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LEADERSHIP FAILURE AND THE BURDENS OF UPHOLDING DEMOCRATIC VALUES IN NIGERIAN DEMOCRACY.

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ABSTRACT

Nigeria's attempt at fostering democratic governance has continued to suffer series of set-backs, several years after gaining Political Independence. The causes of these, is not however farfetched. These include the difficulty of integrating the indigenous political values with the alien political system, and the dearth of true National leaders, who could have successfully driven the new innovations. This is in addition to the weak institution that has continued to rob the Nation the opportunity to develop Political culture that is in tandem with the demand of Democratic Principles of our times. Furthermore, the Institutional failure, has not only aggravated matters but, is sustained by the corrupt nature of Politics played in Nigeria. In effect, the direct consequence of all these, is people's lack of interest in any process aimed at building National consciousness. Tribal sentiment which has overwhelmed the Nigerian Political terrain over the years has also prevented the development of the sense of Nationalism because there is no genuine and generally recognized rallying point to achieve such. In Nigeria, people's orientation is narrowed by growing suspicion and fear of domination reinforced by Ethnic Politics. It is therefore the aim of this Paper to emphasize on the danger of leadership failure to the development of democracy, and also to proffer solutions that will whistle down to the consequences of Ethnic Politics on leadership failure. To surmount this vice, this could be achieved by encouraging the creation of forum to re-orient and to re-emphasis on the need to

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adopt cherished principles of Democratic values that are anchored on mutual respect and accommodation of groups' interest. For the Democratic government to strive, the Nation's cultural diversity should be harmonized, and thereafter harnessed into United front that could be inimical toward propelling general Nationalistic attitudes devoid of Ethnic sentiment, and also extolling and embracing qualities aimed at willingly, or built on rendering selfless services to the Nation.

KEYWORDS: Sentiment, Political Bigots, Leadership, Orientation and Nationalism.

INTRODUCTION.

Nigeria is a Nation of diverse Cultural groups that are united in name but diverse ethics and norms. This diversity has made the Nation to appear like 'coat of many colour'. The colours have, however remained very dim over the years with no hope of gaining brightness. Ethnicity, Nepotism and corrupt tendencies have made the situation to appear irredeemable. In effect; this diversity which ought to have translated into strength has turned to undermine the strength of the Nation both politically and economically. Individual ethnic consciousness appeared to have been instigated by Colonialism who cherished the politics of divide and rule.

Before the coming of the Europeans the various ethnic groups through inter-group marriages were living in harmony, relating among themselves on generally acceptable terms. The groups had control over terms of relationship, and thus had no need to quarrel over political, economic, religious and social issues. At any time, what often triggered inter-group wars, mostly boarders on land hunger due to population increment, and this has always been resolved in the battle field or through dialogue. Politically, people had no issue with regard to political arrangement since socio-cultural norms have assigned leadership positions in particular to specific lineage in the society.

Moreover, the coming of the European with the introduction of new political ideology, created a new order that was at variance with the local people. By throwing up a new political order new challenges arose in contention with the traditional political institution. In addition, the introduction of two major world religions, Christianity and particularly Islam which is seen as a way of life by adherents saw the emergence, a new political order with strong religious cleavage. This emerged to truncate the political stability that has existed over the centuries in addition to violating the democratic principles introduced by the Colonial administrators.

Colonialism which would supervise, and enforce the newly introduced political ideology had a tough time planting the new political order, given the fact that those who became exposed to the foreign political ideology were mostly found in the urban center, disconnected from the traditional institution and anxious to acquire political power that will enable them to dislodge the natural political leaders. Those of them who understudy the Colonial Government, and would later be called upon, to superintend positions of authority when political independence was granted to Nigerian held tenaciously to this aspiration. Since the focus of these leaders was to effectively usurp the power of the traditional leaders, the policy thrust of this crop of leaders was misplaced.

