

CHALLENGES OF DEMOCRATIZATION IN AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

The paper looks into the political processes of democratization in Africa and analyses the challenges this process faces in an era of dwindling economic growth and African perpetual backwardness. The paper adopted system theory as a theoretical framework of analysis. The study used secondary sources of data collection and content analysis as the method of data analysis. Findings show that Africa is in dire need of democratization and it is completely far behind from catching up with modern democratization that is fast taking prevalence in other parts of the world. Violations of human rights and absence of observance of rule of law, sit-tight power syndrome, absence of independence of judiciary and lack of credible, free and fair elections are major challenges to Africa's democratization process. The paper concludes that in African states, democratization process is still facing a huge challenge, which has to be remedied before embarking on a true democratic journey. The study recommends the following: African Union Peer Review Mechanism should be strengthened make to more efficient and effective in dealing with issues of undemocratic regimes and unconstitutional change of power. African Economics should be made more viable and self-reliant so as to reduce high rates of unemployment and poverty challenges.

KEY-WORDS: Democracy; Democratization; Challenges; Africa; political Development; Rights

INTRODUCTION

Democratization connotes a system where democratic institutions and principles are erected and laid in a country. This means that the democratic institutions have become a compass that guides the governors and the governed. It is a system devoid of abuse of powers by the political leaders of the state, flagrant violation of human rights, imposition of unpopular candidate on the citizens, lack of access to law court, no free and fair elections and freedom of the press. But in Africa there is prevalent abuse of human rights and corruption. Again, there are other things that are impeding democratization in Africa. These include obnoxious military resurgence, intimidation of opposition and enthronement of authoritarian system of government. All the above occur in African democracies. It was recently pointed out by Babatope (1997) that success of democratization involves the following:

it is not only the process of recruitment of leadership being legitimate, it must also respect human rights, an efficient operation of freedom of the press, supremacy of the letters and spirit of the constitution, independence of judiciary and a viable and indomitable opposition.

The paper takes a look at the examination of the challenges of democratization in Africa in an attempt to practice the western proto-type or with the aim of making a shift to introduce new doctrines and practices. Democracy in Africa is still being called nascent and contradicts the true democratic processes popularly known its tradition. For the purpose of clarity and comprehension, there is the need to provide operational interpretation of some basic concepts as follows:

The concept of Democracy: Democracy refers to the government based on the consent of the governed and it is government that encourages greater participation of the majority of the citizens of a state in the governance of their state affairs and respects for the rights of the minority ones. The above definition proves that democracy is the best form of government that gives opportunities to the greater number of the citizens access to the participation of the governance of the state. The term democracy came from the Greek word as ‘rule of the people.’ The Greek’s idea of democracy was based on the full participation of all people in every aspect of government. The Greek system of democratic government is the model of ‘pure’ or consensus democracy, though in the case of Greece, pure democracy did not last long (Baradat, 2000). Democracy in the Greek city state was a kind of democracy that is not in practice today because of the complex and complicated nature of the world. Democracy, is much more than a form of government or a set of legal arrangement, but should be seen as a way of life that requires faith in the capacity of human beings for intelligent judgment and action, if proper conditions are provided. Democracy requires faith in the possibility of resolving disputes through un-coerced deliberations. Democracy, according to Dewey (1916) should not be viewed as “something institutional and external,” but should be seen as a way of personal life. Democracy not only requires institutional guarantees of rights but also faith in the possibility of resolving disputes through unforced deliberation. In other words, unhindered communication should be put in place in a democratic setting in which there is a “cooperative undertaking” instead of having one group suppress the other through either subtle or overt violence or through intimidation. The above definition is very particular about freedom of the people. Democracy does not impose authority from above but instead relies on the dialogue as the source of authority and the means of choosing among competing alternatives. A democratic system flourishes in a setting where there is unlimited participation of all citizens in a free and rational public debate.

For Durkheim (1975), the basic hallmark of democracy is the citizens' capacity to participate in the state's judgment. To him, the state's legitimacy springs from its collective conscience. In other words, the citizens should be able to contribute to the natural reasoning and deliberations of the society. In Durkheim's view, if we want to have a viable democracy then we must have a vibrant public sphere where issues of common concern could be debated in a rational manner. Similarly, intolerance, abuse, calling of names because of differences of opinion about religion or politics including differences of race, color or wealth are treason to the democratic way of life.

