DEMOCRACY AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA'S FEDERAL SETTING

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ABSTRACT

Democracy and development are two mutually inclusive concepts in the political science discipline. Both concepts emphasized individual decisions aimed at enhancing his living standards. The current democratic dispensation that started in 1999 in Nigeria suggested there would be instant outright development, but Nigeria is still lagging among the committee of democratic nations in terms of development. The paper relied on the documentary study and collected data from secondary documents such as textbooks, journals, Newspapers, and online resources. The data collected were analyzed descriptively to realize the objectives of the paper. The paper revealed that; despite Nigeria's oil wealth and huge potential in all sectors, there is abundant evidence of the presence of endemic poverty in Nigeria. It is recommended that to achieve federal democracy and economic prosperity political leaders and followers should have a national consensus in pursuit of a devolved federal system and democratic practice.

Keywords: Corruption, Democracy, Development, Nigeria's federal setting, Poverty

INTRODUCTION

Democracy and development are two mutually inclusive concepts in the political science discipline. Both concepts emphasize the capacity of the individual to taking decisions that would enhance his

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living conditions. The common feature of democracy is improving the people's living standards. The end of the cold war in 1991 was significant to the democratization of the world. Since then, many countries around the world have shown significant interest in democracy. During the era of the military in Nigerian politics, proponents for the return of the country to democracy had consistently maintained that democracy remains the best form of government that would usher in the needed development of the citizenry. Democracy is fast spreading because of its ability to provide basic requirements for good governance and development.

Some Scholars are unanimous in support of the arguments and prepositions of the international community (Championed by the United States of America) on the advantages of democracy. They stressed that the USA encouraged countries of the world, particularly those of the African continent to toe the lines of democracy, arguing that, the African state's experience of poor governance was largely due to their non-democratization. Hinged on the perspective of African poor governance, Nigeria, like most developing countries was affected by the wave of democratic change in 1999. Consequently, many people, especially pro-democracy groups and politicians in Nigeria, celebrated the country's return to democratic rule after many years of military interregnum in politics.

Nigeria's democratic journey was again celebrated after more than two decades. Nigeria has had about 22 years of interrupted democratic rule; within the same period also the country witnessed the transfer of political power from the civilian-to-civilian government in 2003, for the first time in the history of Nigeria's body politics since independence. Not too long after the return of Nigeria to democracy, Nigerian citizens expected rapid development both human and material (in terms of good governance, transparency, and accountability, provision of basic needs among others). On the contrary, the expectations were not met. It is based on all these that, people express pessimism about achieving any meaningful development in a state of insecurity, poverty, corruption, and unemployment amongst other vices that currently bedeviled Nigerian society. The failure of

political leaders to meet minimum standards in terms of providing leadership, to deliver on the promises of democracy since Nigeria returned to democracy in 1999 to date poses a major challenge to the legitimacy of the state as an instrument of social transformation. This paper aims to achieve the following objectives:

i. To examine the place of democracy and National development in a federal setting.
ii. To ascertain how the character of federal setting and democracy in some climes support or hinder development.
iii. To evaluate the interplay of the variables; federalism and democracy leading to national development or lack of development in Nigeria's federal setting.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Democracy

Most scholars traced the origin of democracy to ancient Greek. To the Greeks, "Demos" mean the people; while "Kratia" means democracy, power, or authority. According to Ujo (2000, p.4), since the days of ancient Greece, various scholars and politicians have subjected the concept of democracy to redefinition. Abraham Lincoln a one-time president of the United States of America; define democracy as the government of the people, for the people, and by the people. This simply means a government that people put in place through free and fair elections and serves them without any form of discrimination.

For Peter (2019, p.196), "democracy represents liberty, responsibility, and good standard of living devoid of extreme poverty as well as the pursuit of happiness, love, tolerance, and friendship". In essence therefore and for the sake of this paper, democracy is seen as a system that provides goodies or welfare to the citizens.