The Ethnic groups were made to swallow the bitter pills of embracing the strange political and economic ideologies by the elites, who were entrusted with leadership position when the Nation

finally gained independence. This singular act will herald the episode leading to the beginning of leadership imposition, a critical aspect of politics that works at variance with the Democratic principles and also the indigenous political system. Nigeria has copied the Democratic system of government, but the smooth transition to Democratic governance has continued to be undermined due to the fact that some element of Religious and ethnic influences have become a major barrier to the realization of Democratic rule in Nigeria. What this entails, is that Religion and some cultural affinities have continued to undermine the development of Democratic rule in Nigeria.

This is, as the Colonialism failed to offer the Nation ample of time to learn the new political order before independence was granted her. By 'playing catch up, if you can' now, that, has resulted to lack of adequate time for orientation on Democratic principles. As the peoples understanding about Democratic governance has been at variance from what obtains from the Western World. Leadership interpretation appears to have been seen differently in Nigeria (Africa). This has indirectly contributed to the 'sit tight and protect selfish interest syndrome' of the new leaders in Africa. This of course, is copied or integrated from the indigenous posture of leadership by hereditary, which is also at variance from Democratic Ethics. Considering the multiple and mutually suspicious Ethnic groups in Nigeria, the challenge to political leaders in Nigeria is lack of accommodative policy thrust that would be people oriented. Leaders in Nigeria always focus their attention on how to remain relevance, satisfy Ethnic interest and how to retain or influence Power equation in perpetuity.

THE LEADERSHIP AND POLITICAL SYSTEM DURING COLONIAL ERA IN NIGERIA.

Two Classes of Political leadership existed during the colonial era, the natural or indigenous and the Colonial or alien rulers. During the Colonial rule the natural leaders were not only suppressed, but were also oppressed after being detached from their people through the creation of a new political order by the creation of the office of warrant chiefs. By virtue of the creation of this new political office, the powers of the natural leaders were adversely reduced to the point that some of them were turned into puppets for the colonial leaders. Those who resisted were over thrown and replaced with puppets or better still, banished from their domain to die in exile.

It should be recalled that, In Pre-Colonial Nigeria, such leadership system under the natural leaders existed, Monarchical, Feudalism, and Republicanism etc. These political systems survived for years to offer the indigenous people the needed political direction before the arrival of the colonial administrators. At that time too, crisis emanating from the succession to power was minimal. In effect, it was also not difficult for the people to appoint their leaders, in advent of any leadership crisis. This would however change following the coming of the Europeans. The Europeans arrived to create House of Chiefs in the Country with prescribed assignments that must be in conformity with the new political ideology. This also led the foundation to leadership failure for people whose political orientation has never been stage managed.

It should be recalled that, Colonial administration started in Nigeria from 1865, when Protectorate was declared over the Niger Districts. From 1865, British interest expanded to three separate areas. In Lagos, which was granted crown colony, 'the trading requirements of the merchants of the colony led to constant interferences by the Governor, in the affairs of Yoruba land'. Colonial imposition disorganized traditional political institution. It could be said that

Colonialism created middle home to leadership failure by introducing leadership imposition in Nigeria.

In the Niger-Delta, bitter competition for the oil markets between the various states and European traders pushed further the local consul's intervention. By virtue of these interventions the foundations of modern Nigeria was laid. To further straighten the resolve of the British to concretize her colonial administration over Nigeria, the internecine wars among the Yoruba groups which attracted the colonial interest meant that Lt. Governor Glover, the Governor of Lagos Colony, would become the mediator-in-Chief, a situation that opened the interior of Yoruba land up to Illorin and Nupe Land for British occupation.

In the case of the Niger- Delta, 'Competition between British and French merchants, and the increasing need to maintain peace in order that trade might be encouraged, led the British Government to reverse its policy on non-interference and proclaim a Protectorate over the Niger Districts'. It was in this area that, the British initiated intensive treaties signing for the security of the region.' In fact, in 1884 Nana of Itsekiri signed treaties with consul Hewett bringing Benin river, Warri and certain parts of western Ijo under British Protection, and thus establishing paramountcy of British trade in the area'. Having taken hold of the Eastern and Western Niger-Delta, a consulate was established in Lokoja with the new consul in the person of J.M. Macleod appointed to oversee the area.

However, the presence of other European powers in the Niger-Delta region continued to trouble the British. It was such fear that led the British under Sir George Taubman Goldie to have welded all the major British companies trading on the Niger into the United African Company, having persuaded their Directors and equally assured them, that the only means to chase away competition was through monopoly.