Dahl (1984) sees democracy as a concept that defies definition in the sense that the way one defines it would betray one's beliefs, personal outlook, political experience and ideological preference. There are differences for example between the United and Soviet Union's conception of democracy. A major difference between USA and the former Soviet Union is that US emphasizes political freedom as basic to democracy while USSR focuses on economic rights and its leaders are even prepared to suppress or deny individual rights for the sake of the survival of the system. On the other hand, democracy in the USA does not place high premium on economic needs, in spite of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal program.

Dahl, in an attempt to describe the connections between "the Ideal" and "the actual," suggests five criteria that a system should fulfill in order to be seen as democratic. He emphasizes that these, while belonging to the realm of "the Ideal," can and should serve as a standard towards which "the Actual" should strive, and against which it should be compared. These, in his opinion, are "moving to the field of reality." Dahl (1966) observes modern states and names six institutions that should exist in a country in order for it to be seen as a democracy. Such a large-scale democracy must have: (1) Election of the officials; (2) Credible, fair and frequent elections; (3) Freedom of expression; (4) Alternative sources of information; (5) Associational autonomy; and (6) Inclusive citizenship.

According to Lincoln (1858), Democracy is the government of the people, by the people and for the people. It was the above that made Dicey (1905) to view democracy as a form of government in which the governing body is a comparatively large fraction of the entire nation. To James (1921), democracy is the rule of the people expressing their sovereign will through the votes. It was once stressed by Diamond (1988:4) that as a meaningful and extensive competition among individuals and organized groups (especially political parties), for major positions of governmental power. According to Burns (1934:26), democracy is a system of government in which those who have authority to make decision that have the force of law acquire and retain this authority either directly or indirectly as a result of winning a free election in which the bulk of adult citizens are allowed to participate. David Held in his opinion (1993:16) that democracy is a cluster of rules and institutions permitting the broader participation of the majority of citizens in the selection of representatives who alone can make political decision. According to Schmitter and Karl (1991) democracy is a system of governance in which the rulers are held accountable for their actions in the public realm by citizens acting indirectly through competition and cooperation of their elected representative. According to Luckham and White (1996) Democracy is a procedural system involving opening political competition with multiparty, civil and political rights guaranteed by law, and accountability operating through an electoral relationship between citizens and their representatives.

The interpretation of democracy by Schmitter and White (1996) is all encompassing as it sees democracy having those who govern to account for those who elected them into public offices directly and indirectly to represent

and rule on their behalf. There are countries that have never gotten a taste of democratization; there are those that, following the process of democratization, failed to consolidate the democratic institutions and reversed; and there are those which have undergone the change and successfully maintained the acquired legacy. Upon closer study of these experiences, Dahl (1984) deduces three conditions that are essential in achieving democratic institutions: (1) by elected officials (2) Absence of foreign intervention opposing democratization, and (3) Democratic beliefs and political culture. Stressing that the list remains open, he adds another two conditions that are very favorable, albeit not crucial as the previous ones.

Democratization: Democratization generally refers to a process of moving or a transition from an authoritarian system to a democratic political system. It embodies a transition, beginning with the dissolution of an authoritarian rule and consolidation for an enduring democracy. According to Nwabueze (1993), democratization must involve concerted effort to instill the spirit of liberty, democracy and social justice in the people. In more specific terms, Nwabueze (1993:3) added that democratization must involve the following twelve variables: (i) multiparty system under a democratic constitution having the force of supreme, overriding law; (ii) a complete change of guards and the exclusion of certain other categories of persons from participation in democratic politics and governments; (iii) a genuine and meaningful popular participation in politics and government; (iv) a virile civil society; (v) a democratic society; (vi) a free society; (vii) a just society; (viii) equal treatment of all citizens by the state; (ix) the rule of law; x) an ordered stable society; (xi) a society infused with the spirit of liberty, democracy and justice; and, (xii) an independent self- reliant, prosperous market economy.

Democratization, according to Osaghae (1999:5) is the process of establishing, strengthening or extending the principles, mechanism, and institutions that define a democratic regime. In another instance, Potter (2000:368) sees democratization as: “a political movement from less accountable to more accountable government from less competitive (or nonexistent) election to fuller and fairer predicted civil and political rights, from weak (or nonexistent) to continuous associations to more numerous associations in civil society.” Democratization can simply be viewed as the process of entrenching democracy. From the definitions above, democratization implies a process of getting to a stable or consolidated democracy or transitional process. It is therefore, instructive to note that a democratic regime is the ultimate goal of democratization and the extent to which democratization establishes these elements determine the extent of its success or failure. The process of transition from a military or authoritarian regime to a democratically elected government may be described as a process of democratization. However, it is instructive to note that transition to civil rule as important as it is, and even constitute a prerequisite to a transition to democracy but democratization goes beyond that. It involves the operation and institutionalization of democratic principles, values, structures and processes leading to a fully sustainable democratic form of governance. Democratization encompasses full operation of civil and political rights, as well as, effective political participation in policy, making through workable democratic institutions and redistribution of economic resources to enhance the political, social and economic empowerment and equality among the citizenry. Democratization also involves liberalization of the processes of governance through an active participation of civil society groups.

