

# **THE CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA'N SOCIETY: AN EVALUATION OF DEMOCRACY AND RULE OF LAW SYNDROME FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.**

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## **Abstract**

*Democracy and the rule of law are two of the basic concepts that may not be ruled out in a democratic institution. It is a concept that goes hand in hand with other concepts such as good governance and democracy. The purpose of this paper is to seek and explore the concept and practice of democracy and the rule of law in concrete existential Nigerian society is the principle of rule of law and is intrinsically not foolproof. Taking Nigeria as a case study, the paper argues that the rule of law is at best at its vegetative states. The paper adopts an analytic method of research to employ and probe the meaning of the rule of law and its viability in Nigeria's situations and analyses issues embedded in democracy and the rule of law syndrome in Nigeria's predicaments. Democracy is seen as essential and complementary to the rule of law, providing checks on its implementation, and a violation of democracy and the rule of law refers to the act of breaking established rules or regulations set by the legal system, leading to potential harm to society as a whole. The finding of this paper is that Nigeria's democracy and rule of law system faces numerous challenges, including pervasive corruption, electoral irregularities, weak political parties and limited citizen participation. These problems hinder the country's progress towards good governance and sustainable development. By the time the colonialists left, the local political elites had imbibed the culture of this type of governance that puts a premium on gaining political power without considerations for accountability, rule of law and constitutionalism. This paper recommended that to strengthen the rule of law and democracy, the prospects focus on ensuring access to justice, promoting accountability and fostering open government. This includes addressing corruption, ensuring fair and*

*efficient legal processes and empowering individuals to understand the utilisation of their rights. The paper concluded with the assertion that democracy and rule of law are two of the strong elements required for the maintenance of a stable country like Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** *Contemporary Society, Democracy, Nigeria, Rule of Law, Sustainable Development*

## **Introduction**

Nigeria's journey toward a modern democracy and rule of law is marked by periods of both democratic rule and military dictatorship. After gaining independence in 1960, Nigeria experienced a brief period of democratic rule before a series of military regimes took control for over three decades. The last major military ruler, General Sani Abacha, died in 1998, paving the way for a transition to democracy, which was formally established with the adoption of a new constitution in 1999 and the election of Olusegun Obasanjo as president. Over the last decade, the democracy wave of the 1990s in sub-Saharan Africa and the accompanying constitutional reforms, Adeniyi (2003) assert, and the cautious optimism about the possibility of entrenching the rule of law have come under significant stress. In Nigeria, the concept of democracy, though much discussed, remains a work in progress. While the country has witnessed periods of civilian rule, its long history of military intervention and the persistent challenges of corruption and ethnicities have hampered the consolidation of a truly democratic system. A thriving democracy is characterised by a cycle of electoral processes, free and fair elections, respect for the institutional legitimacy and independence of the judiciary Austin, R., and 1975, assert that it is the legislature and executive and is constrained by the primacy of the fundamental rights of the citizens. Andah (2011) assert that governance is today confronted with the fragility of their climes and democratic experiences. In Latin America, recent democratic elections illustrate the decline and erosion of democratic norms and institutions. In Nigeria, a confluence of events – colonial legacies, uprisings, regional conflicts, term elongations, challenges to the dynastic style of leadership and the rising incidence of coups – challenge the entrenchment of rule of law in contemporary Nigerian society. In this regard Annan (2006) maintained...democracy is a universal right that does not belong to any country or region, and that participatory governance, based on the will of the people, is the best path to freedom, growth and development. The stress that threatens democratic regimes in contemporary Nigerian society is not unique to the region. Globally, there is a decline in the rule of law, which is under challenge in the global North and global South. Imperial Western countries, like the United States and countries in Europe, hitherto regarded as the prime examples of stable democratic After six decades of independence in much of Nigeria, the governance outlook is to a lesser degree democratic. The contemporary interpretation of the doctrine of the rule of law and democracy refers to a cluster of ideas, the best known being related to the principle of legality. David & Boyle (1995) assert the prescription of procedural standards in the administration of justice, the separation of powers, the promotion of material justice and individual rights and the maintenance of public order. The definition of the rule of law thoughtfully presents the concepts as a