Since it was trade that pre-occupied the minds of the British, their arrival to Niger-area was not initially to alter the indigenous political structure but altercation became noticeable , as the British adopted superior measures to undermine the indigenous political structure, with the use of gun boats the natural leaders were humbled. For instance, in the Niger-Delta area the political units (Houses) were controlled by friendly chiefs who often times received trade goods on credits from the British traders who subsequently appointed some of them leaders. Recalcitrant ones among them were usually banished to die in exile. In Lagos area friendly Yoruba Chiefs were armed against their rivals during the war years in order to open the interior to facilitate trade. In the North, the Emirs that resisted the British were dethroned.

The activities of German in Cameroon, France in Porto Novo, Aghlew, Great and little Popo, and their intermittent encroachment in Niger-area, in addition to G.I. Gaiser the founder of a well known company who had purchased Mahin beach near Lagos were all pivotal in eliciting the British political in Nigeria. In fact, by 1884, the British had concluded thirty-seven such treaties. Goldie who stood for the British interest mobilized fleet of twenty gun boats, which proved very valuable as opposition to his company increased. In response to such threat, Akassa, Brass, Patani and Asaba were bombarded for daring to attack the British company's factories. When Aro expedition was conducted, it was aimed at taking charge of the rich Igbo hinterland trade. When German Herr Flegel attempted to sign treaties with the Sultan of Sokoto and the Emir of Gwandu, Goldie through Joseph Thompson, a British citizen hurriedly forestalled him. What started as trade war would later transform to political domination.

In effect, with the efforts of Goldie and Hewett, the British were able to gain hold of Nigeria for the Metropole. Britain having taken hold of Nigeria began to create political structure that tend to relegate the position of the natural leaders. So the imposition of the colonial rule was not democratic but autocratic in character, because the new structure was not supported by the subjects, and this, the new crops of Nigerian leadership have copied.

THE INCEPTION OF DEMOCRATIC AND PARTY POLITICS IN NIGERIA.

Nigerian Democracy has the reflection of what Sally Dyson captioned in Drum Magazine of October, 1970, thus, 'Nigerians were among such people whose independence was snatched away by a nation, thousands of miles away, pretending it was not in their interest to be free to rule their own fatherland'. Nigerian Post colonial political institution was therefore borrowed . Again, from Dyson's statement it was obvious that though the British colonial government granted Nigeria Political independence, they were however, denied the genuine knowledge of democratic principles considering her political attitude to the colony. This attitude sustained the conviction of Nigeria leadership to believe that the denial of sound political ideology and the snatching of power was the right way to go.

Again the British recruited poorly trained administrators, who lacked basic knowledge of democratic principles and values. By engaging people without requisite knowledge of governance, the panacea of the modern political system was mortgaged to failures.

This has further buttressed the fact by some scholars, that, the structure of the political system introduced in Nigeria by the Colonists was weak. In that respect, 'British Colonization of Nigeria has left an indelible print on this Country-past and present- in such a way that it is capable of influencing its future' positively. The reality of the above statement is the manifestation of failure and the politics of 'do or die' in the present political situation in Nigeria. Again the nature of platform under which the political parties were formed, in addition to caliber of people nominated to nurture the new parties were to say the least discouraging.

To recall, it is important to note, that the move to introduce party politics in Nigeria was nurtured following the evolution of constitutional rule in 1861, after Lagos was annexed. It was however, not until 1945, after the 2nd world war that the search for democratic constitution was realized. Nevertheless, Sam Oyovbaire in Richard Sklar's had supported that, thus, 'Democracy in Africa is a developmental project'. However, weather positive progress has been recorded over the years is what we cannot say here. On two or more occasions after independence, Nigerian political leadership has alternated between the military and civilian rule. Moreover, on each occasion the transition from the military to civilian rule has often failed sooner than later. This has affected the development of party politics in Nigeria. The present democratic rule is sitting on a balance because the developmental democratic process has failed to attain it course due constant interferences. The reason for such is not farfetched. Suffice to list some of the reasons as follows, thus:

(i) The Challenges of setting an appropriate mode of political system that would promote democratic principles is lacking.
(ii) The missing link of inducting the indigenous political cultural habit into the western democratic principles.