The ultimate of democratization process is the consolidation of democracy. This can take place only when democratic institutions, practices, and values have become deeply entrenched in society. Democratic consolidation is a process through which democratic norms that is- democratic rules of the game become accepted by all powerful groups in the society including businessmen, labor, religious groups, the military and no

important political actors contemplate a return or reversal to dictatorship. It is consolidated when it becomes (Linz and Stepan, 1996) the only game in town, even in the face of severe economic or political adversity. According to Linz and Stepan (1996:15-16):

Behaviorally, democracy becomes the only game in town when no significant political opposition seriously attempts to overthrow the democratic regime or to promote domestic or international violence in order to secede from the state...Attitudinally, democracy becomes the only game in town when, even in the face of severe political and economic crises, the overwhelming majority of the people believe that any further political change must emerge from within the parameters of democratic procedures. Constitutionally, democracy becomes the only game in town when all of the actors in the polity become habituated to the fact that political conflict within the state will be resolved according to established norms and that violation of these norms are likely to be both ineffective and costly. In short, with consolidation, democracy becomes routinized and deeply internalized in social, institutional and even psychological life as well as in political calculations for achieving goals.

In another development, Diamond (2004) observes that:

Consolidation is obstructed or destroyed causally by the effects of institutional shallowness and decay. If they are to become consolidated, therefore, electoral democracies must become deeper and more liberal. This will require greater executive (and military) accountability to both the law and the scrutiny of other branches of government, as well as the public, the reduction of barriers to political participation and mobilization by marginalized groups; and more effective protection for the political and civil rights of all citizens. Deepening will also be facilitated by the institutionalization of a political party system that stimulates mass participation, incorporate marginalized groups and forges vibrant linkages with civil society organizations and party branches and officials at the local level.

Democratization is the processes of becoming democratic i.e. It pertains to democracy. Central to these definitions is the participation of citizens in decision making through their elective representative. Hence, this implies the popular sovereignty over the rulers and the perceived inherent legitimacy of the government on the people. However, these definitions dwell on political rights to the detriment of the economic man which is essential in enjoying the socio-political rights exercised through voting and other activities. The above implies that democratization involves the process of achieving broad and deep legitimating to the extent that all stakeholders and political actors (both political elites and the masses) believe that democratic system is better for their society than any other system or political regime and must be ready and willing to contain and contend with several constraints to democratization process (National Open University of Nigeria, 2015).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

System Theory: Political systems theorists assume that political phenomena can best be analyzed by viewing them as part of systematic whole. In politics, David Easton is popular in applying the systems theory to municipal politics. In the same area of politics, it noted Morton Kaplan analysis in international politics. Kaplan, one of the foremost users of systems theory in the study of international politics, asserts that “a scientific politics can develop only if the materials of politics are treated in terms of systems of action” (Kaplan, 1957:4). Even though

non-systems theorists may object to this claim, they might admit the utility of a rudimentary notion of a system as a starting point for theory construction in political science.

The best-known original general systems theorists are Ludwig Bertalanffy and Miller who were the first to accept that systems are isomorphic (similar) in nature. This means that systems at a micro or macro level are the same. Miller, on his part, introduced the idea of living systems. What Miller meant was that a system that has no function to carry out must be dead. It must therefore appreciate that systems range from a micro organization to international organization; but that each system must have a decider, otherwise known as the nucleus. Without this according to Miller, a system cannot survive. In the case of a political system, we are specifically talking of a pattern of political behavior that is connected and expressed within a clearly defined analytical boundary. This suggests the following: (i) A political system implies interrelatedness (ii) The attributes of the political system is symbiosis. The different parts depend, rely, and benefit from each other (iii) All the different interrelated parts usually look for a situation of balance (iv) A political system usually has certain needs that must be satisfied or else such a system is bound to go into extinction ” (Kaplan, 1957:4).

Characteristics of a system

Every system is characterized by some certain features and these features include the following (Kaplan, 1957:4):

- i. It is inter-related and similar in its relationship among the units;
- ii. Each of the units performs functions that is sustainable and ensures its continuity;
- iii. System has boundary where its operations is carried out- it is this boundary that shows how different parts interacts within the environment;
- iv. A system has a structure that demonstrates the type of relationship among the units and;
- v. A system has a goal towards which it works; the commonest been self-preservation or resistance.

