

Research Article

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Sustaining development in Nigeria through liberal democracy

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Abstract: Development is a pivotal process for human existence. The unique feature of the development is that it involves an active engagement of everybody. In Nigeria, the situation is different because, with the inception of self-rule particularly the return of full democracy in 1999, the system of politics disguisedly revolves around the interests of the few (bourgeois). National interests are handled like private property by the selected few who came into power on the basis of socio-economic status, tribe, and religion. However, people who are supposed to contribute to the

transformation of the state are neither not voted into power because of their tribe nor allowed to participate in national decisions. Nigerian politics in a nutshell stifled all efforts of true democratization because of greed which sidelines the welfare of the masses. Advocates of development insist that the process can only be sustained in a society where there is a principle of equal opportunities. By this, the principles of right, law, and government should aim at shielding different personalities as illustrated in the principles of liberal democracy. Liberal democracy maintains a political value that incorporates equality and widens the horizon for religious, economic, political, and intellectual freedom of citizens. It is on this basis that this study suggests liberal democracy as a vital system which can transform the socio-economic and political situation of Nigeria. The study recommends that to sustain development in Nigeria, stakeholders should prioritize the welfare of the civil society against material gains and selfish interests of the few elites.

Keywords – Democracy, Development, Globalisation, Liberty, Sustainability

1. INTRODUCTION

Liberal democracy is a classical 18th century political tradition that came into limelight through ideas of notable political practices of developed countries such as United States of America, Great Britain, France, amongst others. It arises out of the need for the stability and equilibrium in the capitalist liberal societies (Wike & Fetterolf, 2018; Udalla, 2022). The origin of liberal democracy is traceable after the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 when the masses deem for a possible system that will serve as the “messiah” for a new socio-economic and political world order

(Agreement, 2012). It is a product of scholars such as Baron de Montesquieu, John Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau and John Stuart Mill who promoted practices such as private ownership of property, social justice, natural rights and majority rule (Udalla, 2022). The system is attributed to elitist theory of democracy with noticeable advocates like: - Vilfredo Pareto (1848-1923), Gaetano Mosca (1858-1941), Robert Michels. James Burnham, Joseph, A. Schumpeter, Raymond Aaron, Giovanni Sartori and Karl Mannheim. Liberal democracy according to Wolterstorff & Cuneo (2012) is a system of government that emphasises on the full exercise of equality of rights of citizens, protects citizens against violations of their rights and guarantees proper functions of government within a constitutional or legal framework. Agreement (2012) adds that it is an aspect of representative democracy whereby the elected officials make decisions on behalf of the electorates and still ensure that these decisions are within the framework of the constitution without any form of limitations. Turner (2003:9) further explain that the system is 'the idea of having a 'government through discussion,' whereby there is a free exchange of ideas indirectly or directly produced by public opinion- by controlling the means of production of public opinion. So in this case, public opinion is the basis of political action through representation.' This shows that, decisions by the elected officials under liberal democratic society are guided and governed by the constitution so that civil liberties and rights are not violated. To this effect, Mbachu (2009: 86) assumes that liberal democracy is a "political system in which there are attempt to frame rules that maximize the well being of all or impost citizens". This comprises of three dimensions: economic, political and civil. Each of these dimensions is dependent on each other such that each serves to enhance the other. However, liberal democracy is a political value which guides the state on what to do as well as offers a direct scheme for the principles of checks and balances with the objective that the fundamental human rights are not dishonoured.

Advocates of liberal democracy insist that the system is based on egalitarianism. By this, it does not alter the existing socio-economic and political situations because every person in the society has the same rights but as an alternative political system for the existing order. Udalla (2022) offers the following as the major characteristics of liberal democracy:

- a. Capitalism is recognized.
- b. Availability of universal franchise which involves periodic free and fair elections.
- c. Respect for fundamental human rights is emphasized.
- d. Multi-party system is encouraged to make room for healthy competition.
- e. Existence of pressure groups.
- f. The rule of law and supremacy of the law is in practice.
- g. Principle of checks and balances and separation of powers are promoted.
- h. Change of government through forceful or revolutionary methods is abhorred.
- i. The recognition of minority rights.