(iii) Lack of Core Value of social, participatory and Consociatory arrangement in our democracy.
(iv) Lack of liberal elements of limited government and individual self development.
(v) Problems of how to forge a developmental process in our democracy.
(vi) How to inculcate sustainable democratic habits.

The first representative government in Nigeria could be traced to 1865 as noted above, when the Egba United Board of Management a quasi-government was constituted. This government which was permitted to raise tax was made up of the Chiefs and the educated elite. Discussing further on the inception of democracy and party politics in Nigeria, it will be appropriate to state that though both differs, they are essentially for the development of every nation. Whereas political party could be formed without democratic principles, democratic principle cannot be envisaged without political party. For instance, in 1914 Fredrick Lugard constituted the Nigerian Council of thirty-six members most of whom were drawn from the natural leaders, mostly the Emirs and Obas. They were then appointed to represent certain political interest, and not through political party. By virtue of such appointment, it became obvious that some element of selection, election and party formation was necessary for the smooth running of government.

However, the provision for the nomination of representative from Lagos, Calabar and Warri created the need to float political party subsequently. Those selection and later election concentrated within the cities and could not offer wider orientation to the majority of the people who lived in the rural areas. In effect, because the Chiefs, Obas and Emirs were nominated and not elected, the consequence was that "the Chiefs who formed the majority of the nominated Nigerians were expected to represent the masses. But they rarely attended the meeting of the Council'. This negates the principles of democracy and the promotion of party politics in Nigeria.

Moreover, the colonialists deliberately nominated the naturally leaders who had no knowledge of what they were expected to do at the council and thus lacked the knowledge of educating their subjects on the principles of democracy as envisaged by the colonial administrators. The elites who were excluded from the Nigerian Council were the ones that later spearheaded the formation of political party. They formed the political parties not to address the welfares of the people, but to create a platform that will attract self recognition from the colonial government. It was not however until 'in 1922 that limited recognition was accorded to the elective principle'. This period could as well be regarded as the year when democratic principle of party election was constituted.

Party Politics during colonial rule was weak because those elected under the parties had little or nothing to do; the colonial administrators still played overriding roles. In other words, when the Nigerian Youth Movement was formed in 1936 to replace the Lagos Youth Movements formed in 1934.However, the transformation of the Youth Movement failed to achieve the needed Political transformation as it became more or less a protest platform not Political Party. Subsequently, it joined several other Nationalist platforms to present to the Africans as a medium through which to express their grievances against the colonialism.

The organization which was formed by Samuel Akinsanya had Dr. J.C. Vaughan as it pioneer leader was very strong in Lagos area. The movement had succeeded the Lagos the Lagos Youth movement and had aspired to extend her influence beyond the Lagos area.

From 1936 when the Nigerian Youth movement was formed, the elite participation in politics was very low, apart from the inability of the colonial administrators to accommodate the elites; the creoles that were eventually given political appointments were also discriminated against. In fact Michael Crowder aptly captured the political scenario, thus, 'British were not prepared to accept that more capable members of this class even those who possessed the requisite educational qualifications, assume senior posts in the administration which would in any way put them in a position of directly governing their uneducated fellow men'. In effect, by 1938, the movement had spread beyond Lagos to include Aba, Enugu, Port Harcourt and Calabar in the South East, and Jos, Kaduna, Zaria and Kano in the North. As at 1938, the membership of the Nigerian Youth Movement has grown up to 10,000.From the above account, certainly the Nigerian Youth Movement was the first attempt at forming a National Party. In 1941, the leadership crises that erupted in the Nigerian Youth Movement led Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe to leave the Movement.

From 1943 when Nigerians were appointed to Executive council till the nation's independence in 1960 and beyond researches have shown Nigerian democracy still wobbling and strongly rooted at the developmental stage. Politically, the Nigerian Youth Movement was formed to put pressure on colonial government, but when it failed to adequately articulate this aspiration due to ethnic politics that started playing out in the organization, prominent members of the organization resorted to infiltrating the tribal organization in their bid to actualize their political aspirations. For instance, NCNC that initially appeared as a National Party turned to Pan-Igbo Union to galvanize support. The resignation of frontline leaders, led to the eventual collapse of the Nigerian Youth Movement.

