comparisons, public scrutiny, and ranking among countries (Oche, 2004). Perhaps, Paragraph 24 of the APRM document is explicit on the implementation of peer review with the offer of assistance to the reviewed country in the course of failure

to display political will in effecting the recommendations of the outcomes of the APRM review teams as deemed appropriate. Such assistance is usually dispensed through suasions and other subtle dialogue means. Though, a major lacuna could be observed in the APRM document and this is identified in its voluntary participation, and the fact of it not also binding on participating member-nations.

Again, another lacuna to the implementation of the APRM document might also relate to the precedence which usually surrounds international conventions in their non-binding and voluntary nature. This is also inimical to promoting international compliance in such cases as with APRM document among other of such multilateral documents. The success or otherwise of the NEPAD agenda, has been largely remarked, depends on the amount of political will it also enjoys from the African leaders, and the level of commitment so desired by them towards realizing the developmental agenda for the African continent.

### **Theoretical Discourses on Nepad and the Agenda of Good Governance in Africa**

Observers and scholars on African developmental issues might be puzzled on whether there are enough or adequate literature on the theoretical perspectives which underpin the topical issues around the NEPAD initiative. This argument could be more appropriate in view of its novelty as a home-grown conceptualization towards addressing the African developmental challenges solely from the African perspective. This contention could however, be repudiated on the ground that literature is replete and much has been discussed on the Africa's developmental issues as much as its political trajectories as a post-colonial entity. The novel initiative of NEPAD has only provided a relatively new basis for either supporting or refuting some of the existing postulations as regard the challenges of Africa's development.

For Ake (1996:1), while examining the African development paradigm and its politics, contends that the three decades of preoccupation with development in Africa have yielded little returns while African economy has been stagnating or regressing. He argued further that the apparent failure of developmental strategies on the continent could be attributed largely to colonial factors and other post-independence challenges which bedeviled the African countries. Ake however, dismissed the notion of a failure of development as misleading on the ground that, development has not only been given the premium attention by the African policy makers. This argument was justified by the fact that political conditions in Africa are the greatest impediments to Africa's development, predicating such again, on political legacy of colonialism and the post-colonial conditions as the major constraints to the pursuit of development and the emergence of relevant and effective developmental paradigms and programmes in Africa.

Ake (2000) while interrogating the feasibility of

democracy in Africa argued that, this could be largely dependent on the declaration of African leaders and the relationship with the existential conditions of Africans and the state, looking at the utility of democracy to the African continent. The feasibility of democracy should be essentially anchored on its ability to meet the social needs of the people and the willingness of the state managers to redistribute power in favour of the people, make ultimate power reside with the people, and make the people the *raison d'être* of development. In furtherance of the treatise on the feasibility of democracy in Africa, Ake (2000) highlighted four major characteristics which are essential thresholds for an enduring democratization project in Africa. These are as follows:

- A democracy in which people will have the decision making over and above the formal consent of electoral choice.

- A social democracy that places emphasis on concrete political, social and economic rights, as opposed to a liberal democracy that emphasizes abstract political rights.

- A democracy that puts as much emphasis on collective rights as its does on individual rights.

- A democracy of incorporation. To be as inclusive as possible, embracing along with the legislative bodies, other diverse interest groups that are equally germane to democracy and societal development.

Taking a more deeper examination of the above highlighted essential characteristics of the Ake's treatise, it could be noted that, part of the deficits which have impeded Africa's development are not also far-fetched from the very agenda of NEPAD, but the puzzle however, lies in the amount of political-will deploy by the African leaders to actualize such laudable objectives. The recourse to liberal democracy, to many observers has not really brought the desired economic development to Africa, and it is on that primary insight that the idea of NEPAD as developmental paradigm had appealed to the embrace of the African leaders.

### **Nepad and the Nigeria's Democratic Journey in the Fourth Republic Dispensation: An Appraisal**

The question of good governance and democratization project in Africa will, for along time remain a major agenda and issue of concern for intellectual discourse, as this has continued to generate some fundamental debates in many enlightened fora. Observers have however noted that, democratic agenda which took hold of the African continent in the late 1980s and early 1990s has produced enough of evidences to corroborate the enduring democratic project long enough to allow for some observations on the institutionalization of democratic governance in Africa and some of its perceived challenges (Oche, 2004a).