Development

Like most concepts in the social sciences, development has been a subject of debate among scholars. Some view development from the perspective of individuals and groups in terms of skills and capacity, freedom, and self-discipline among others. Viewed from this

perspective, Rodney (1972, p.3) defines development as "a many-sided process. At the level of individuals, it implies increased skills and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility, and material well-being". From the perspective of social groups, development is linked to regulating relationships, both internal and external. Other scholars conceive development as a multi-dimensional process involving changes in the entire social system, especially as it affects individual needs and desires to live in a good condition of life. Todaro (2005, p. 96-98) put it succinctly:

> Development must be conceived as a multi-dimensional process involving changes in structure, attitudes, and institutions as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality, and the eradication of absolute poverty. In essence, development must represent the entire gamut of changes by which the entire social system turned to the diverse basic needs and desires of individuals and social groups within the system moving away from the conditions of life regarded as materially and spiritually better.

National Development

Eke (2005, p.163) opines that democracy "constitutes a reliable vehicle for development and modernization". From the Marxist perspective, development is hinged on the improvement of the lives of the citizenry in a political society. This means that National development entails producing more food to eat, healthier and happier life for citizens, availability of decent shelter, education, and more money circulating around

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This paper adopts the liberal democratic theory as a theoretical framework. According to Nwodim (2018, P. 107), the theory has at various times been viewed as a western concept of explanation and justification of democracy and its values and why it should be

embraced. Several scholars such as Macpherson; Robert Dahl, and Joseph Schumpeter, among others are identified as proponents of the theory. Liberal democracy provides freedom to an individual in the society to vote for his preferred candidate in an election that is expected to bring development to the society and by extension improve his living standard. According to Lukeman, et al., (1998, p.12): Liberal democracy affords the individual the opportunity to live a decent life, have an improved standard of living, and by extension initiate good governance in the society, based on the assumption that liberal representation in the society has been accepted as the best method of managing political affairs in compliance with the principle of rule of law. It implies from the above that expectedly individual freedom, well-being, and development of the society are guaranteed by his choice of responsive leaders during elections. In this sense, Nigerians have embraced democracy and in particular proponents for the return of the country to democracy since 1999 had consistently maintained that democracy remains the best form of government that would usher in the needed development of the citizenry, even though the political class has not met the expectations of Nigerians in terms of an improved standard of living. Scholars have criticized the theory over its western orientation, which is different from the orientations of the developing nations. Despite the criticisms, the theory provides a clear compass for the study and insight into understanding indices for measuring development in Nigeria.

THE PLACE OF DEMOCRACY AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN A FEDERAL SETTING

This part of the paper deals with the practices of democracy in a federal setting and how development is attained or hindered. We also drive our discussion to the debate on how the character of the federal system in some climes supports or hinders development. The wave of democratization has made it possible for the spread of federalism around the world. The federal systems can now be found in both consolidated and emerging democracies. Federalism provides a platform by which a country can decentralize power, serving as a tool

for holding diverse countries together, thereby dousing the tensions often created by a community or ethnic group agitating for separation from a country. The benefits of decentralizing power in a plural society like Nigeria, therefore, ensure stability, peace, and development.

The character of a federal system garnished by democracy can support national development in several ways, principally by creating opportunities for participation in politics as well as access to government because of multiple levels of government. For example, Democracy in a federal system can broaden power-sharing based on a minority political group holding political office at the state or national level. This can promote political inclusion and balance of power in such countries with a dominant party at the national level. For example, in South Africa, "the African National Congress party has won large majorities at every national election since the transition to democracy in the 1990s, but the opposition democratic alliance has enjoyed power in the Western Cape Province" (Bulmer 2017, p.9). The broader base power-sharing may also provide opportunities for women, ethnic minorities, poor people and other underrepresented groups to be elected to political office.