The failures of the Nigerian Youth Movement saw the emergence of the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon as a Political front, likewise the Provisions made by the Macpherson's Constitution of 1951 contributed to the hurried transformation of cultural organizations from the North and West into Political Parties. Initially, the NCNC was formed in 1944 with a resemblance of a National Party. Firstly with Dr. Herbert Macaulay as its first President and Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe as the Secretary General. When Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe eventually became the leader of the Party, (NCNC) some non-Igbo members became afraid of Igbo domination. It was as a result of that, that a Pan-Yoruba cultural group 'Egbe Omo Oduduwa formed by Chief Obafemi Awolowo in 1946 was hurriedly turned to a political party (the Action Group) in 1951.The same fear led the Northern elites under the leadership of the Sarduana of Sokoto, Ahmadu Bello and Alhaji Tafawa Balewa to transform the cultural organization the Ja'aaya mutunen Arewa' into Northern People's Congress. This actually formed the basis of ethnic politics of which Nigeria is yet to recover from. By adopting ethnic toga, the concept of developmental democracy envisaged by Oyebaivre has been unnecessarily prolonged. The danger it portends in Nigerian Politics over the years is well captured in voting and election pattern as recorded in subsequent elections in Nigeria.

Prior to the election of 1951 the 'Northerners feared that incorporation into a unitary Nigerian state would mean that they would ultimately become politically and culturally dominated by the south'. This mind set adversely defined the character of Political relationship between the North and South. By betraying such mentality it became very difficult to play Politics devoid of ethnicism in Nigeria. In fact, Falola affirmed to support this when he stated, thus: 'Throughout Nigeria, ethnic identities had begun to solidify…'. Even the NCNC which appeared to have a

National outlook began to wear ethnic toga. The moment the suspicion was confirmed, what followed was the formation and transformation of cultural organizations into Political Parties. NCNC that used to enjoy the support of the Yoruba, Igbo and Southern minorities began to assume Igbo Party. In fact, when the votes of 1951-52 Elections had been counted, Nigeria had clearly broken into regional blocs. The NCNC dominated the Eastern Region; In the North, the NPC took all the seats, and in the West, the AG won 49, out of 80 seats, a solid Majority. The loss of confidence in the National Party was gradual as can be seen in the following elections

NIGERIAN FIRST GENERAL ELECTION 1951-52 RESULTS:

In effect, '1951-52 Election marked the real beginning of the transfer of power to Nigerians by the colonialists, and was therefore a significant last jump on the course towards decolonization'. After the formation of NNDP and its subsequent contest for the seats for Lagos territory in 1920s, the Real Party Politics contest could be said to have been ushered, following the adoption of Sir Richards's constitution earlier in March 1945.In fact, Crowder affirmed in support, thus, this constitution 'mark the real turning-point in Nigeria's progress towards independence'. The real turning point indeed, being so, firstly, relevance was conceded to Party Politics in Nigeria. The constitution also made provision for the creation of three regions, East, West and the North. The direct consequence the above development was the provision of expanded Party Political system. It should also be noted that the regional election thereafter, in both Eastern and Western Regions of Nigeria underscores the point of assessment to the level of Ethnicism in Nigerian Politics.

As noted earlier, the Party Politics experiment in Nigeria started from Lagos and later Calabar cities. The Nigerian Youth Movement and Nigerian National Democratic Party had been the only party in Nigeria to contest for seats in the two cities in 1922 for the two cities. Party Politics was later extended to the entire regions of the East and West regions in 1951, and later the North. In the Regional House of Assembly Election conducted later. The three major parties, the NCNC whose dominant policy was the achievement of a Uniting Nigeria, the Action Group which at first was mainly intent on securing Western region interest … and the NPC which was transformed halfway to a political party from cultural organization, had the wrong foundation of projecting sectional interest than supporting national goal. Ethnic politics therefore owed its foundation to the strong ethnic influences and coloration that survived the colonial regime. The under listed Political Parties, NCNC, NPC and Action Group were the major political parties that Contested the election.