Liberal democracy however includes advocates that democracy must include the existence of party pluralism, periodic elections, active engagement of all citizens, equal expertise of all citizens, civil and political liberties, suffrage (right to vote and to be voted for), rights to positive revolution, freedom of the press, rights to freedom of expression (oral, writing, and symbolically), right to freedom of non-interference, freedom of association either in public or private, amongst others. Because the system fosters fundamental rights, creates room for active engagement of everybody in the state and opens equal opportunities for everyone, it is deduced that these characteristics incubate socio-economic and political development.

Development is a multidimensional concept that situates in every human affair or explained in diverse cases. For example, presence of accessible roads, modern edifices, availability of electricity and good pipe-borne water are samples of physical development of an area. Hence, the development demand in the third world countries is different from that of affluent states. People attribute developmental processes to economic growth although development efforts focus on the achievement of rapid economic growth. The motivation for striving for economic

growth is not originally to alleviate poverty, but rather to achieve rapid industrialization measured in terms of annual increases in per-capita income or gross national product. By this, poverty, unemployment and inequality reduction are considered channels of development (Aguzie, Awu, Umunakwe & Okereke, 2019). Development is vital for the continuation of human nature and that is why it is noticed, evaluated and measured by human beings alone. As a parameter, human comfort and satisfaction are measured with the level of development (Uriah & Wosu, 2012). The indices of development begin with the development of human beings; human beings that will later develop other facets of the society such as the economy, natural, mineral and all other resources available in the country. This integrates variant natural, physical and acquired human talents towards actualizing full working out and real productivity either permanently or cumulatively of their being (Uwadia, 2010). Development incorporates the whole system of actualization or harness of an implicit potentiality which pertains to human beings alone since it consists of any improvement of human living conditions. By this, development assumes a process that takes into cognisance the re-organization and re-orientation of the entire socio-economic and political values of every human affair. The advancement of people in decision-making and enjoyment of those material benefits that accompany socio-economic affairs is well prevalent in a free society as rightly illustrates by Mimar (2012). Hence, the indicators of development assume tripod principles of equality, justice and equity which in turn determine the structure and inform the social development mainly used to display all positive changes in the social construct.

Despite linking liberal democracy and development, critics argue that democracy alone is deficit when it comes to socio-economic and political development let alone when it is considered liberal. According to Held (2006), the concept of liberalism is faulty because it creates the impression that within the state, individuals should be free to pursue their socio-economic and political preferences. Ake (1996) adds that liberal democracy has nothing to offer when it comes to the development of the people. Even though that it might foster development, it is never part of its main plan. Liberal democracy champions capitalist economic system which compels most people to transfer their natural powers of self-development to economic 'overloads' who control capital and other resources (Hipler, 1995). In this, the elites get richer while the poor remain mourning forever in their low socio-economic and political conditions. The system of liberal democracy supports some countries to control others so as to promote and serve their selfish interest. Affluent countries champion a kind of new world order which provide a justified policy to control and monitor the values of the third world countries. Against the critics, liberalists insist that development is attainable only in a free society because the instrument of liberalism supports the willingness to highly accept, obey and respect one's opinions or ideas, bounded not by authoritarianism, orthodoxy or traditional forms. Liberalism in the modern society came into play through the operations of capitalism and activities of industrial revolutionists. Under these, people are free to decide and the constitutions are designed to discourage all forms nepotisms and tyrannies for the favour of people's freedom (Abuiyada, 2018). Hence, society becomes progressive when there are intense changes from a fairly less decent state to better conditions favourably with respect to free economic, social and political activities. This satisfies the moral and substantial requirements of the society by appropriating humanistic models measured in matters of progress on the standard of living. No wonder, there is a belief that every average American thinks what he can do for his state and not what his state can do for him. Liberalists' position on developmental processes however anchor on the claim the development can only be actualised when everyone is given equal opportunity to exact decisions, contributions and needs. It is on this background that this study suggests that liberal democracy appears to have given hope as an alternative in sustaining development in Nigeria, though the results of its successes are yet unforeseen.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1. Liberal literature survey