Easton's Input-Output Model

The major concepts in systems theory are represented by David Easton's input-output model. This input-output model identifies the major parts of the political system to include the total environment, the inputs the structures of the political system concerned with the authoritative allocation of values, output, and the feedback process. All these parts are themselves interrelated and interdependent. These essential parts are:

- (i) The boundary refers to the limit or dividing line within which political activities take place.
- (ii) The total environment on the other hand refers to the totality of the society in which we live and how its nature determines what we want, what we do, and so on. According to Osaghae (1988):

This environment will include both internal and international elements because the entire world has become one integrated mass in which what happens in “China” would likely affect what goes on in Nigeria (emphasis mine). From the environment, come the inputs, which consist of demands and supports. This is what adds some substance to the political systems framework. inputs include demands – indications from the political system's environment of what is wanted, needed and required – and supports – the extent to which the society is willing to consider the system and its leaders legitimate. Legitimacy is thus one of the most significant concepts to flow from the systems approach. It suggests that political leaders and their government can lose authority, that is, the mass public

acceptance of their right to rule, if they are unresponsive to the demands of the people. Demands may be articulated in a peaceful way through voting, writing to official or lobbying them, or in violent ways through riots, kidnapping, strikes, or even civil world.

(iii) The inputs are transmitted to the conversion process where they are processed and converted into authoritative allocation of values as outputs. These outputs in figure are simplified according to the three major organs of government, namely rule making, by the legislature, rule adjudication by the judiciary and rule application by the executive. Basically, outputs are the policies formulated by the decision makers. These concepts are significant because they describe how a system model accounts for linkage between the system and its environment, or between systems.

(iv) The feedback refers to the influence of outputs on inputs and ultimately on decisions. An interest group for instance makes demands (inputs) on the National Assembly, asking for the passage of a particular bill. There will be a feedback resulting finally in reaction to the interest group to the National Assembly. There will probably be new inputs, perhaps even the withholding of political support, including civil disobedience. The National Assembly then learns of the results of its decision through the change in inputs, and perhaps may modify its behavior.

According to Isaak (1985: 276), feedback is important to systems theory because it provides a kind of continuity. It builds into the approach a method for handling the two-way relationship between inputs and outputs.

THE RELEVANCE OF THE SYSTEM THEORY TO THIS WORK

System Theory's relevance to this work cannot be overemphasized. Political system talks specifically of a pattern of political behavior that is connected and expressed within a clearly defined analytical boundary. Applying the above assertion to this work, which is the challenges of democratization process in Africa, you will discover that most of the challenges faced by the democratization process in Africa are based on the cultural beliefs and orientation. Our cultural beliefs do not encourage the pre-requisites of the democratization. These pre-requisites are respect for the fundamental human rights, rule of law and supremacy of the constitution of the state, free and fair elections and constitutional change of power. These above mentioned indispensable pre-requisites of the democratization are lacking in African states which are huge impediments to Democratization in Africa. What we have as culture and orientation, are the cultural beliefs that encourage flagrant disrespect for the fundamental human rights, rule of law and unconstitutional change of power and lack of free and fair elections. It is this behavior that has hindered African states from the achievement of the democratization. Most times, when the citizens make their demands and needs to their governments in form of input waiting for their reaction, sometimes, they do not pay attention to their demands, plights and problems. Africa has a system that does not pay attention to system reaction/ environment of the system mechanism.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study discusses the challenges of Democratization process in Africa due to some certain intervening variables. African countries are willing to democratize, but salient factors distort the process of accepting the veritable transformational instrument of democratization. Some of these factors that remain a great challenge to such are as follows:

Lack of credible, free and fair elections

Credible, free and fair elections is type of election where the independent and impartial umpire conducts elections that is devoid of manipulation of election results, where the constituencies are not gerrymandered and where the peoples vote count. African states have been known with the culture of rigging and manipulation elections results and even using the techniques of money inducement to get electorates to vote for them whether they are competent to rule or not. Osiki (2010) explores the vexed problem of electoral irregularities in Nigeria and its hindrance to democratic consolidation. Osiki examines the historical and political contexts of election regularities, and the impact of the illegal use of money, weapons and thugs as aspects of electoral irregularities in the conduct of elections in Nigeria between 1999 and 2007. Osiki argues that Nigeria demonstrates an ugly specimen: “although, Nigeria’s case of electoral irregularities may not be unique, their magnitude makes it a good subject of historical investigations.” Osiki’s conclusion is quite instructive:

Bribery, use of thugs and physical weapons continued to be part of the political development of Nigeria and the country’s electoral politics between 1999 and 2007. Elements of money politics, use of thugs and dangerous weapons were effectively used by the political class to alienate the electorate and have a firm grip on the machinery of government. The trend helped to sustain the phenomenon of “godfatherism”, which assumed a potent force in Nigeria during the period. The fact that the Nigerian electoral system thrived on patronages made the illegal use of money, weapons and goons the surest option available to the political elite.