During the above Election both NCNC and the AG fielded Candidate as could be seen from the above table. Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe an Igbo man from the Eastern Region but residing in Lagos then Part of the Western Region had contested and won a seat to represent Lagos in the Western House of Assembly. Not only that, his Party, the NCNC had also won 43 out of 84 seats. So Azikiwe being the Leader of the NCNC was on the verge of becoming the Leader of the Business in the Western Region when Ethnic Politics was permitted to take the center stage. According to Ikejiani, 'the next day we all went to the opening of the Western House of Assembly. Immediately after the initial opening ceremony and after members of the house of Assembly had taken their seats with the parties, which they belonged, the first person to cross over to the A.G. side was Chief Arthur Prest'. As a result of Ethnic Politics directed against Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe and his Party, when about 20 Members Elected under the NCNC in the

Western House cross carpeted to AG, he was advised by his close friends to go to the East instead of playing second fiddle as an opposition Leader in the Western House then dominated by the Yoruba people.

Note: During this Election a number of Action Group members had stood as NCNC Candidates but subsequently crossed the carpet to join the Action Group of Chief Obafemi Awolowo .In Lagos the NCNC under the leadership of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe had won one of the three seats for Lagos and Zik was on the verge of being Elected the Premier of Western Region before the cross carpet. This thus confirmed the genesis of ethnicism in Nigerian Politics.

THE EASTERN NIGERIA 1957 REGIONAL HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY ELECTION RESULTS.

NCNC:……
…….64 Seats

UNIP:……
……..3 Seats

AG:……
……13 Seats

Independents:……
…….2 Seats

THE EASTERN NIGERIAN 1959 REGIONAL HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY ELECTION RESULTS.

NCNC:……
……..106 Seats

AG:……
……..15 Seats

Dynamic
Party:……
……5 Seats

Independents:……
…….15 Seats

Note: There is a recorded Increment in number of seats contested for in the Regional Election from 1957-1959, and that meant that more Electoral Constituencies were created within that time. Again the voting pattern portrayed animosity and ethnicism. The seats won by the Action Group came mainly from the non-Igbo speaking areas of the Eastern Region.

WESTERN REGION.

NCNC :……...23 Seats

NPC:……..NIL

AG:……....18 Seats

Mobolaji Democratic Party:.. ….6 Seats

Note: Voting pattern shows the National Spread of the NCNC until Chief Obafemi Awolowo's Ethnic instigated Politics that cost the NCNC control of the Western Regional House of Assembly in 1950s.

All the Regional Elections as indicated above orchestrated Ethnic dominance in the regions where the leaders of the Parties are from. Whereas the oppositions could win some seats in the regions from the south, in the North, the NPC kept denying the oppositions from even fielding candidates, a clear indication of strong Ethnic Politics in that region.

RESULTS OF 1959 FEDERAL ELECTION IN NIGERIA.

S/N	PARTY'S NAME	TOTAL NUMBER OF VOTES WON.	PERCENTAGE	NUMBER OF SEATS WON.
1	NATIONAL COUNCIL OF NIGERIA AND CAMERON(NCNC)	2,059,577	34%	81
2	ACTION GROUP (AG)	1,992,364	26.1%	73
3	NORTHERN PEOPLES CONGRESS (NPC)	1,922,179	25.2%	134
4	NORTHERN ELEMENT PROGRESSIVE UNION (NEPU)	509,050	6.7%	8
5	MABOLAJI GRAND ALLIANCE	610,677	8	6
6	IGALA UNION		-	4
7	INDEPENDENCE		-	2
8	INDEPENDENCE		-	1
9	IGBIRA TRIBAL UNION		-	1
10	NIGER DELTA CONGRESS		-	1
11	**TOTAL**	**7,628,847**	**100**	**314**

Source: From Chinweizu Caliphate Colonialism p.35

From the above records it could be noticed that Chinweizu's claim on the British collaborative scheme at handing over Power to the Hausa/Fulani was initiated prior to the Independence. In his write up, 'Britain handed over to Northern leaders' Sir James Robertson was the shrewd implementor of Northern rule earlier fashioned by Lords Harcourt and Lugard. If not, the pertinent question one must ask is, how come the purveyors of Democratic government have chosen to deny the NCNC the Party that won more votes in the 1959 Federal Election the opportunity to form the government? Again what informed the British colonial government to create more seats for the North with disregard to more populace south? This is obviously deliberate aim at creating Political problems even after independence. The British initiated this rigging and it has continued to be sustained by the Cabal who has hijacked the Political machinery in Nigeria.