collection of principles that can be used to inform the structure, operation, reform, and evaluation of law-related institutions across societies. A perusal of the major concerns of the rule of law reveals its affinity with other aspects of governance. In the governance of any polity as a defined structure, Heater (1964) said that the political ideal proves that the role of the constitution, as the legal framework within which policies and laws are fashioned, as colossal as the concepts of the rule of law, or one should rather say some of the principles underpinning the rule of law, finds its origins in Ancient Greece; the rule of law is one of the basic concepts that may not be ruled out in a democratic institution. It is the opinion of this paper that the principle of the rule of law is intrinsically not foolproof. It is agreeable that colonial rule of law imposed a type of governance in the country that was anti-people in nature. The euphoria about the spread of democracy, according to Sagay (1996), following the dramatic political events of the mid-eighties and early nineties – the overthrow of authoritarian military regimes in countries of Latin America, the dismantling of the apartheid regime in South Africa and the fall of the communist system and the Berlin Wall – is over. Kofi Annan (2006), point out that democracy has proven more difficult to achieve than many assumed. The initial steps toward democracy with the organisation of competitive elections, as undertaken in many countries, proved not to be enough to deliver on the high expectations among people for an improvement in their lives. But then, what exactly is democracy? What has been Nigeria's experience of democracy and the rule of law? These are some of the questions we shall examine in this paper.

**Leadership Challenges:** Nigeria's fundamental approach to leadership is troubling. In Nigeria, the primary goal of assuming leadership position is self-enrichment. Larry Diamond 1988 assert that Nigerian leaders have the power, to educate, inspire, and provide the people with the resources to advocate for the causes they believe in, but like bad parents, they have failed in their responsibility to lead by good examples. In the problem with Nigeria Chinua Achebe concludes that Nigeria's problem is bad leadership and evidence on the ground has consistently shown that he is correct. Some people however, seen to disagree that leadership is not Nigeria's problem. (Mullarkey, 2010). To promote uniformity in usage and understanding of the rule of law, the UN Secretary General in his report to Security Council in 2004, provided a detailed definition:

The "rule of law" refers to a principle of governance in which all persons, institutions and entities public and private, including the State itself, are accountable to laws that are publicly promulgated, equally enforced and independently adjudicated and which are consistent with national human rights norms and standards. It requires, as well, measures to ensure adherence to the principles of supremacy of law, equality before the law, accountability to the law, fairness in the application of the law, separation of powers, participation in decision-making, legal certainty, avoidance of arbitrariness and procedural and legal transparency.

Certainly, Nipo (2011) assert that *human development* is at leaders and the poor rural dwellers that are responsible for Nigeria's under development. In every, it is the responsibility of the leadership to protect the political, social and economic interests of the

citizens. Leading a country involves making policies and finding solutions to problems, ensuring stability of the polity, and guiding the society to prosperity. But a large number of the political leaders of Nigeria lack of vision, the passion, and the character to effectively govern the state and deal with the crumbling economy. They do not have a clear understating of their responsibilities, as some of them are insensitive to them. As Bell and Smith (2002) and Okwudiba Nnobi, (1986), opined 'leaders can point many reasons why they aren't good listeners, but none of these reasons excuses them from the obligation...to listen.' Leaders who listen are, however, known to respond well to criticism and crisis, build more loyalty and increase the morale of the followers, listening is a way of showing that a leader cares about others, due to the fact that power belongs to the people, no political leader in the advanced democracies would function effectively without the support of the people. Thus, they constantly have their ears on the ground for information signs of shift in public opinion that often guides them in policy formulations and implementations.