The leading role of Nigeria in the formation of NEPAD and its role conception as a preeminent country on the Africa continent are no doubt, a major factor which has also placed some heavy burdens on its democratic credentials. Though, the establishment of NEPAD came

almost about a decade after the return to democratic governance in Nigeria following the second interregnum of the military in politics which began precisely in December, 1983 and terminated in a somewhat of a “pacted transition” arrangement on May 29th, 1999. It is however instructive to note that, the transition to civil rule which saw the handing over of power from the military government of General Abdusalam Abubakar to the civilian administration of retired General Olusegun Obasanjo in 29th of May, 1999 pointed to the validity of the argument about the pacted nature of the transition arrangement. President Olusegun Obasanjo, a retired Army General had been credited with the efforts as being the first military ruler to have transited power to democratically elected civilian government following the thirteen-years of the first military interregnum which began in 1966 and ended on 1st of October, 1979.

The General Abdusalam hurriedly conducted transition programme was assumed to have been compelled by the prolonged transition to civil rule programme in the aftermaths of the political impasse of the June 12th general elections crisis. The 1993 June 12th presidential election was believed to have been won by the business mogul, Chief MKO Abiola, also a former school mate and kinsman of General Olusegun Obasanjo. To many observers, the emergence of General Obasanjo in 1999 was said to be a “pacted” form of transition whereby, the military government had conceded to handing over power in efforts to assuage and appeal to the people of the South Western Nigeria in the prolonged political impasse which had almost engulfed the entire country in the aftermaths of the June 12th political crisis.

The eventual departure of the military from the political stage in 1999 brought in a vista of hope for the Nigerian state with a renewed political ecosystem of electoral democracy. The inauguration of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo led civilian administration on 29th of May, 1999 along other thirty six democratically elected governors across the Nigerian states marked that renewal of hope. Importantly, the 1999 Constitution which serves as the binding legal covenant of the Nigerian Fourth Republic equally adopted the Presidential democratic arrangement similar in character to the 1979 Constitution and therefore, affording the country another attempt at experimenting with the American model democracy which is also suited for the peculiarly diverse multiethnic society like Nigeria. In a manner of what Huntington (1991), had succinctly described as the “third wave of democratization”, the period did not only brought Nigeria out of its erstwhile prostrate pariah status within the comity of nations, but also saw Nigeria regaining its preeminent position as a leading country in Africa.

No doubt that the Nigeria’s emergence within the orbit of the third wave of democratization had been occasioned by some compelling domestic and exogenous conditions. The prolonged transition programmes of the military and the resultant protracted political impasse of the 1993 June 12th elections on one hand, and the

perceived ostracization of Nigeria by the international community on the other hand, had also motivated the Nigeria’s determined journey of electoral democracy. As again noted by Babawale (2007), one of the major issues confronting the present democratic governance in Nigeria has to do with the task of promoting the substance and content of democracy and not just its infrastructure or form. This argument is a pointer to the fact that, Nigeria, just like many other countries that have embraced the wave of democratization in Africa, is still much riddled with some existential challenges which have in some ways negated the very essence of the democratization project. While we should equally bear in mind, the Africa’s democratization project within the NEPAD agenda, this however became a suspect given the cosmetic nature of Africa’s democratic enterprise (ibid: 49).

Going by the Nigeria’s trajectories of democratization, the obvious illusion of democracy continues to be the dominate assumptions similar to what Ihonvbere (1998) described in his submission that, the tragedy of Africa’s experience of the third wave of democratization lies in the fact of its “non-transition to democracy”. Over the last two decades of democratization project in Nigeria, much could not be presented in the positive description of its dossiers as impactful and transformative. Rather, politics has taken the dimension of warfare with the tendencies for accumulation of state power by the political elite. Right from the inception of the Nigeria’s Fourth Republic in 1999, the struggles for state power has been at the focus of the political contestations among political elite, as winner-takes-all syndrome also became the determining paradigm in place of power sharing concessional arrangement which could guarantee some levels of equilibrium within the political system.

Electoral democracy in the Nigeria’s Fourth Republic dispensation is fraught and lacking with that philosophical consequentialist notion of democracy of what Alao (2004) described as “epistemic democracy”. The epistemic notion of democracy is explained to conceive of the link between the voting process and the common good is provided by the majority rule criterion which under certain common assumptions produces the “correct” answer. The “correct” answer here is defined as the candidate/programme associated with the common good (ibid. p.vii). The highpoint of argument here also lies in the fact that politics, since the return to electoral democracy in 1999 has assumed various dimensions. The growing phenomenon of elite capture of the political ecosystem has taken a worrisome path with the increasing level of despair even among the voting public that elections do not count in Nigeria.