NIGERIAN FEDERAL ELECTION RESULTS OF 1964-65.

Prior to this Election there were series of political alignments. Firstly, the dominant party in the North, the NPC has entered into an alliance with the factional western region party of Akintola, the NNDP in addition with the Mid-West Democratic Front and the Dynamic Party of Chika Obi from the Eastern region to form the Nigerian National Alliance NNA. It appears that those Parties entered into an alliance with NPC for the sake of obtaining relevance from the center. On the other hand, the two main political parties in the south, the NCNC and the AG had aligned themselves with the Northern Element Progressive Union and the United Middle Belt Congress to form the United People's Grand Alliance. In effect, in spite of Election marred with rigging and thuggry the outcome had strong evidence of ethnic sentiment in voting pattern.

However, in spite of Ethnic Politics being hoisted on Nigerian Political horizon, efforts were made to sustain some kind of stability at the center. In fact, Falola rightly pointed out thus,

> General Elections of 1954, 1956 and 1959 cemented
>
> the regionalization of Political Consciousness in Nigeria,
>
> as the AG, NCNC and NPC Continued to dominate their
>
> respective regions in both the regional and Central legislature.
>
> In many ways, however, the various regional Political Parties
>
> tried to work together to form a strong National Government
>
> in the second half of the 1950s.

Evidently the results from Elections conducted in Nigeria have continued to reflect ethnic coloration with the Political Parties gaining dominance from the region of their founders. That was the case from the 1950s to the early 60s.From 1970 after the civil war; the Political cabal has emerged to dictate the Political structures and the leadership to various strata of Political positions in Nigeria. This system of politics has steadily grown too, and even extended to other sectors. The cabal now engaged partisans to supervise the elections, to head most strategic sectors in Nigeria.

RELIGION AND POLITICS: THE PAINS OF UPHOLDING DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES IN NIGERIA.

Christianity and Islam are two major religion practiced in Nigeria. These two foreign religious organizations have not only overwhelmed the traditional religion, but have influenced every aspect of their life. For instance, Islam is seen by its adherents as more than religion, but total way of life. Islam therefore touches every aspect of life of the adherents including Political. This however, is at variance with Christianity that is not compulsive. The clashes between the two religious ideologies have continued to undermine the Principles of democracy. For the traditional religion Amucheazi aptly captured thus, 'the traditional religion are not in a position to exert meaningful influence on the course of Nigerian Politics', in which case, the two religions have succeeded to dictate the Nation's Political swings because to some extent the traditional Political institutions have already been clipped.

It should however, be noted that, 'as a matter of fact, Lord Lugard who consolidated the British control over Nigeria, was reluctant to allow Christianity freehand to evangelise the North'. This attitude had far reaching effect on the bond of building strong Political unity. Lugard failed to realize that, 'by the first decade of the century, a great part of Northern Nigeria had come under the control of Moslems, who in fact restructured the Political and social set-up of the area'. Since Islam supported theocratic rule, so the emirate system of government was acceptable to the Northern Moslem more, this negated the system of government introduced to the south by the colonial administrators. In other word, when party politics was introduced in Nigeria, the attitude of Northern Moslems was to sustain deeper Political system with strong Islamic colouration. No wonder, their natural leaders, the Emirs were given strong roles in the new political system in Nigeria. The democratic system failed in the North because it held tenaciously to political system that has strong link and connection to the Islamic religion.