Federalism garnished by democracy ensures that public resources are shared and economic development encouraged among federating units in contrast to a unitary state. Bulmer (2017, p.10) states that:

> Federalism is a way of ensuring the wider distribution of public resources through revenue sharing and other forms of fiscal arrangements that guarantee an agreed share of resources to all areas of the country. Federalism may also encourage more geographically diverse economic and social development, in contrast to a unitary state where everything-money, power, culture-gravitates to the capital.

From the late 1960s however, it became clear that federal political systems were not the panacea that many had thought to be in the early years after 1945. Most of the post-war federal experiments

experienced difficulties, and a number of these were abandoned or temporarily suspended. Examples were the continued internal tensions and frequent resort to emergency rule in India, the secession of Bangladesh from Pakistan, the forcing out of Malaysia of Singapore, the Nigerian Civil war and the subsequent prevalence of military regimes, and the dissolutions of federations of the West Indies and Rhodesia and Nyasaland and the collapse of most French colonial federations (Watts 2007, p.10).

The experiences of the countries mentioned above that practice the federal system show in clear terms the limitations of federal solutions. Even the classical federations of the United States, Canada, Australia, and Switzerland according to Scholars such as Kincaid (1993, p.139) "were experiencing renewed internal tensions and a loss of momentum that reduced their attractiveness as shining examples for others to follow.

Bahtti and Zaidi (2014), argue that the cause of the breakup of Pakistan in 1971 and the emergence of independent Bangladesh is linked to "the absence of a consensus constitution and denial of political, administrative and economic share claimed by the then East Pakistan…the then Pakistani state was heavily tilted towards over-centralized governance, denying space to diversity and decentralization".

FEDERALISM, DEMOCRACY, AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

Nigeria is a country of multiple diversities, highly polarized in religion, ethnicity, and linguistics. The polarization of Nigerian society is caused by the grand design of the political class that overheats the polity, using banners of ethnic and religious sentiments. The journey of Nigeria to become a federation in 1954, passed through several stages, from the creation of three provinces; western, eastern, and northern provinces to regions, and these regions finally launched Nigeria on the path of federalism. According to Abang and Ogar (2020, p.14), In federalism, democracy, and development in Nigeria, the creation of regions in Nigeria was a welcome development because a multi-ethnic

entity like Nigeria requires a political progression that is free from friction, a platform where both majority and minority groups have their fair share. Bearing in mind the extraordinary complexities in terms of various groups that cohabit the territory of Nigeria, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa in 1954 stated that: "the federal system is under the present conditions the only basis on which Nigeria can remain united". Even though Nigeria had over the years embraced federal structure and democracy, the socioeconomic level of the country is far lower than her counterparts. The federal system that Nigeria operated in the first republic was fundamentally different from the post-military federal structure. In the first republic, the four regions were autonomous federating units, a premier as head of government headed each region, each region had native authority police, and each region also had its laws, the symbol of its authority, and representatives in foreign countries. Each region was almost dependent on itself in terms of fiscal and some other needs. Each region was somehow economically viable to take care of itself. The regions enjoyed a high level of autonomy to the extent that, the central government was seen as being very weak. However, the main criticism according to Ebegbulem (2011, p. 219) was that " the regions were too powerful and the centre was too weak for a meaningful federal system and national Unity….". Truly, the federal government could not have imposed its will on the regions because it lacked the constitutional powers to do so. This was essential because, by the provisions of the 1960 and 1963 constitutions, the regions were assigned tremendous powers. Mohammed et al (2020, p.1,) in a comparative study of Nigeria's first republic and post-1966 federalism noted that: First republic federalism was more disciplined in financial and residual matters and power with greater autonomy and competition between regions which greatly fostered development and accountability among them, with less constitutional frictions between the central government and the regions. However, the military intervention in Nigeria's body politics in 1966 changed the scenario. The independence of the regions was compromised by the emergence of the military command structure. This action by the military violated the philosophical principles of federalism because true federalism protects

the rights of the individual and the federating units. In support of this assertion, Oluwagbamila et al (2018, p.9) in their analysis of the travails of Nigerian Federalism noted that more powers have been added to the central government to the detriment of the state governments in Nigeria.