**Human Right:** The ontological essence of man demonstrates he is a being with value. The cognition of this intrinsic dignity and value shows imperative inalienable rights of human beings. Those inviolable rights are foundation for justice and peace in the world. If the rights are neglected and disregarded, it will result to barbarous acts which are antithetical to the human conscience The belief that everyone by virtue of his or her humanity is entitled to certain human rights is fairly new. Its roots, however, lie in earlier tradition and documents of many cultures; it took the catalyst of World War II to propel human rights onto the global stage and into the global conscience (Ofoegbu,2014) Prior to return to the civilian rule in Nigeria by May 1999, the human rights violation was in the increase because of the military. Eze, (2008) posts that *human rights* are the promises that has to do with individual to operate in office or social favors, coercion, intimidation and interference with freedom of election, sale of votes, killing and maiming of people in the name of election and a situation where losers end up as the winners in elections and votes turn up in arrears where votes were not cast. Human rights are inherent and there the need to protect it. Ofoegbu (2014) x-rays, Human rights then, are inviolable, inalienable basic rights which a human person possesses inherently simply because he or she is a human being. Human rights are perceived as universal, that is, it is for every person. These rights in national and international law could exist as natural or legal rights. It should be noted that what is meant by “Right” has generated lots of controversy and a subject of ongoing philosophical discourse. Rights as freedom from unlawful imprisonment, torture, and execution are regarded as belonging fundamentally to all persons. Human rights are basic rights and freedom that all people are entitled to regardless of nationality, sex, national or ethnic origin, race, religion, language, or other status

### **Conceptual Clarifications of Democracy**

The word democracy has been on the bill board from ancient times to this modern period. It is a song in almost every tongue now. Universal democratization seems apparent the way global and international politics are going (Ofoegbu,2014)Etymologically, democracy was derived from Greek word “Demos” meaning “the people” and “Kretein” which stands for

“the rule of people”. Literally then, democracy demonstrates “the rule of the people”. Abraham Lincoln definition of democracy could be likened to the Greek meaning. That is “the government of the people, by the people, and for the people”. This shows that democracy is participatory. It involves everybody although indirectly through election (Ofoegbu,2014). Achieving true democracy requires good governance, including fair elections, transparency, accountability, and respect for the rule of law. The national unity, the syndromes on ethnic and religious groups within Nigeria have presented challenges to national unity, which is crucial for the success of any democratic system. As a form of government, it connotes a system where the will of the majority holds sway whilst giving the minority the liberty to express itself. Democracy is generally used in contrast with rule by the few Oligarchy/Aristocracy and with rule by a single person which is tyranny or autocracy. Today, for Remi & Enemu, (2008) democracy is often used to refer to liberal democracy as distinct from such other variants as Consensus Democracy, Deliberative Democracy, Direct Democracy, Satiation Democracy and the like. Liberal Democracy is a representative democracy with free and fair elections, along with the protection of minorities, the rule of law, separation of powers and protection of liberties of speech, assembly, religion and property.

Right through its ancient origin in Greece where the word is interchangeably used with the Isonomia, through to the Middle Ages where systems involving elections and assemblies were held albeit involving only minority of the population, up till the 20th and 21st century, democracy has taken on different shapes and toga and has become the universal standard form of human society. Andah, Basse (2011) speculated that the popularity and acceptability of democracy that is liberal democracy may continue in the future to the point where global democracy including global voting will become a common place. Whatever the variant, an indisputable assertion is that democracy, to the extent that it involves the will of the majority of the population, remains the best form of government. Democracy does not come by itself and cannot be imported from abroad, let alone be implanted by military means. It has to grow from within countries by gradually institutionalizing and constructing political processes and spreading the universal values that are intrinsic to democracy. Values such as respect for diversity and pluralism, tolerance, justice, freedom, human rights, and non-violence are universal core values that are embedded in the rich cultural diversity around the globe. Transforming these values into the practice of democratic governance takes time, which is in short supply because of people's high expectations for democratic government to deliver. Yet, to quote Koffi Annan once more 'no nation is born a democracy'. It requires effort and time to build, while it requires permanent maintenance as well. To manage the process of democracy building and the exceptions of people, government needs to ensure a 'social contract' with their people that provide those governments the legitimacy to govern. Basse (2011) The advancement for democracy is not only essential goal in its own right, but it is also linked; -

- To encourage peace building through resolution of conflicts nonviolently
- To encourage economic growth and development, through government that invests in human capital and accountability

- To encourage consolidation of human rights through the application of the rule of law and social justice.

### **Corruption**

Corruption is a pervasive issue in Nigeria, affecting all levels of government and undermining public trust. Ethnicity and religious divisions have made Nigeria a diverse ethnic and religious landscape that can be a source of tension, further complicating democratic governance. The political instability is also another combination of these challenges that can lead to political instability, including electoral disputes and violence, which, due to lack of accountability, will be a weak judiciary and lack of transparency in government operations that can make it difficult to hold leaders accountable.