Various scholars have researched on the relationship between liberal democracy and development. Closer scrutiny of some of these researchers' works reveal that their analytic portions came as a reaction to the weakness of

democracy which is purported to promote social injustice since it only protects the interests of the majority while that of the minority are abandoned. The concept of democracy is a derivation of two Greek words: 'demos' - the common people or the masses and 'kratos' - power. The sovereign tradition of democracy is historically inspired by the Greek myth of 'demos' - the people and 'kratos' - power in the Greek city state (Lioba & Abdulahi, 2012) despite the fact that the great rrio of Athens, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle vehemently opposed democratic society . Early democratic tradition opens a licence to direct political participation where the common good is decided by the will of the majority (Ijere, 2015). As a system, democracy is a union of peoples understood both as states and as citizens in collective self-governance; individuals are citizens of the democratic state, not its subjects.

In a true democratic system, people engage their civic rights either directly or through elected representativeness (government) who are accountable to the electorates, and as such, every citizen has the constitutional power to select representatives through periodical elections (Farrelly, 2014). Democracy however refutes rules by one despot (autocracy) or a few (oligarchy). It also repudiates arbitrariness and authoritarianism since citizens are entitled to fundamental rights and the expressions of their political views are protected (Aguzie, Awu, Umunakwe & Okereke, 2019). Basically, the principles of democracy alone do not support development and because of this, scholars seek a liberal version of democracy that is comprehensive and collaborative. According to Okolie and Agbo (2019), an ideal liberal democracy ignites good governance which bears on its shoulders the judicious, responsible and efficient management of power or public institutions for advancing sustainable human and material development of the polity. Otoghile, Igbafe and Aghontaen (2014) contribute also that the system breeds good governances; duly exercise of political power and authority, problem-solving and conflict resolution, efficient resource management and control and high response to the citizens' needs and the interest. By this, liberal democracy acts for the protections of all the individuals/minorities against the uncivil sovereign (the sovereign or the electoral majority, as the case may be). This builds a society where everyone is empowered to attain their full potential since every individual respects each other's dignity, rights, responsibilities and suggestions. Liberal democracy is only political system that offers full individual rights and protects the freedoms it grants to individual citizens (European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR), 2015). It shows that liberal democracy supports economic liberalisation and political democratisation which virtually takes societal development to the grassroots; fosters social progress and random community development in terms of economic, social and cultural aspects. The system as well reconnects all development goals; supports human dignity, human rights, reducing hunger, spurring economic growth and building peace planned to sustain the socio-economic and political well-being of an area. These serve both as a systematic lens for the national development and as a normative benchmark with a guarantee of wider gamut of social and economic rights (nationless, sexless, classless, disembodied) which are necessities for development and represent an abstract, generalized model of humanity.

3. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The poor economic and political situation in Africa has awarded the continent a global title: 'member of third world country' or 'a region of underdevelopment'. According to Babawale (2004; 102): 'chronic poverty, squalor and diseases, HIV/AIDS, under-employment and unemployment, underdevelopment and maledvelopment, exploitation and unsustainable development, debt crisis and falling standards of living - which have come to be defining characteristics of states in the Third World, especially in Africa.' This affects socio-economic development and level of poverty in most African countries particularly Nigeria. In Nigeria, the state of underdevelopment consequently results to poverty which has tilted toward the absolute definition of the concept as provided by World Bank (1999:1) is that:

Poverty is a state where an individual is not able to cater adequately for his/her basic needs of food, clothing and shelter; is unable to meet social and economic obligations; lacks gainful employment, skills, assets and self-esteem; and has limited access to social and economic infrastructure such as education, health, potable water and sanitation; and consequently, has limited chance of advancing his/her welfare to the limit of his/her capacities.

Despite different initiated poverty alleviation programmes such as Better Life for Rural Women (BLRW), Family Support Programme (SAP), Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP), National Directorate of Employment (NDE) amongst others by respective Nigerian governments from independence era to the fourth republic, socio-economic and political developmental processes in Nigeria are marred in turmoil. There are also cases of limited growth of investment, productivity and technological innovations, unfair elections, kleptocrats, nepotism, electoral violence which have constrained the processes of development (Yau & Murjanatu, 2022). Nigeria lacks autonomous capacity to control, exploit and manage its natural, economic and human resources. She depends continuously on the developed industrialised nations for trade, finance, technology, military know-how, consciousness and scholarship of development. These situations of underdevelopment make the country to be economically undeveloped and also depend heavily on imports from the developed countries (Obi, Nwachukwu & Obiora, 2008). All these are attributed to deficient strategic vision, decisiveness and failed political systems of Nigeria particularly democracy.