The above claim was justified when International Peace Institute (2011) stated that:

Elections have been manipulated by legitimate autocratic regimes or ensure dynastic successions on the continent. Violence still pledges approximately 20 to 25 percent of elections in Africa. In recent times, high profiles electoral crises in Kenya (2007-2008), Zimbabwe (2000-2008) and Cote d’Ivoire (2010-2011) have collectively led to at least four thousands deaths and hundreds of thousands displaced.

The above statements were supported by the work of Tar and Shettima (2010 cited Usman 2010), which recalled empirical evidence from the Nigerian 2007 and 2011 general elections to examine the behavior and performance of Africa’s political class in constructing legitimation, subordination and hegemony. They note that the elections remain relevant because it provides fresh empirical evidence on the nature elite contest for power which, though characterized by injustices and imperfections, nonetheless remained relatively unchallenged either by local or international forces.

The report of the US government given over elections conducted in Nigeria in 2019. She said that case of voter intimidation in Nigeria’s 2019 polls disappointing by the low voter turnout and reports of voter intimidation, vote buying, and interference by security forces and violence in some locations during Nigeria’s 2019 elections (The Punch, March 22, 2019). The above discussion proves the level of challenges of democratization in Africa. According to Thomson (2004 cited in Usman 2010) summarized the challenges of democratization in Africa using table below:

Challenges	Remarks
Lack of credible opposition Absence	Absence of a strong opposition parties that can challenge the policies and programs of the ruling party; absence of alternative policy program choices required by electorate; zero-sum struggle for power.
Weak civil society	Lack of strong, dense and vibrant civic groups who will act as a counterbalance to state hegemony; such groups are expected to resist cooptation by state but, instead, provide a permanent independent check on state power; the weakness of civil society is often as a result of a lack of strong middle class with its own class interest and stake in society.
Weak economies	Productive economy needed to allow state to supply goods and service to electorate; scarce resources could persuade, even force, electorates to abandon democratic processes. At worse, citizens can be “bought” to vote for wrong choices.
No separation between state and ruling party	Ruling party dominate and manipulate the political process; constitutions are regularly amended to retain power; state resources are ostensibly used to advance the interest of the ruling party; state security forces are used to coerce citizens and opposition groups
Ethnicity, religion & nepotism	Politics and governance are mitigated by divisive sectarian tendencies; democratic process (voting etc) is held hostage by the sectarian sentiments and loyalties of political actors and voters; state policies are influenced by sectarian fragmentation and sentiments.
Potentials of military intervention	There is high chance of military intervention as a result of any confusion created by political deadlock between parties.
Weak democratic political culture	Ruling elites do not respect democratic values such as rule of law and human rights; opposition parties and pressure groups are forced or induced into abandoning their role checking the excesses of state officials; weak democratic structures and values such as participation, civil liberties, voting etc.
Lack of regime change (incumbency continuum)	A sustained tradition of limited political change; regime continuity; oppression of dissent.

Source: Thompson (2010: 8).

The above table gave the summary of the challenges of democratization in Africa. The electoral process is therefore a complex process that encompasses the good intentions and undesirable outcomes of election administration, particularly in emerging democracies where general elections are often marred by culturally hued electoral malpractices. In the Nigerian case, the truth remains that the electoral process is immensely characterized by a culture of electoral malpractices.

From the above cases of absence of credible, free and fair elections in Africa as one of the serious challenges of African democratization. It has affected Africa negatively when it is being compared with advanced democracies of the world. Other countries in Africa where elections are issues are as follows: Togo, Guinea, Zimbabwe and Democratic Republic of Congo (Ifeoma, 2008).