### **Rule of Law**

For human rights to be respected and upheld, the rule of law must be active, practicable and functional. Guarantor of rule of law is democracy. It assures the preservation and protection of the rights of humans for being humans and citizens of a society. Rule of law is a doctrine that says everybody is under the law. The law is supreme and not a respecter of persons (Ofoegbu, 2014). The rule of law is the principle that governmental authority is legitimately exercised only in accordance with written, publicly disclosed laws, adopted and enforced in accordance with established procedure. The rule of law is a cornerstone of contemporary constitutional democracy, as was underscored by its role in cementing the recent traditions from authoritarian or totalitarian regimes to constitutional democracy in Eastern Europe and elsewhere. Albert Venn Dicey, in his *Law of the Constitution*, identified three components which form the rule of law; these are: The absolute supremacy or predominance of regular laws as opposed to the influence of arbitrary power. Equality before the law or the equal subjection of all classes to the ordinary law of the land administered by the ordinary courts. Okwudiba (1986): Politics and its laws are a consequence of the rights of individuals as defined and enforced by the courts. The right to equality before the law, or equal protection of the law, as it is often phrased, is fundamental to any just and democratic society. The Bassey (2011) rule of law has been recognised as a concept of great constitutional importance. It is a panacea against tyranny. It is a yardstick for the determination of the validity, legality or acceptance of any governmental action. The concept of the rule of law has been expanded beyond the classic formulation provided by Dicey. The doctrine is now recognised to include the supremacy of the law, including judicial decisions over all persons and authorities in a state. Observance of democratic practices, including the freedom of the press, thought, and association; regular, free and fair elections as the bases for assuming power in government. Thomas Paine, in his *Common Sense*, captured the import and essence of the rule of law when he wrote, '... the world may know that in so far as we approve of monarchy, that in America the law is king. For as in absolute governments the king is law, so in free countries, the law ought to be king, and there ought to be no other. discernible: The foregoing efforts to capture the essence of the rule of law are that the concept is generally accepted as a guard against despotism and a benchmark for the enforcement of limitations on the powers of government. Eze (2008)

asserts that human rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in 1948 stated thus: It is essential if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against. Human rights are protected by the rule of law'. This implies that the rule of law exists to moderate societal activities to safeguard individual freedoms and liberties by protecting citizens from oppressive and repressive actions either by government or individuals and helps to establish an acceptable standard of human activities. In sum, it may be stated that the rule of law stipulates that government be instituted and limited in its power according to the law and that it be devoted to the preservation of the liberties of individual citizens, all of whom are deemed equal before the law.

### **Challenges for Successful Promotion of Democracy and Rule of Law in Nigeria**

Lack of Constitutionalism and Constitutional Democracy: Result from national public perception surveys, key informant surveys, and administration data collection and analyses conducted by the clean foundation as well as other indicators show that a major challenge to the promotion of rule of law is the lack of constitutional and constitutional democracy. The problem has not been the absence of constitutions, but rather the ease with which constitutional provisions are abrogated subverted, suspended, or brazenly ignored.

### **Relationship of the Concepts Democracy and Rule of Law**

Democracy and rule of law are closely related in the sense that in a democratic system of government, the people rule through their elected representatives. There cannot be true democracy, liberal or otherwise, without the observation of the rule of law. Democracy is a necessary foundation for the rule of law and also sets the limits to the rule of law. Indeed, a democratic society is hinged on the law that distinguishes a government from dictatorship and gives it the claim to a democratic character. As earlier posited, democracy presupposes the existence of a clear separation of powers and the observance of the rule of law, among other established indices. Thus, in a situation where all governmental powers are fused in one person or organ who makes the laws. The adoption and practice of basic principles of the rule of law are clear barometers for any democracy. The awful consequences of the breakdown of the rule of law bring in dictatorships. In democratic societies, deviations from the principles of the rule of law, such as slavery and systematic discrimination or the unequal treatment of women historically, serve as powerful arguments for the fulfilment of the rule of law and democracy.