From 1966 to 1999, except for six years of Shehu Shagari's democratic regime, [the period considered as 2nd republic] the remaining 29 years were under military regimes. According to Elaigwu (2017,p. 11-12); Despite some political scientist's submissions especially from the western world, military rule is incompatible with federalism because of the absence of popular participation in governance, non-democratic character, and unbinding and less accountability to the electorate, the military according to him, has been dominant in the Nigerian federalism ever since the January 1966 coup and had hence, played the most significant role in shaping the federalism through decrees, Edicts, states and local government creation and revenue allocation amongst others thus resulting and entrenching Military federalism. Contrary to Elaigwu's position some scholars are of the view that, Nigeria under the military has failed to achieve the goals of federalism and democracy in terms of integration and development. According to Ekeh, 1998; Agagu and Ola, 2011 cited in Etebom, (2021 p.72): Some scholars, political elites, and citizens have continued to blame the military as the cause of the challenges of contending national development and integration. Mohammed et. al., 2018; Amusan, et. al., (2017,p.18) indicated that; Although substantial revenue has been realised over the years since the discovery and exploitation of oil and democratic practice in Nigeria, not much in commensurate with the generated revenue has been achieved in terms of infrastructure and socio- economic development. Instead only few and privileged elites have access to the oil resources and what accrues from it thereby resulting in violence, pervasive corruption and negligence and near crash of the non-oil sectors, and mortgaging the oil resources and revenues at the expense of stability, development and prosperity of Nigeria. In essence therefore and for the sake of this paper, development in Nigeria should be seen beyond infrastructure

provisions like roads, bridges etc. This is because even the most repressive regimes around the world are found to do very well in the provision of such infrastructure. This paper therefore looked at development delivered by federalism and democracy in Nigeria in terms of change in political attitude by the political elites leading to good governance, political participation of citizens, employment opportunities, Healthcare delivery, fighting corruption and ensuring Transparency, acceleration of economic growth, human development in terms of reduction of inequality and eradication of absolute poverty, gender equality amongst others. The inter play of these indices with the variables- Federalism and democracy can be used to measure the level of development or lack of development in Nigeria. Political elites who are the operators of the political system in Nigeria's federation must therefore keep to minimum standards expected of them, especially in terms of providing leadership that would address societal challenges. Generally, Nigeria is blessed with abundant resources; as such citizens should not ordinarily suffer from lack of food, shelter, employment and other necessities of life.

Similarly, several years since Nigeria returned to democracy from 1999 to date, after a long period of military intervention in politics no meaningful development has been achieved, partly because the welfare of the individual and the rights of federating units has not been provided/ protected by the federalism Nigeria operates. This is manifest for example, in the majority of the citizenry's abject poverty and lack of access to basic necessity of life including security. In support of this assertion, table 1 below illustrate in clear terms the level of poverty in Nigeria based on multiple overlapping deprivations in three dimensions: health, education and standard of living. The survey data revealed that, In 2018, 46.4% of the population (90,919 thousand people) were multi dimensionally poor while an additional 19.2% were classified as vulnerable to multi-dimensional poor (37,659 thousand people). Intensity deprivation in Nigeria, which is the average deprivation score experienced by people in multi-dimensional poverty, is 54.8 percent. The data in the table also shows the percentage of Nigeria's population that lives in severe multi-dimensional poverty.