ABSENCE OF INDEPENDENCE OF JUDICIARY

Independence of judiciary is the one which the judiciary is free from the intimidating shadows of other arms of government such as Legislative and Executive arms of government. It gives the institution and judicial arm powers to decide cases before it without any fear or favor (Chris, 2018), but in Africa, the judicial arm of government has not been given independence deserved to carry out its constitutional mandated functions by the so called executive arm of government specifically. It was illustrated by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers; Diego Gracia-Sayan has said that:

President Muhammed Buhari's decision to suspend the Chief Justice of Nigeria was in contravention of human rights standards. Garcia-Sayan said in a statement that, the "suspension and replacement of the Chief Justice of Nigeria by the country's president is in contravention of international human rights standards on independence of the judiciary and separation of power". International human rights standards provide that judges may be dismissed only on serious grounds of misconduct or incompetence," he added". The dismissal of judges without following procedures laid down by the law and without effective judicial protection being available to contest the dismissal is incompatible with the independence of the judiciary (Daily Sun, 2019; pg 19).

This judicial attack that happened in Nigeria is applicable to all the African states. No state in Africa is exempted from this type of the absence of the judicial independence which affects democratization of African states.

Sit-tight- power syndrome

There are cases of sit-tight power syndrome in African states which have hindered democratization in Africa. These cases are abounding and huge. According to Koulibaly (2005), as at December 2008, 23 African heads of state and government have been on the throne for more than 10 years. Before his death in June 2009, President El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba of Gabon went down in history as Africa's longest serving leader. He was on the throne for 42 uninterrupted years. Libyan President, Muammar Gaddafi, is 40 years in office, while President Teodoro Obiang Nguema of Equatorial Guinea celebrates his 30th year as head of state, same for President Jose Eduardo Dos Santos of Angola, (Ifeoma, 2008). President Muhammed Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, 80, has ruled for 28 years, while President Paul Biya who came to power in the Republic of Cameroun in 1982 has already made 27 years in office, without any intention to retire soon. In Guinea, 74 year old Lansana Conte was in his 24th as president before death on December 22, 2008. Sudanese President Omar Hassan has spent 20

years, even in the face of continued ethnic, religious and political instability; President Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia is 18 years on the throne, so also is President Idris Dby of the Republic of Chad (Ifeoma, 2008). Out of the 53 serving African political leaders, 15 came to power through military coup d'état and then manipulated their ways to become ‘‘elected’’ civilian presidents. This sit-tight-power syndrome has been the bane of democratic leadership and process, (Ifeoma, 2008).

At a public lecture organized by the Media Trust Limited, in January 2008, Rawlings summed up that:

The dangerous democratic practices that is capable of igniting conflicts in Africa...they are busy attempting to prolong their stay through fair or foul means, to modify, sometimes through crudely, multi-party democracy into a virtual one-party state, to arrogantly abuse the concept of the separation of power, to ignore the rule of law, to undermine judicial independence, to interfere with the fundamental human rights of political opponents, especially and to capriciously use decentralization to promote parochial interest (Ifeoma,2008).

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND ABSENCE OF OBSERVANCE OF RULE OF LAW

What makes democracy democratic is absolutely the rule of law, which makes everybody respects the laws and the constitution of the land. In Africa, democracy is not practiced according to the rules, not even Islamic democracy which nations and states are ready to accept because ‘‘the governing elites failed to deliver on their promises of economic progress, political participation, and personal dignity to expectant populations’’ (Sheriff and Aliyu, 2018). Violations of human rights in Africa have become of African system and culture. Almost all African states are guilty of that. According to Ibrahim (2015):

Serious human rights violations have mostly been perpetrated by organs of the state - specifically high-level officials in the intelligence service who report directly to the president, the Burundi national police force, the military, and the Imbonerakure - the youth wing of the ruling party CNDD-FDD. The report concluded that given the gravity, nature and scale of the acts and direct involvement of state bodies, the violations are likely to constitute crimes against humanity. The report further found that the climate of widespread impunity in Burundi is being sustained by hate speech uttered by Burundi government representatives, members of the ruling party and its youth league.

The report made it very clear that the Burundi justice system lacks independence and therefore there will be impunity for these crimes as the Burundian state is neither willing nor able to carry out effective investigations or prosecutions. President of the commission, Fatsah Ougergouz, a former judge from Algeria who served as the vice-president of the African Court of Human and Peoples' Rights from 2006-2016, has reported on the extensive extra-judicial killings and torture, rapes, forced disappearances, arbitrary arrests and detention in Burundi. According to The Amnesty International Report (2017/2018) Intolerance of peaceful dissent and an entrenched disregard for the right to freedom of peaceful assembly were increasingly the norm. From Lomé to Freetown, Khartoum to Kampala and Kinshasa to Luanda, there were mass arrests of peaceful protesters, as well as beatings, excessive use of force and, in some cases, killings.