### **A Necessary Accomplishment to Democracy**

In democracies, the use of arbitrary power is considered anathema to the rule of law. Fundamentally, constitutional limits on power, a key feature of democracy, require adherence to the rule of law; indeed, the rule of law could be defined as the subjugation of state power to a country's constitution and laws, established or adopted through popular consent. This is the meaning of the commonly cited phrase 'a government of laws, not men' made famous by John Adams, the second president of the United States. Under such a system, law should be supreme to the capricious authority of any individual. The rule of law is the supreme check on political power used against people's rights. Without the

regulation of state power by a system of laws, procedures, and courts, democracy could not survive. Bassey, while the rule of law protects the majority from arbitrary power and tyranny, should also ensure that the minority is protected from both arbitrary power and the 'tyranny of the majority.' Without the rule of law, there is likely to be either a dictatorship or mob rule. Some revolutionary thinkers have extolled mob rule as the highest form of political and social justice. In reality, however, mob rule has meant violence and political chaos, which are the very same conditions that often give rise to dictatorship, the exercise of arbitrary power, and the denial of individual rights.

### **Contemporary Nigerian Experience on Democracy and Rule of Law**

. In 1914, when the Northern and the Southern regions attained self-governance from the British colonialists, could be fingered as the beginning of Nigeria's journey to democracy. The self-governing status that was attained, at least on the surface, heralded a government of Nigerians, by Nigerians and for Nigerians. Today, however, it is a matter of common knowledge that democracy is yet to take a firm root in the country. Contemporary Nigerian society is marked by diverse social structures, including ethnic and relational divisions, as well as the influence of globalisation and modernisation. Ethnic and regional diversity in Nigeria is a multicultural nation with over 250 ethnic groups speaking distinct languages. These factors create complex social dynamics, including challenges like poverty, inequality, and social unrest. This explains why politicians are quick to say Nigeria's democracy is still 'fledgling', 'nascent' or 'young' and that it needs to be properly nurtured. This is quite true. Unless everyone behaves and plays according to the rules, it is doubtful if a mature, virile democracy and a free society envied by others would ever be built. From 1960, when Nigeria became independent and began to hold elections, the country's democracy has been interspersed with military dictatorship. Hardly had a democratically elected government been put in place when one military coup or another was staged to upturn it. For Bassey (2011), military interventions end up lasting much longer than the 'democratic' processes they purportedly came in to correct. There are several innovations, insights and positive trends to address the challenges facing democracy and rule of law syndromes in Nigeria. Besides, in the final analysis, it is a matter for conjecture whether these 'corrective' interventions were actually better than the truncated processes. Time and space will not permit an adventure into discussions in this regard on this occasion, but the point must be made that Nigeria's democratic experience has not since independence been a smooth sail. It should be noted that even for the few times that democracy has been enthroned in the country, it has always been as a result of deep and intense struggle by the citizens, at colossal cost in terms of lives and resources. It is therefore always a matter of public joy and jubilation each time a dictatorship is replaced by democracy. A visible fallout of the incessant interruption of the country's democratic experiences is the military mentality of the political class, who, whilst pretending to be democrats, are nothing but autocrats and dictators whose only claim to democracy is the fact that 'selections' were held one way or the other to bring them in. I have employed the use of 'selections' here because, for the most part, what we regard as elections in Nigeria are actually selections, conducted in the most blatantly undemocratic fashions, where assassinations, rigging, thuggery,