The contributions of deprivations in each dimension to overall poverty complete a comprehensive picture of people living in multi-dimensional poverty in Nigeria. The health care delivery is equally an important indicator of development of any country. According to World Health organisation (2012; Jamo, 2019, Ocheja, (2014, P.44); National health indicators in Nigeria are possibly among the lowest in the world for almost all measurable indices. Furthermore in his work democracy and development. A case study of Nigeria from 2007 to 2014, Ocheja (2014, P. 44) substantially cited World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), National Population Commission (NPC) in analysing Nigeria's healthcare performance under the democratic dispensation thus:

> Life expectancy in Nigeria as at 2012 was 48years compared to 73years in China and 83years in Japan, while maternal mortality rate was 1,100 deaths per 100,000 in contrast to 45 and 6 deaths per 100,000 in China and Japan respectively (WHO, 2012). One third of the World maternal death occurs in India with 20% and Nigeria with 14% respectively (WHO, 2012). In Nigeria 52, 000 Nigerian women die every year, and daily 150 pregnancy related cases with an average of death in every 10 minutes (UNICEF, 2012). Nigeria is also among the countries in the world with a large infant mortality rate (70.49%, 33rd of 179), Maternal mortality, malnutrition, poor drug access (0%, 141st of 163), Poor birth rate, crude> 1000 people (40.51/1000,20th per 1000) with 0.28physician per 1000 (48 of 148), poor expenditure on health as % of GDP of 4.7% (13TH OF 85) and general low-performance records in the world…

Employment and unemployment are also indices for measuring the development of a country. For many years since Nigeria returned to democracy unemployment is on the increase. According to Ocheja, (2014, P. v1ii). "The rate of unemployment in 2002 was 3.8 and dropped to 3.3 in 2005

and appreciated to 5.8 and 11.8 in 2008 and 2009 respectively. The figure also increased to 19.7 in 2010 and 21.1 in 2011 and finally reached 23.3 in 2012". From all these revelations it is crystal clear democracy in Nigeria's federal setting did not provide the expected dividend to a majority of Nigerians.

Table 1: The most recent Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index (MPI) for Nigeria relative to selected countries.

	Survey year	MPI value	Head count (%)	The intensity of deprivation - (%)	Population share (%)			Contribution to overall poverty of deprivation in %		
					Vulnerable to multi-dimensional poverty	In severe	Below income poverty line	Health	Education	Standard of living
Nigeria	2018	0.254	46.4	54.8	19.2	26.8	53.5	30.9	28.2	40.9
Congo DR	2017/2018	0.331	64.5	51.3	17.4	36.8	76.6	23.1	19.9	57.0
Ethiopia	2016	0.489	83.5	58.5	8.9	61.5	30.8	19.7	29.4	50.8
Sub-Saharan	-	0.299	55.0	54.3	17.9	32.9	45.7	22.4	29.3	48.4

Afr ica										

SOURCE: Briefing note on countries 2020 Human development report: Nigeria

Based on the multi-dimensional level of poverty as represented in Table 1 above it is clear that Nigeria remains in the group of underdeveloped nations in terms of her inability to meet the needs and yearnings of the people. This is partly due to failure of policies that are supposed to improve the welfare of the people. Aligning with this position Aliyu and Chukudi (2015, p.1) noted that, "most of the policies adopted in a bit to alleviate poverty turn to benefit only the elites while the poor continue to remain in an abject poverty." It is worrisome to note that, over 60 years since Nigeria got its political independence and practiced democracy for an average of 30 years, the country is still battling on how to address some of the basic needs of its citizens. Traveling along the road from one state to another, particularly in northern Nigeria, you could see poverty. The houses are made up of thatch and even those built with mud are porous, the houses are without an entrance gate, and in some cases empty fertilizer jute sack is hung as a cover in place of an entrance gate. This is the failure of leaders to deliver on the promises of democracy especially as it affects citizens' needs and desire to live in a good conditions of life. The consequence of this worrisome situation is partly responsible for what we see today as the challenge of insecurity in Nigeria. This is also the manifestation of the abuse of the processes of governance by the political elites who manipulate the system especially manipulating programmes that were designed to alleviate poverty for self-enrichment. In another dimension, Insecurity caused by ethno- religious conflicts, Insurgency, banditry in Nigeria, using relative deprivation argument, could be attributed partly to the failure of democracy leading to disenchantment of some citizens with the Nigerian federal system that is poorly managed by the political class.