Political deadlock and failures by regional and international bodies to address long-standing conflicts and their underlying causes were also in danger of becoming normalized, and leading to more violations, with impunity, (Amnesty International, 2017). The authorities in Madagascar intimidated and harassed journalists and human rights defenders in an attempt to silence them. Those daring to speak out against illegal trafficking and exploitation of natural resources were increasingly targeted through the use of criminal charges, (Amnesty International, 2017). There was renewed conflict in the Central African Republic (CAR), which led to large-scale human rights violations and abuses and crimes under international law. Outside the government-controlled capital, armed groups carried out a range of abuses, and reports of sexual exploitation and abuses by UN peacekeeping troops continued.

In DRC, unprecedented violence in the Kasai region left thousands dead and as of 25 September 1 million were internally displaced; over 35,000 people fled to neighbouring Angola. Congolese army soldiers used excessive force, killing scores of suspected members and sympathizers of the armed insurgent group Kamuena Nsapu, which, in turn, recruited children and carried out attacks on civilians and government forces. The government proxy-militia group Bana Mura was responsible for dozens of ethnic-based attacks including killings, rapes and destruction of civilian property (Amnesty International Report, 2018).

Human rights violations in Africa have impeded the growth of democratization process in Africa which needs urgent correction from the violation to respect of them.

Ethnicity and Corruption in Africa

Ethnicity and corruption are two sides of the same coin whichever way you want to look at the two concepts. Ethnicity and corruption have done bad than good to the growth of democratization of African states. In Africa, where the minorities are not the people in power they are bound to face some inequalities and lack of access to the political positions. For example, equality is the ability and full access to the minorities, to enjoy equal rights that are available to the majority. In Egypt, the Copts, Nubians, as well as the Bedouins of Sinai, i.e. religious, racial, and ethnic minorities, have suffered from marginalization and complained on national and often on international level, of being marginalized. Same applies to the Imazigh who had similar grievances in Tunisia and Algeria and Morocco. The indigenous Imazigh people of North Africa were influential in the Algerian war for independence from France, with an estimated 60% of fighters coming from the Kabyle region. Imazigh, they ask in Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco for, cultural recognition, and, justice, as Arabization programs led to the alienation of Imazighen, whose mother tongue was violently repressed in schools and the public sphere. The actions of Imazigh activists were often considered a threat to National Security (Kahina, 2013).

On the other hand, Mustapha (2010) explores the conceptual and empirical dimensions of corruption in Nigeria. His article identifies new ramifications of corruption and prebendalism in Nigerian political culture. This article questions state-centric analyses of Nigerian politics and democracy by recalling the formal and informal dimensions of corruption. The formal dimension – or official corruption – is seen to be existing side by side with informal one such as financial fraud tagged “419”, “oil bunkering” etc operating at the micro and indeed unofficial level of the state. He argues that both kinds of corruption impact negatively on democracy and state-society relations. Mustapha’s conclusion is striking:

The argument is that there is an intrinsic link between mis-use of official resources for personal aggrandizement with the current pervasive nature of spoil system. Failure of governance and the cunning to milk the state approach by the few have deepened the phenomenon of poverty. Compelled by the negative impact of “graft politics” that excluded the majority of the populace, most Nigerians resorted into series of societal illegalities that becomes the norms of the society. The lingering wave of financial fraud code named as “419”, „oil bunkering“ “kidnappings” has strains the ethical disposition of the state and come to tenaciously spoiled the entire sociopolitical and economic fabric of the state.

In the report of Transparency International (2008), Corruption Perceptions Index shows that eight countries in West Africa were among the 20 bottom rank and Somalia, the most corrupt. The indictment of the report was no doubt a true reflection of the situation in Africa where systemic corruption as defined by Igwe (2010:90) as a “situation in which the major institutions and processes of the state are routinely dominated and usurped by corrupt individuals and groups”, is the order of public life. Celarier (1996) avers that about \$30 billion Dollars estimated aid sent to African found their ways into foreign accounted in the same way about 500 billion Dollars of Nigerian commonwealth may have been stolen from the treasury by successive military regimes (The Guardian, August 29, 1999). The late strongman of former Zaire (new Congo DRC) Mobutu was said to be 8 billion USD worth at the time, he was forced out of power by the ravaging rebel led by Laurent Kabila (Hope, 2000).

UNEMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY

Unemployment and poverty have been one of the key challenges of democratization in Africa because if 60% of African population is unemployed the result is poverty. Historically, North Africa has faced fairly common challenges in respect of democratization over the years. The first relates to lack of balanced development, unemployment, inequality and poverty. This challenge has affected the ability of the population to make a free choice. Thus, socio-economic inequality and lack of inclusive combined with uneven income distribution, widespread corruption and nepotism, have severely compromised efforts towards democratization in North Africa. Socioeconomic inequity and the unequal distribution of wealth are among the key factors driving unrest in North Africa. Figures reflect the discrepancies between the Per Capita GDP and Per Wealth GDP, the per capita GDP in US dollars in the year 2012 in Egypt 3,187, while per wealth is Egypt 4,850, Tunisia per capita GDP, 4,237 while per wealth 14,250, Algeria per capita is 5,404 and per wealth 6,619, Morocco 2,925 while per wealth 7,006, (Global Wealth Data Book 2012/p. 33-36, p. 81-84). A further illustration is through The GINI Index that measure of statistical dispersion reflects to Egypt 80.4%, Libya 67.7%, Tunisia 68.3%, Algeria 65.5%, Morocco , corruption and agitated anger and lack and transparency and accountability in the political system (Credit Suisse: 2013). Under these conditions, come elections, vote-buying is a pervasive phenomenon.

MILITARY RESURGENCE IN AFRICA

Military rule is a system or pattern of government where the military personnel are in control of the machinery of government of the state with an introduction of the decree and edicts, (Obiajulu and Obiemeka, 2003). It is a system of government that does not guarantee the liberty and human rights of the citizens, and press freedom or independence of judiciary. Military rule is a purely against the traditional and constitutional functions of the

military such as promotion of territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of the state, protection of the state against aggression or aggressor coming from outside the territories of the domestic state and assisting police in maintenance of an internal peace and security when they have seen that the Police have failed from all indications, from its core duty. Military rule in most cases claims that why they intervene or rule is to protect constitutional provision from further violation by the civilian politicians. In 1950s and 1960s when most African countries gained independence military rule became a norm in Africa as a result of corrupt leaders, stagnating economic conditions, ethnicity and foreign intervention (Obiajulu and ObiEmeka 2003). In 1990s in Africa was an era of democratization where most African countries were moving towards institutionalization of democracy into their political system. Again, it was a time when the military rule was becoming outdated and obsolete. And international bodies such as ECOWAS, Organization Of African Unity (OAU, now AU), United Nations kicked against the military rule in the state. But in recent time, military rule has resurgent in the governmental powers of some African states.

In the year 2020 there was a military intervention in Mali as a result of bad governance, corruption and electoral manipulation which brought about military rule. African Center for Strategic Studies (2020) has this to say about the 2020 military coup in Mali: “August 18 2020-Colonel Assimi Goita led a coup ousting president Keita from power and installs a military junta. Initially, the junta Proposes to remain in power for a 3year military transition. This proposal generates sharp domestic opposition and international condemnation.”

The above proposal was later changed on 22 September, 2020 when the Colonel Assimi Goita accepted the ECOWAS body arranged. This arrangement was that the Colonel Major (retired Bah N. Daw) becomes the interim president while he takes up the interim vice-president’s position and maintains the affairs of the military. This continues until when the election is being conducted in a free and fair manner. In Chad what brought military rule to the Chad was that of Deby’s death that brought his administration to an end. But the case here was that the son Mahamat Idris Deby seized power after the Death of his father and promised to hold elections within 18 months (Reuters,2021).

CONCLUSION

Democratization envisages a process of entrenching democracy in an entity for the betterment of the people especially in enjoying their rights. In other words, it is the process of establishing democratic principles and elements in a state which will provide the foundation of liberty and rule of law to the people. In African states, democratization process is still facing a huge challenge which has to be remedied for a meaningful development to take place. The recommendations of this work can go a long way in helping the situation if applied. These challenges are, among other things, poverty and unemployment, ethnicity and corruption in Africa, violations of human rights and absence of observance of rule of law, sit-tight power syndrome, absence of independence of judiciary and lack of credible, free and fair elections.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are useful in paving a way to Africa’s democratization:

- i. African Union Peer Review Mechanism should be strengthened to a more efficient and effective process in dealing with issues of undemocratic regimes and unconstitutional change of power.
- ii. African Economies should be made more viable and self-reliant so as to reduce high rates of unemployment and poverty challenges.
- iii. Electoral bodies should stand up to its responsibilities and duties to avoid occasion of manipulation of electoral results.
- iv. Ethnicity and corruption should be discouraged completely.
- v. Judiciary should be given total independence as it is practiced in advanced societies and democracies

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