banditry, intimidation and harassment and other electoral malpractices are given free rein. Discretion being the better part of valour, what usually obtains in most cases is that a broad spectrum of the population avoids the electoral process like a plague, resulting in the imposition of the will of a few over the vast majority. As if to justify the aberration that Nigeria's democratic culture represents, the politicians themselves are so quick to add to the existing democratic lexicon by coining words such as 'homegrown', 'guided', etc., to describe the peculiar variant of democracy as practised in Nigeria. The choice of this rhetoric in qualifying our democracy underscored the fact that democracy in Nigeria is not what it is globally understood to mean. If this is the position of our democracy, then the story cannot be different for the all-important rule of law. To be sure, it is the absence of adherence to the rule of law that gives vent to the identified aberrations in our democracy. Where there is a reign or rule of law, the usual cutting of corners and the attendant chaos, confusion and violence that have characterised our democratic experience will be nonexistent. In other words, where each organ of government or government official is prepared to keep within the roles specially created for it by law and not indulge itself in usurping the functions of other organs or officials, then there will be peace or little room for conflict. At present, one hopes that the attitude changes fast; there is a big flux in the polity. Contrary to Dickey's exposition on the rule of law, what we have in the country is the absolute supremacy or predominance of the influence of arbitrary power as opposed to the regular laws. An attempt Bassey Andah, 2011, Page 105 Subject the different classes of the population to different laws administered not by the ordinary courts but by a few powerful individuals. Subjugation of the rights of individuals and the whims of individuals or bodies are attempted to take the place of courts in the enforcement and interpretation of laws. Now, we are witnesses to instances of some of the disturbing events in Nigeria in recent times from which the above conclusions become inevitable. The skirmishes in oil-producing areas culminating in the Abuja deal; the crises in several parts of the country; the Boko Haram saga; bomb blasts; the single-term agenda; labour strikes; the National Minimum Wage palaver; the might-is-right posture among leaders and the ethnic composition of Nigeria are issues that require national discourse for our present democracy. We who seek to build democracy must not be bound by the false assertion that the rule of law is democratic. The evaluation of history teaches us that our powerful legal system is a massive fortress against popular sovereignty. One of our most important tasks is to revisit the fundamental questions that were resolved by undemocratic means in the past. For now, however, it can safely be said that these developments are bad omens for the survival of our democracy and the sustenance of the rule of law. As we stumble on, the judiciary, as the citizens last line of defence, will certainly continue to be called upon to give direction, and from the no-nonsense attitude of the judiciary in recent times, especially since the assumption of office of their Lordships, the Honourable Justice Kutigi Bassey Andah (2011, Page 106 (Rtd)), and his successor, Justice Katsina Alu (GCON) (Rtd), as former Chief Justices of Nigeria, there is hope that at the end of this dark tunnel, light abounds. In this light, the words of Gerald F. Ford become relevant: 'My fellow Americans, our long national nightmare is over. Our constitution works. Our great republic is a government of laws and not of men. Here the people rule.' This declaration encapsulates the real essence of

democracy and the rule of law, and it is hoped that now, Nigerians will be given the opportunity to truly rule. Democracy is an attitude, as the saying goes; attitude, as opposed to aptitude, determines altitude. Where we go in the future will be determined by our attitude.

### **The Prospective Way, Nigeria Should Achieve Sustainable Development**

To promote democracy, the rule of law and good governance in Nigeria, the following measures will be taken:

National economic restructuring to ensure equitable distribution of resources in the various countries

Provision of quality and functional education to improve the literacy level of the citizenry

To promote regular, free, fair and credible elections in Nigeria in order to elect credible and patriotic citizens into national government, as well as encourage participatory democracy

Restructuring of the judicial systems in order to improve the checks and balances of the organs of government

Embark on electoral and bureaucratic reforms for improved service delivery.

Mass mobilisation, value orientation and ethical rebirth of the citizenry.

### **Recommendations**

This paper recommends the openness, the capacity building and other skills acquisition for Nigeria's sustainable development. The paper recommended that everyone, including the government, should be subject to and accountable under the law. It is further to stress that democracy is a system of government where power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or through elected representatives. And drew the need that the two concepts are closely linked, as a functioning democracy requires the rule of law to ensure fair and equal application of laws and protect citizens' rights. The police and other criminal justice actors should be able to adhere to human rights, the rule of law and democracy in capacity building to enhance their daily activities. The paper also recommends that the foundation, with the support of the justice for all programmes, should be promoted in achieving sustainable development in Nigeria. Having an interest in using indicators to measure the performance of justice in institutions, which means that the criminal justice agencies such as the public prosecution, police and correctional services are beginning to show keen interest in using low-cost and tailored justice indicators as management tools for measuring the impacts of their reform programmes and evaluating the performance of key officials in delivering their institutional goals. There is a need for the UN and the international policy community to encourage Nigeria to democratise the rule of law and open up through constitutional and institutional reforms to ensure separation of powers and accountability amongst government institutions. There is a need to address the poor working conditions and to increase the workforce in the criminal justice sector in order to enhance the operation of the system in accordance with the rule of law and democratic system.