Political participation of citizens is an indicator for measuring development in a society. Lack of political participation and lack of trust

amongst the ethnic nationalities leading to persistent agitation for self-determination, resource control and power sharing among others also manifest in Nigeria due to the kind of federalism and democracy the country operates. Lack of political participation in Nigeria for example is an indication of authoritarianism and lack of good governance. This is what informed the classification of Nigeria as a nation of hybrid democracy almost becoming authoritarian regime. Corroborating this assertion, Sasu in a publication in February 2022 on democracy index in Nigeria, 2021, noted that: "as of 2021 Nigeria's democracy achieved 4.11 points, very close to being defined as an authoritarian regime (four points or less). The index according to the source is based on electoral process and pluralism, government functions, political participation and political culture as well as civil liberties. Electoral process and pluralism attained 5.17 points. However, Nigeria received very low scores in government functioning, political participation, and political culture, which were all below four points. In situations such as generally described above, it will be difficult to say that democracy in Nigeria has led to good governance that is deemed necessary to achieve the goals of development.

The attitude of political elites leading to good governance is an indicator for measuring development in any society. While looking at the nexus between Federalism, democracy, and development in Nigeria, Frank, and Ebong (2020, p.46) noted that:

> It is instructive to note, however, that for federalism and democracy to deliver development as in other climes, certain minimum standards are expected from the political elites for it to flourish. These include trust, tolerance, compromise and leadership, which uphold justice objectively complimented by judicial reviews. The growth of democracy on the other hand require; the elite's commitment to it, strong state institutions, operated by skilled personnel, committed to the unity of the country and transparency in the operations of the states as well as continuous nation building and

utilization of resources where it's found is a sure way to promote federal practice and development in Nigeria.

On the other hand federalism garnished by democracy protects federating units and therefore ensures development. Lack of such protection in Nigeria's federal arrangement is manifest in the absence of political autonomy as well as the issue of revenue sharing that favours the federal government at the expense of the states and local governments who are in dear need of resources for grassroots development. Corroborating the assertion on revenue sharing, Nasir (2011), Aigbepue and Augustine (2021, p.29) noted that; " there is a problem with the existing sharing formula. A situation where only the Federal government gets 52.68% of the total revenue without a corresponding responsibility while leaving the states and local governments with 26.72% and 20.60% respectively is neither fair nor just". The revenue sharing formula which favours the federal government make funds readily available to the public office holders and because of the small expenditure assignment as well as the concentration of power in the federal government, officials are found to capitalise on the situation at one time or the other and siphon or diverts these funds that are meant for development. This, therefore, explains why we have high rate of corruption in Federal government institutions. Public office holders and their cronies siphon government funds with impunity. The table below provide a clear illustration of the level of corruption in Nigeria relative to other countries.

Table 2a
Least 10 Countries in the Corruption Rank by Country/Africa.

S/N	COUNTRY	LAST/2020	PREVIOUS/2019
1	Seychelles	27	27
2	Botswana	35	34
3	Cape Verde	41	41
4	Rwanda	49	51
5	Mauritius	52	56
6	Namibia	57	56

7	Sao Tome and Principe	63	64
8	Senegal	67	66
9	South Africa	69	70
10	Tunisia	69	74

SOURCE: Modified by author from Transparency International

Table 2b
TOP 10 countries in the corruption rank by country/Africa.

1	Mozambique	149	146
2	Nigeria	149	146
3	Zimbabwe	157	158
4	Chad	160	162
5	Comoros	160	153
6	Eritrea	160	160
7	Burundi	165	165
8	Congo	165	165
9	Guinea Bissau	165	168
10	Republic of the Congo	170	168

****Nigeria occupied 149 positions in the year 2020 than her previous position 146 in 2019.**
Source: Modified by the author from Transparency International, 2020.

The proposal by the current administration of President Buhari aimed at altering the revenue sharing formula through review is right decision in a right direction. However, a lot more has to be done in terms of putting the necessary mechanism of control against diversion of revenues at all levels of government, going by the African saying that; a beautiful woman must accentuate her beauty with frequent showers. This would ensure transparency in state operations and utilization of resources meant for development that Nigeria is itching for.