This negative perception has been much acerbated by the compromised electoral system. For instance, Presidents Olusegun Obasanjo had admitted to the electoral malpractices during the April, 2007 general elections though, with some equal reservations that those imperfections were not sufficient to invalidate the elections results (Daily Sun, April 20, 2007). Similarly,

the late President Umar Musa Yar'Adua openly acceded to the fact that the election that brought him into office was highly flawed with irregularities which also necessitated the inauguration of a 22-member Electoral Reform Committee in August, 2007 (This Day, March 28, 2009), headed by Professor Attahiru Jega, former Vice Chancellor, Bayero University, Kano and one time Chairman of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) who later also became the Chairman of INEC (Independent National Electoral Commission) under President Goodluck Jonathan.

Examining the Nigeria's democratization process particularly, within the prisms of the NEPAD agenda on Democracy and Political Governance initiative, it is apposite to assert that one of the major obstacles to Africa's democracies generally could be located in the poor governance credentials of member-nations as obviously archived from a leading country like Nigeria. The unimpressive political dossiers of Nigeria as a preeminent country on the continent, serves as a great disincentive to actualizing the overall agenda of NEPAD good governance and of significant negative influence to other member-nations.

The Nigeria's governance profile since the return to electoral democracy in 1999 has not only been uninspiring given the unfolding domestic crises of governance and their debilitating impacts on its socio-economic and political wellbeing. The varying degrees of social challenges as insurgencies, terrorism, rural and urban banditry, vandalism among other forms of social misdemeanors could be largely taken in their causes and intentions as basically of social reactions to the deep seated maladministration and poor delivery of governance by the managers of the Nigerian state. The events within the last two decades of the electoral democracy have painted much of inadequacies in governance in somewhat of less visibility in terms of delivery of the dividends of democracy.

Relying on Larry Diamond (2017) assessment of the prospect of democracy in Africa, Nigeria's ability to develop, politically and economically, will also have to be determined by its ability to do so democratically. The Nigeria's democratic narratives, given the return of democracy, has not totally done with some of the vestiges of authoritarianism with the many contradictions and the failures to entrench accountable, rule-based institutions that can curtail corruption and limit the arbitrariness and the abuse of power of government. As part of such emerging negative narratives of the Nigeria's democratic environment, the rising cases of ethnicity, corruption, nepotism and other vices which have aided the breeding of what Larry Diamond (ibid) commonly refers to as an "uncivic society", riven by a culture of self-interest.

Notwithstanding the Nigeria's attainment of the Two Turn-over Test with the change of power between political parties within the period of over two decades of electoral democracy, the prevalence of undemocratic practices particularly, within the major political parties

serve as the key driver of prebendal and patrimonial politics. Absence of internal democracies in the conduct of the affairs of political parties has also continued to be a dominant discourse which has impacted negatively in the overall governance of the country. When primaries to choose party flag bearers are conducted within political parties, they are mostly organized in such an environment quite contrary to democratic norms and ethos. Wide spread cases of heavy monetization of the primaries processes whereby, party delegates are induced to vote and sometimes too, candidates foisted on the political parties by party chieftains and the political godfathers. The increasing phenomenon of the absence of internal democracy within political parties in Nigeria have equally raised the concerns for the gross inability to generate the right democratic values capable of delivering the much desired development for the Nigerian society.

The challenges of electoral democracy in Nigeria have also gone beyond the political party fault lines in terms of the absence of internal democratic values. There are other inherently identified institutional and ecological challenges which are becoming the defining attributes of the Nigeria's political ecosystem in spite of the general concerns over the need for the country's electoral reforms. The unwholesome democratic practices of the commodification of the electoral system such as the compromised electoral management officials, the growing incidences of vote-buying and vote-selling during elections, political intimidation and stifling of the opponents, compromised and subservient security agencies, as well as, the sometimes docile civil society groups have all contributed negatively to the downward trend of the Nigeria's democratic profile during the Fourth Republic dispensation.