Conclusion

For democracy and rule of law to thrive in Nigeria, the people must be vigilant and demand accountability from the leaders. It has been proven that the strength of a democracy is only as great as the will of the people to uphold it. In essence, the rule of law provides the framework for a stable and just society, while democracy provides the means for the people to shape that framework and hold their government accountable. For all these to be possible, the citizens must be politically educated and mature. This would enable the future leaders to make ethical decisions and for the people to begin to make political office holders accountable while in and outside office. We have attempted to examine the concepts of democracy and rule of law and explored the interface between the rule of law and democratic consolidation in Nigeria. As a nascent democracy, Nigeria has been at a crossroad on how to enthrone an enduring and populist democratic culture that will inculcate in the people a participatory democratic culture. Democratic governance is based on the will of the people, and it is the form of governance best suited to allowing all people to live in dignity and freedom. Democracy requires a rule of law framework in order to govern the interaction and coexistence of all citizens. In fact, if the prevailing decimation of the principle of rule of law is allowed to continue, the country may slide into anarchy, and that will make the whole place 'nasty and brutish'. Nigeria's democratic journey is ongoing, marked by both successes and significant challenges. The rule of law, democracy and good governance are the major features of any civilised society today. The governance of any state where any of them is lacking often degenerates to dictatorship and authoritarianism. The rule of law provides the general framework for good governance. Democracy floats on the rule of law, while good governance promotes and sustains both of them. Nigeria is governed by the rule of law and democratic principles despite some present limitations. Good governance is the destination of both democracy and the rule of law. The media have worked hard to sustain both the rule of law and democracy despite some structural and institutional problems. Many years of civil rule, no doubt, assisted to frustrate the functional triumvirate of the rule of law, democracy and the media for improved good governance in Nigeria. Except an immediate overhaul of the structural, economic, legal, educational, administrative and other bureaucratic impediments is done, the rule of law and democracy may remain an article of faith, as good governance. While the country has made strides towards establishing a democratic framework, further efforts are needed to consolidate democracy, address corruption, promote inclusivity, and improve the lives of its citizens. Democracy and rule of law can, despite the conceptual definition contained here, be briefly but rightly defined as the government of the people by the representatives of the people for the people. At this entrance into Nigeria, democracy and rule of law assured that it will better the material and abject life of the people and further enhance the peoples' contribution to the way they are governed. Many years into this democratic life, Nigerians have little or nothing on either side of the promise to show for their faith and patience in democracy; rather, it turned out to be a harvest of unfilled promises, an ever-increasing level of poverty, corruption, and political and human rights abuses: unfree, unfair and violence-filled elections, total disregard for the rule of law, and so on, leading to the masses seeing democracy as another tool of oppression for the elites to continue their oppression of the massive calls for any other system of government that can give them what they

politically want. This conclusion also involves the analysis of actions and reactions of our leaders as regards their democratic performance; therefore, we adopted an analytic and critical approach in its interpretation of texts. The paper discovered that the differing background of culture, history, tradition, values and needs from that of Nigeria, in which the Western democratic system was forged, coupled with the absence of the requisite knowledge for the understanding and practice, the absence of the robust economic status of the citizens, the repeated and abysmal failure of elite Nigerian leadership, the high level of corruption and so on, are behind the constant heartbreaking failure. This paper therefore recommends education of the people on democratic requirements. Nigeria's democratic leadership and its development in discipline, poverty eradication, accountability, transparency and so on are for the relevance and effectiveness of the practice. To many Nigerians, democracy and the rule of law seem to have few benefits. Between 2015 and 2022, the democratically elected government of Buhari presided over worsening security, continuing corruption, and two recessions. Nigeria becomes the poverty capital of the world, consistently ranked as one of the world's most corrupt nations. But the ENDSARS movement showed the democratic dynamism of young Nigerians. And technology has helped demands for better government to transcend old ethnic, religious and linguistic divides. Nigeria's democracy can only be strengthened through a revolutionalised political system, better quality political parties, more independent and diversified media, a stronger electoral management body and a well-resourced judiciary.

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