The full return of democracy in Nigeria on May 29, 1999 appears to be confined, with little or fewer exceptions which caught in the web of mediocrity. Democracy fails today in Nigeria due to how constricted and myopic it is being defined which is imprisoned in multi-partism and the periodic holding of elections, administered and monitored by bizarre constitutions purporting to bear principles of the rule of law (Agreement, 2012). Democracy and its scope of operation in Nigeria exhibit severe abuse of power and social injustice to the masses; the benefits of the government are enjoyed by the few ruling class (the cog wheels in the economic class) who always believe that decision-making is exclusively for them. This is to say that democracy in Nigeria is characterised by increasingly political polarization engaging winners' take-it-all. There is no doubt that Nigerian socio-economy and politics are teetering on the brink of collapse with no clearly defined strategy in place to deal with the effects of the global headwinds and the attendant high inflation being recorded on a daily basis. Inflation levels are at a record high mainly caused by cost-push factors, the unemployment rate has remained above 33percent while government debts are at the highest level the country has witnessed. But more worrisome is that the fiscal authority is using almost 100 percent of the country's revenue in debt servicing. And because of this, people considered Nigerian version of democracy a failure and demand for a political reform.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study chiefly aims offers liberal democracy as a viable system through which development can be sustained in Nigeria. It specifically conceptualises sustainable development, examines the nature of Nigerian politics, analysis developmental strategies of liberal democracy, discusses militating factors in achieving liberal democracy in Nigeria and proffers slolutions to the underdevelopment situation of Nigeria.

5. CONCEPTUALISATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

By sustainable development, it is a coinage of two different English words: sustenance and development. Sustenance according to Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (11th edition) is to give support or relief. This can be intrinsic or extrinsic which that affects positively every part of the subject. By sustenance, it is thus a

constructive change with solely anticipated results. Development on the other hand has diverse conceptualisations. According to Pearson (1997), development is a clear change from an initial state or position which might be negative or positive. It is an improvement qualitative, quantitative or both - in the use of available resources. To Ebiziem, Ezenwoke and Ogbodo (2019), it is a collective activity by the society with the sole objective of reducing the stability of perceived obstacles to a higher standard of living. The system of development however considers the awareness of the human personality. No wonder Abuiyada (2018) states that development is the condition of changing power structures so as to decrease hurdles that prevent people from participating in the issues that affect their lives. When development of an area meets the immediate demand of the people with the hope to benefit the needs of the future generations, it becomes a sustainable development (Ajibola & Habiba, 2014).

In politics, sustainable development is when government embarks on the project of sustaining the development of the state, through policy-making; government ensures that the social, economic and political supplies that are vital for the satisfaction of the good life are available (Babawale, 2004). Sustainable development is a deliberate and systematic policy of ensuring the survival of a state in such conditions that the social, economic and political necessities that are imperative for the enjoyment of the good life and ensuring the greatest good for the greatest numbers are available now without this constituting a denial of the capacity of being able to enjoy the same benefits to generations yet unborn in the foreseeable future. Adamu (2019) categorizes information, integration and participation as vital institutions that help countries achieve development that deems these interdependent pillars. This also includes investments in human, social and physiological resources management. Hence, sustainable development is a global responsibility aimed at safeguarding and protecting the proficient use of existing resources both natural and human.