In addition to the problem of revenue allocation that favours the federal government at the expense of other tiers of government, the state governors on the other hand add salt into the injury by manipulating the meager federal allocation of the local governments, which is meant for grassroots development projects. Most of the state governors scuttle democracy by appointing their cronies as Local government caretaker chairmen and councilors with virtually no administrative skills and knowledge of public financial management. These cronies serve as conduit pipes for siphoning funds and therefore stagnating development in the rural communities. This negates the philosophical principles of federalism and indeed local government creation, which is intended to bring government nearer to the people for rural development.

Another major challenge of democracy and fiscal Federalism in delivering development in Nigeria is the lack of equity in the distribution of resources to all groups that constitute the nation. Consequently, the principle of derivation, equity of states and Landmass as a sharing formula among federating units in Nigeria has over the years generated controversies. Proponents of derivation principle are of the view that, the geese that lay the golden eggs should be adequately rewarded but not the gees that consumes without producing eggs. However, there are equally some arguments against the principle of derivation as a sharing formula. Aigbepue and Augustine (2021, p.30) contend that, "under a system of revenue allocation based on derivation the wealthier Nigerian regions tended to receive more and the poor ones less". However, this principle does not seem to improve on the level of development in such regions that clamour and benefit from the 13% derivation, because of the huge corruption perpetrated by the Political elites and their cronies in the suppose regional development commission, i.e. the Niger Delta development commission (NDDC) for example. The corruption in NDDC is supported by a comment on the non-publication or delayed implementation of the NDDC audit report by one Frank Oseya, a lawyer and author in an online Guardian newspaper report of 16th November 2021. According to him; "It is a big red flag that nothing

significant would come out from this jamboree of an audit. The NDDC has become a cesspool of corruption and a slush funding source for politicians." The issue of Fiscal federalism will continue to be a contentious issue in Nigeria, essentially because; even the persistent emotional public discourse on resource control is predicated on the self-interest of the elites and not necessarily the interest for development.

Transparency is a prerequisite for development. Lack of it lead to underdevelopment of a society. The attributes of democracy are incomplete without transparency and accountability. "They are the essential elements of democracy (Ukaogo 2015, p.1). Robert Dahl (1956), Ukaogo (2015, p.2) espoused characteristics of genuine democracy to include:

> Responsiveness of the government to the preference of its citizen in which case, the constituent people of a given society must have an unimpaired and unhindered opportunity to formulate their preferences, signify their preferences to their fellow citizens and government by individual and collective action and have their preferences weighted equally in the conduct of government that is weighted with no discrimination…

Accountability and transparency determine to a very large extent, the level of development or underdevelopment of a given society. The dialectics of transparency as a means of improving the living standard of Nigerians, therefore, can be linked for example to the country's budgeting process, diversion of public funds and some other forms of corrupt practices. The budgeting process and other forms of manipulations in Nigeria are described as avenues through which political leaders and their accomplices in the public service siphon government funds meant for development, from the period of independence to date largely through what has come to the limelight as "Padding" the budgets with frivolous budget items and monies allocated. For example, looking at such manipulations from the history of corruption literature in Nigeria, Arthur (2000), cited in Ukaogo (2015, p .3) noted that; "In the 1950s the first panel of inquiry was set up to look

into the "Nnamdi Azikiwe Affair". The panel headed by Justice Strafford Foster-Sutton indicted Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe in 1957 and caused him to "transfer all his rights and interest in the bank (ACB) to Eastern Nigerian government which henceforth own A.C.B". Arthur pointed further to say; several probe panels indicted other first-generation politicians in the class of Dr Azikiwe, such as chief Obafemi Awolowo and chief Dennis Osadebe at different periods.