Mutual suspicion anchored on fear of domination has been another key factor responsible for undermining the growth of the Democratic government in Nigeria. Ethnic interest has always been the deciding factor in election results. In addition, those who were given the mandate to rule have usurped the political power for selfish interest, and they have systematically extended the same to other sector of national development as well. The direct consequence is that leaders are selected with the blessings of the cabal and not elected. The cabals have always floated a party constituted by leaders mostly loyal to its political ideology .selected from the North. Hiding under the fathom and over bloated census figures

CONCLUSION

The British Colonial government facilitated Ethnic Politics when they collaborated with the Northern leaders to rig the Federal Elections prior to the Independence. The failure of democracy in Nigeria was sustained when ethnic politics was introduced into the political system of the Country by the Elites. Loyalty shifted from the National interest to sectional interest. The drive for nation building was relegated to the background as acclaimed Nationalists adopted the toga of Ethnic jingoist. At the peak of politicking, the cultural groups which were formed during the Colonial era were promptly transformed to articulate Ethnic interest; this was to detriment of National interest.

On attainment of independence, the newly formed political parties automatically transformed to become platforms to promote sectional interest, and also as a launch pad for the elites to test their popularity in National Politics. Because ethnicism has formed the bedrock of the party politics in Nigeria, the democratic system was allowed to remain at the developmental level. Since no effort was made to remedy ethnic politics attention moved to mutual suspicion as no politician no matter how popular was able to win National trust. This produced a democratic pattern of politics that nurtured the development of cabal in politics. This cabal which presently reflects a political class has integrated the top military officers, captains of industries, top judges, first class traditional rulers, notorious religious leaders and some top notch academics.

With the repugnant ethnic politics, it is obvious that no serious attempt is made to build national Consciousness among the people since independence. It thus behooves that, while the Colonial government denied the indigenous leaders the opportunity to understudy the new political system, those of them who managed to be selected to occupy a position in the Colonial government, were restricted to ceremonial functions. The African leaders either by omission or commission were denied the vintage positions in Colonial government that would have afforded them the opportunity to test run the new system.

Transition from colonial rule to independence suffered acute shortage of well trained manpower since the numbers of black people recruited to understudy the whites were few. When the few so recruited were mostly from the South, it generated animosity between the Northern and Southern region. Fear of domination saw the North throwing up incompetent leaders who came to power not to unite the Nation but to sustain ethnic disharmony. It is also from the bulk of these elites and their scion that the political cabals emerged to sustain sectional interest not only in the political terrain of the Nation, but to the Economic sectors. From evidence, it has spread to the judiciary, the Military and other key sectors of the Nations existence.

Nigerian brand of political bigotry is such that appears to subjugate, and strive in oppressive tendency. Political leaders within the sphere of this type of political system have continued to recruit surrogates from other ethnic groups. Such recruits are allowed certain political, economic, juicy judicial top jobs and high officer ranking in the military and Para-military cadres. This political system has destroyed Democratic system which Nigeria pretends to practice. It will take high sense of Nationalism and selfless commitment to Nation building to extricate Nigeria from this mess. Beside, bad leadership in Nigeria has created bad institution; it can only take revitalized leadership space to re-create a New Nigeria that can be a doyen for all. The common people, who most often have formed already made political thugs, need to be more politically enlightened. The earlier they understand what the system has done in relegating them to be societal drag not worthy to enjoy the good things of life, the better for all.

Proper planning cannot be effected in Nigeria because the Political cabals have cooked figures to favour their interest. This has become glaring during political parties elections, when figures have been seen to have been inflated to serve certain political interest. People are now complaining that free and fair elections are not guaranteed in Nigeria, because obviously selection has replaced election .Ethnic politics has prevented people of Nigeria from recognizing genuine National leaders. The absence of true National leaders is responsible for the needed cohesion vital for building Democratic ethics. The Nation’s Democracy can grow when the masses become more enlightened to understand their political rights, and when they begin to

place demands on enforcement of those rights from those leaders when elected to power. Money bag Politics should be discarded. Any aspirant who spent money to secure a political position will definitely work to recover the money he spent during campaign, when elected to power. No sincere and honest leader would throw money about in order to secure a political position; electorates should also understand that placing monetary demand on the aspirants is as good as supporting the enthronement of corrupt leaders. In that respect, building Democratic values and aborting the era of leadership failures in Nigeria is a collective responsibility.

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