It is again apposite to remark that elections in Nigeria have continued to be constrained by the crisis induced environment where both in the pre and the post election periods, the electoral process becomes usually susceptible to violence and disruptions, and mostly orchestrated by the political elite in their bids to establish superiority. The aftermaths of electoral violence have been recorded in most of the elections held in the recent times with many collateral effects on the largely innocent communities across the Nigerian society. Sometimes too, some dimensions of ethnic and religious coloration are reflected and added to electoral violence in Nigeria and making such to escalate even beyond their initial points of ignition, spiraling to other places with devastating consequences. Perhaps, the problems of insurgencies and terrorisms in some parts of Nigeria have also been linked to the aftermaths of poorly managed electoral crises.

## CONCLUSIONS

Appraising the Nigeria's democratic journey can never be achieved in the vacuum of the cognizance of its preeminent role in the affairs of the African continent. The leading role played by Nigeria in bringing to fruition the transmutation of the Organization of African Unity

(OAU) into the African Union (AU), in conformity with the existential realities of the phenomenal agenda of globalization, and the compelling wind of liberal democracy are remarkably noteworthy. The birthing of NEPAD as a continent-wide agenda for promoting democratization and good governance in the aftermath of the tidal wave of political liberalization tilting towards the Africa have also had the warm embrace of Nigeria as a leading promoting member-nation. Aside the institutional supports and commitment of the Nigerian authorities towards realizing the goals and objectives of NEPAD, the question of Nigeria's commitment to the ideals and principles of NEPAD have however, generated concerns considering the many inherent contradictions of governance and the negative trajectories of its politics which are also inimical to the socio-economic and political wellbeing of Nigeria as a leading country on the African continent.

The attempt by the Nigerian government to domesticate and institutionalize NEPAD as part of its governance framework is a commendable endeavour. Efforts towards keeping to some of the ideals and objectives of NEPAD particularly, with the establishment of anti-corruption regulatory agencies as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Allied Offences Commission (ICPC) have equally prompted some mixed reactions, most especially in their effectiveness and sincerity in the pursuance of their expected mandates as anti-graft agencies of the Nigerian state. The growing spate of institutional corruption which continues to characterize the Nigerian public service and the political space has also painted the anti-graft agencies as ineffective institutions for tackling corruption. The arguments of perceived selective prosecutions of political opponents which have been allegedly pointed to the anti-graft agencies as state mechanisms specifically put in place to witch-hunt political opponents have also rendered their existence somewhat questionable.

Further to the above submissions, the lack of political will by the Nigerian state in the sincere implementation of the ambitious agenda of NEPAD in spite of the attempts to put in place several institutional mechanisms in line with such agenda. This could also be explained within the Nigeria's political ecosystem where much has not been positively recorded within the larger agenda of NEPAD-APRM initiative. For instance, the recommendations of the National Political Reform Commission and the Electoral Reform Panel of 2007 were yet to be fully implemented despite the obvious need for the total overhaul of the Nigeria's political and civic spaces. The reform of the electoral management system, and the necessity of the continuous value reorientation for the Nigerian masses for positive change and development, and the reinvigoration of agencies like the National Orientation Agency (NOA) will not only assist in the attainment of a renewed and ethically sound Nigerian society, but also, the actualization of the ideals and agenda

of NEPAD-APRM initiative.

Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999 has no doubt, been marked by many crises of governance. The need for a sincere consolidation of the Nigeria's democracy has severally also been proffered as one of the plausible thresholds to achieve the laudable task of consolidating Nigeria's democratic journey. Such laudable prescriptions by scholars and observers alike however, include the institutionalization of the rule of law, the strict adherence to constitutionalism and the unhindered civil liberties (Fatai, 2017:367). Commitment to democratic consolidation as a corollary to NEPAD agenda should be well noted beyond the above prescriptions. For instance, achieving a sincere democratic consolidation should be taken to include the efforts at reforming the electoral system through the wholesale implementation of the recommendations of the committees and commissions set up in the past by successive administrations.

Strengthening the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), and granting it the genuine autonomy for the actualization of part of the electoral reforms agenda. The transition of the country's electoral system into a digitalized and electronic-based system is also very necessary to mitigate the current challenges associated with its operations particularly, in terms of the tendencies to reduce electoral malpractices.

If the laudable agenda of NEPAD must therefore be realized, Nigeria as a leading member-nation of the African Union (AU) must also wake up and embark on the necessary self cleansing of its domestic polity and the civic space, in keeping faith to the sacred creed of sowing the seed of democracy and consolidating such on the African continent.

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