The military governments of Gowon, Obasanjo, Babangida, Abacha and Abdulsalam were all indicted of all manner of corruption. Probably, the only exceptions of military leaders in the entire military interregnum into Nigerian politics were the Murtala and Buhari's military leaderships. Both regimes were short lived but have shown some level of commitments in fighting corruption in Nigeria. The government of Alhaji Shehu Usman Shagari inaugurated in 1979, Obasanjo's civil administration, Yar'adua/Jonathan and Jonathan regimes did not abate the level of corruption that hinders development in Nigeria.

The Buhari's civilian administration from 2015 to date was voted believing that, the administration will find a lasting solution to insecurity, corruption and improve the economy and ultimately lead to development. Unfortunately, the government appear to be overwhelmed. The political leadership in the present democratic dispensation could not provide the necessary change that will translate into development. Similarly democracy in the current political dispensation that started in 1999 did not significantly improve the Nigerian economy, against the expectations of most Nigerians. According to Adediran (2015, p .1):

> The current democratic dispensation that started in 1999 suggested there would be instant outright economic development. But Nigeria is still lagging among the committee of democratic nations in terms of development. However, the nexus between democracy and development is contestable.

The return of Nigeria to democratic rule in 1999 gave many Nigerians hopes that; their lives would soon change for the better through the dividends of democracy. However Nigeria's human development between 2005 to early 2019 and later part of 2019 present a picture of high and low ratings. This is supported by UNDP in its briefing note for countries on the 2020 human Development report (2020, P.2), Table 3 below shows that, between 2005 and 2019, Nigeria's HDI value increased from 0.465 to 0.539, an increase of 15.9%. The table also reviews Nigeria's progress in each of the HDI indicators. Between 1990 and 2019, Nigerians life expectancy at birth increased by 8.8 years. Mean years of schooling also increased by 1.4 years and expected years of schooling increased by 3.3 years. Nigeria's GNI per capita increased by 58.0% between 1990 and 2019. However, the country witnessed a decline in HDI value for 2019. According to the UNDP report (2020:2), Nigeria's HDI value for 2019 is 0.539, placing the country in the low human development category and positioning it at 161 out of 189 countries and territories. This low-level rating of Nigeria in human development in 2019 is a minus for Nigeria's political leaders in terms of their inability to provide dividends of democracy.

Table 3: Nigeria's HDI trends based on consistent time series data and new goal posts.

	Life expectancy at birth	**Expected years of schooling**	**Mean years of schooling**	**GNI per capita (2017 (PPP**	**HDI value**
1990	45.9	6.7		3,109	
1995	45.9	7.2		2,776	
2000	46.3	8.0		2,739	
2005	48.3	9.0	5.2	3,675	0.465
2010	50.9	8.4	5.2	4,536	0.482
2015	53.1	9.7	6.2	5,356	0.526
2016	53.5	9.5	6.3	5,160	0.526
2017	54.0	9.7	6.4	5,032	0.531
2018	54.3	9.7	6.5	4,929	0.534
2019	54.7	10.0	6.7	4,910	0.539

Source: Adapted from Briefing note for countries on the 2020 Human development report: Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is the position of this paper that, if Nigeria is to attain the desired development as in other climes that practiced federalism and democracy, there is the need for the political leadership to keep to certain minimum standards expected of good leaders in terms of transparency, commitment to the unity of the country, and leadership amongst others. Keeping to minimum standards include providing leadership that would have the courage and willpower to re-examine Nigeria's political culture so that, issues such as corruption, exclusionism, political manipulations, unemployment, and poverty among others are addressed as discussed in the body of the paper. The state governors should stop jeopardizing the revenue powers of the local government and also ensure that, local government fiscal autonomy is guaranteed. This would allow for grassroots development.

On the final note, generally, Nigeria is blessed with abundant resources, as such citizens should not ordinarily suffer. Dividends of democracy should ordinarily make available sufficient access to basic needs like security, food, shelter, employment and other necessities of life. Similarly to achieve federal democracy and economic prosperity political leaders and followers should have national consensus in a pursuit of a devolved federal system and good democratic practice, and good development performance.

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