6. DEVELOPMENTAL STRATEGIES OF LIBERAL DEMOCRACY

Liberal democracy suggests diverse strategies for developmental processes in the society. These strategies are mostly embedded in the articles of liberty which may not be an end in itself since societies in the past had transmitted effectively their socio-economic and political values and aspiration through other political values. For instance, Russia, Germany, Japan developed under military regime, United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Qatar developed under monarchism while some countries like China developed under communist democracy. No matter what, principles of democracy portray good ratio in equation to development. Democracy primarily is to better the living conditions of the people, but today, democracy introduced in Africa by colonial authorities marred existing traditional systems. According to Sachikonye (1995: 5), 'democracy is a western ideology whose goal is to promote capitalism in Africa. Programmes in Africa such as structural adjustment programs which anchor on democracy have contaminated social services such as labour conditions, health, education and the privatization of public enterprise and the devaluation of currencies have resulted in embarrassing and troubling economic conditions. This is an indication that African governments are dancing to the tunes of foreign donors under the umbrella of capitalism at the expense of the electorates.' Further, democracy alone is not thriving in Africa because of traditional values. For instance, Omukule and Geoffrey (2022) inform that decision-making and policy interventions in traditional Africa are designed in such a way that women should only take up roles of caregivers and mothers. Hence, any function that women perform outside the above is taken as an extension of their domestic roles and hence discouraged.

In Nigeria today, the scope of democracy reflects a lot of social injustice to the masses and those who survive or enjoy the fruits of the government are the few elites. However, popular participation in the political and economic spheres is kept very minimal and enjoyed by only those who are the cog wheels of the corrupt government. Particularly in the fourth republic Nigeria, the determinants of democracy are the presence of multiparty system

and the conduct of periodic elections. Because of these, the Nigerian government declares that the country is a democratic society. Surprisingly, these are not sufficient rationale to quantify good democracy since there are cases of rigged elections and the political party when emerged the winner fails to have the welfare of the civil society at heart. Is it not an amazing 'abuse of democracy'? The Buhari led administration for instance which ascended to power in 2015 assured Nigerians of a 'change' during a party campaign but the same administration has failed to redeem the dividends of democracy. Nigerian polity is thereof bedevilled with contaminated change: terrorism, banditry, insecurity, harsh economy, unemployment, incessant industrial actions, hunger, public embezzlement, regional politics, amongst others. This means that positive change will take long before it can take shape in Nigeria since the ruling classes are in the habit of siphoning public resources for their own private use. This personal enrichment affects development gravely in that the resources that could be channelled towards helping many people are enjoyed by the chosen few. Sani Abacha stands as a good example of typical Nigerian kleptocrat that hampers development while Bola Tinubu and Atiku Abubakar have joined the train of Nigeria dictators who want to hang on to power regardless of the deteriorating socio-economic and political conditions of the country. Most leaders of Nigeria are richer than the country while the citizens could not even afford a loaf of bread. Nigerian politics reflects a chain of mischievous acts by those in power to better their own economic, social and political positions with little concern for the citizens. This could be relayed that politics in Nigeria has bred more 'kleptocrats' rather than true representative leaders of the people. That being as it may, some politics observers and news agencies continue to proclaim these administrations in Nigeria exceptional. This paints a bad image for democracy in Nigeria and in turn affects adversely people's rights as Dani and Sharun (2017) rightly put that not all purported systems of democracy bear true principles of rights linked to the ideal system of democracy. Though democracy per se is not strongly correlated to development sustenance, there is compelling evidence that strong democratic institution coupled with competent meritocratic bureaucracies lead to better development outcomes. To collaborate this, the strategies of liberal system of democracy should be considered.

Liberal democracy ensures public service management, accountability, a legal framework for development (by which is meant rights, essentially property rights) and the availability of good and sufficient information. These features when injected in the Nigerian polity will go a long way to give everyone access to participate in the developmental processes. This does not mean that every Nigerian is free to do whatever desired instead, being free is simply understood as the condition where every person has equal access to every available resources and also free to develop one's potentialities for the good of the society. In a free society, it does not matter who rules but how human rights are exercised as Plattner (2016) rightly informed. For instance, supposed every Nigerian has total freedom to directly influence in decision-making, control and manage public resources (industrialisation, employment) or a situation where elected representatives properly consult and consider the welfare of the masses, wont there be a 'progressive development' since diverse thoughts were touched. This implies that, elected representatives should limited in their powers and modes of acting. Representatives are limited through the principles of rule of law particularly, an informed law or constitution that respects the rights of the individual. Ordinarily, liberal democracy as a system terminates the intergenerational chains of politics which disrupt the important aspect of diversity in promoting development. By this, liberal democracy has strategic guidelines that can transform positively the socio-political, economic values, cultural behaviours and life styles required in Nigeria. Other systematic methods liberal democracy can support development in Nigeria include:

(a) Promotion of social equality: This is one of the cardinal components of liberal democracy. Social equality is similar to gender equality which means equal opportunity and individual's rights and responsibilities. The underlying value about social equality is the idea that the equality of all individuals in respective of their sex, social status, religion, ethnicity and race (Sani & Baba, 2013). Primarily, social equality is designed towards addressing

social disparities because members of the society irrespective of their nature are given equal opportunities to develop their inert endowments and strengthen their natural capabilities to make choices without being constrained by gender stereotypes. In Nigeria, there is gender discrimination, gender stereotype and social inequality which have assume setback in supporting development. Traditionally, womanhood in most Nigerian indigenous tribe is subjected as a second-class citizen and that the best place for women in the society is the 'Kitchen' (Makama, 2013). Gender is shabbily used to indicate the different and unequal perceptions, views, roles, relevance or rewards that a society assigns to the two sex categories (Anyalebechi, 2016). The males claim superior and authority over their female counterparts and this, constantly declines, limits and undermines the involvement of females in most decisions making or acquiring certain property despite the fact that the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria sees such acts as infringements. However, social equality is a key instrument for economic development of emerging economies (Archibong, Bassey & Nwagbara, 2018). Azuh and Egharevba (2014) contribute that the system is a veritable instrument for societal development because everybody in the society is entitled with the freedom of self-development. For instance, according to illustration by Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) (2011), giving women access to control and manage agricultural assets and productive resources will contribute massively in achieving food security and sustainable livelihood. This means that women's knowledge and collective actions are central in contributing economically, socially and environmentally which are proficient in sustainable strategies to manage local landscape, produce food and secure water. Certain aspect of gender equality such as women education, women full participation in decision making and employment have positive impact on socio-economic and political growth (Agarwal, 2010). Through liberal democracy however, systematic relevant scheme of affairs for both men and women is necessary in Nigeria. By this, every gender should be in all spheres of decision making and development programmes to build a society that encourages active engagements of everybody.

(b) Full implementation of separation of power: Effective separation of power is another proven attributes of liberal democracy that can hold development in the Nigerian polity. Beginning from 20th century, the system assumes one of the efficient and powerful theories implored by the Anglo-American government to promote the power of the constitution and prevent arbitrary control by powerful and selfish rulers. Separation of powers however champions the philosophy of, a different body of individuals administering and controlling each organ of the government (The legislative, executive and judiciary). In this theory, none of each organ has an absolute control power over another because such separation is vital so as to preserve the liberty of the individual and to avoid tyranny (Ogoloma, 2012). In political science, separation of powers is best understood as a state where none of the legislative, executive and judicial powers is able to meddle in the duties of the other. This is to infer that, the Judiciary for example should be independent of the executive and legislature in theory and practice. Being a part of liberal democracy value, separation of powers does not constrain equal participation nor is it dominated by systems preferred by the elites. The system is believed to command development in Nigeria when the different arms of government carry out their responsibilities as stipulated in the constitution without unduly interference. The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria recognizes the doctrine of separation of powers. The Section 4 of the Constitution vests the legislative powers of the federation on the National and State Houses of Assembly, Section 5 and 6 vest the executive and judicial powers of the Federation on the President and Governors and the courts established by the constitution, respectively. Sadly, lack of implementation has turned to be the chief weakness for effective separation of powers in Nigeria. Nigerian polity today is struggling to attain a political height where there is an effective separation of powers among the organs of government because of unduly interferences by the executive arm. For instance, the president constitutionally appoints the chief judge of the federation instead of allowing that duty to done members of judiciary council. By the virtue of self-love, people will

appoint those loyal to them. This breeds nepotism, favouritism, incompetency which affects adversely the developmental process of the country. For effective separation of powers in Nigeria, arms of government should be constitutionally allowed to carry-out their responsibilities without unduly interferences.

(c) Justice: Justice is a proven determinant that can sustain development in Nigerian polity. Justice is the state of being just, impartial, right, legitimate, equal and fair in giving that which is due (Ayeni, 2013). Justice promotes development in the society through principles such as equality and equity. When full justice is applied in the Nigerian polity, it is believed that every Nigerian acts according to one's competency. This means that, the Nigerian polity cannot be deemed just if it accords the same apportionment or reward to a lazy, unproductive worker, as it does to the active productive worker, since such would clearly be a travesty of justice. In fact, justice will dilute issues of tribalism and religious fanaticism that are prevalent in Nigerian politics as Larry (2017) rightly states.

7. FACTORS THAT MIGHT HINDER THE PRACTICE OF LIBERAL DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA

Achieving the substance of liberal democracy in Nigeria might be locked-up in several factors. Globalisation poses one of the impairing factors that may affect liberal process in Nigeria. Globalisation according to Njoku (2012) is a human relation that deals with exchange of civilization, technology, culture, conflict and integration of human and natural endowment. Its primary aim is to connect the gap between the developed and under-developed societies by means of removing all forms of barriers which may hinder effective human development. The value of globalisation is that, decisions, policies and activities in one part of the world can be essential for individuals in other distant globes; it has the target of offering universal prosperity and opportunity for the development of human life (Ogonna, Ikechukwu & Ifeoma, 2022). For instance: - economic policies in Britain can also be significant in Nigeria. Presently, there is a decline in the objectives of globalisation. Critics like Adebimpe (2012) argues that, globalisation and its implications constitute a major problem for the south in the 21st century. It is clandestinely structured so as to favour and benefit developed societies while the poor nations like Nigeria are at the receiving end of its harsh effects. Indecisive theories, debt crisis, increase in privatisation and market-based policies assume the defining characteristics of Nigeria due to the globalisation hurricane. Globalisation creates cultural insecurity of traditional identity groups who feel threatened. Ethnic and religious differences as well might delay the practice of liberal democratic theory in Nigeria. These emerge when portfolios are not assigned base on competency rather on the basis of religion or tribal status. However, nepotism and patronage have continuously become cancerous within the Nigeria's politics. These cause the marginalisation of people from participating in matters of decision-making. Political systems in Nigeria either past or present are fashioned to promote autocracy. Elections have assumed a tool through which unjust governments resume office regardless of whether the civil society regard the elections as free and fair or not.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the linear relationship between liberal democracy and development in the society, Nigeria should adopt policies and practices that address the followings:

- a) Political system should prioritize the welfare of the civil society as against material gains and selfish interests of the few elites.
- b) Nigerian national interest should be invested intensely in meritocratic state institutions to deliver social services.
- c) Stakeholders should embark on more sensitizations and awareness programs against inequality for the attainment of sustainable development goals.

- d) Fiscal authority should brace up to its responsibility.
- e) Stakeholders should subsidise agricultural and petroleum products in order to bring every Nigerian on developmental stage.
- f) Stakeholders should ensure meaningful redistribution of wealth in Nigeria.
- g) There should be simultaneous investments in building strong and accountable state institutions.
- h) Creation of specific actions to integrate the supply and demand components of meeting basic human needs to include increasing transparency and participation in public budgeting, establishing anti-corruption mechanisms, and improving rights-based public education on availability of social services at the local level, especially for women, children, and other sectors of society.

9. COCLUSION

From the foregoing discussion, it is evidently stated democracy alone is not thriving in Nigerian polity, nor does it have a common prescription or line of action. It is by no means clear whether people should be celebrating the triumph or lamenting the demise of democracy since the modality developed is just only for the few without allowing the minority to have a say. To restore active engagement of every Nigerian, liberal democracy has systematic strategies that champions liberal political theory; a state where everybody in a particular society is constitutionally entitled to equal rights and opportunities without any undue interferences. By this, the only way for Nigeria to escape a looming underdevelopment catastrophe is for the elected representatives to start thinking in terms of delivering the necessary goods and services to the masses. The economic liberalization will close the gap between the haves and have not's and this, will create an important platform that will strengthen bonds between the individuals and their leaders to share their best ideas and practices. Whenever the principles of liberal democracy are duly absorbed in the Nigerian polity through justice, equity and equality, the living conditions of the people will be improved. Given these trends, liberal democracy has a new imperative which aims at demonstrating to the world and Nigeria in particular that its core principles are equal opportunities. In conclusion, every Nigerian has a stake in helping the society develop by ensuring equitable distribution of available resources.

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