

# **The Nigerian State and Crisis of Democratic Governance (1960-2007)**

**Ugwu Chukwuka E.**

*Department of Public Administration and Local  
Government University of Nigeria, Nsukka*

**Abstract:**

*The main thrust of this paper is an analysis of the concept of state generally and a historical prognosis on the dynamics of the post colonial state system of Nigeria. It additionally discusses the role of the Nigerian state in the implementation of basic democratic configurations in the governance theatrics of Nigeria. The paper's postulation is that, in the*

*context of effective democratization of the polity in Nigeria, the Nigerian state has not achieved the objective conditions for democratic governance, leading to citizen's political deprivation.*

**Key Words:** Nigerian State, Crisis of Democratic Governance, Political Instability in Nigeria, Democratic Elections in Nigeria.

**Introduction:**

The state as a political phenomenon is analyzed by various scholars Abraham (2008) Okowa (2008) Ekpebu (2008) as that political mechanism organized for implementing law and order and for ensuring the development of its people within the context of a given territory. In order words, the state Abraham (2008) is established to serve certain utilitarian purposes in the service of the citizens under its jurisdiction. On this particularly, Pam Sha (2005:59) has opined that the state is:

*Established to execute and sustain its fundamental inherent and constitutional responsibilities of ensuring a secured people and territory for sustainable development within a regulated society... It is thus related with governmental performances, particularly, the magnitude, scope and scale of political and governmental performances and the conditions that affect such performance.*

One of the major political and governmental performances expected of modern states as the Nigerian state is enhanced citizenship and increasing democratization. This aspect of the state functions has been adumbrated upon by Jessop (1990) when he avers that, the proper object of our study of states is not the state itself, but state projects which are those political undertaking which have as their intended outcome –state effects ||.

One of the state affects of modern state's operations is that these states have broadly embarked upon representative democratic forms of society as a matter of importance. This feature of modern states, explains why states like the Nigerian state have evolved democratic phenomenon such as representative democratic institutions (parliaments, democratic presidential systems and other elements of democratic governance at both state and local levels), along with certain civil and economic rights and privileges as enshrined in the country's constitution.

Accordingly, Bobbio (1986:66) has indicated that most modern states, like the Nigerian state define the political element of their democratization to include the following political condition:

- ✓ All citizens who have reached legal age, without regard to race, religion, economic status, sex, etc. must enjoy political rights, i.e. the right to express their own opinion through their vote and/or to elect those who express it for them.
- ✓ The vote of all citizens must have equal weight.
- ✓ All citizens enjoying political rights must be free to vote according to their own opinion, formed as freely as possible, i.e. in a free contest between organized political groups competing among themselves so as to aggregate demands and transform them into collective deliberations.
- ✓ They must also be free in the sense that they must be in a position of having real alternatives, i.e. of choosing between different solutions.
- ✓ Whether for collective deliberations or for the election of representatives, the principle of numerical majority holds-even though different forms of majority rule can be established (relative, absolute, qualified), under certain circumstances established in advance.
- ✓ No decision taken by a majority must limit minority rights, especially the right to become eventually, under normal condition, a majority.

From the above cluster of democratic rules expected to be accomplished by states as the Nigerian state, there have arisen debate among social analysts Ake (1973) Duru (2003) and Ezeani (2004) as to whether the Nigerian state has succeeded in establishing effective democratic governance in Nigeria. While some of these authors have averred that the Nigerian state is significantly consolidating democratic governance, a lot of others are of the opinion, that the Nigerian state is still a feudal state system, circumscribing democratic governance.

On the feudalistic oligarchy of the Nigerian state and its implication on effective democratization in Nigeria, Okowa (1997:56) has vehemently mused that:

*The Nigerian state is fundamentally a feudal system. It is true that the British introduced capitalism and liberal democracy in the course of their imperialism. However, the fundamental values remain feudal. Social*

*orientation remains feudal. Social propensities are still*

*feudal. Liberal democratic values are yet to develop. The institution of liberal democracy is, therefore, to the extent that, it appears to exist, no more than a fraudulent pretence and a defensive front. This is the crux of the matter.*

It is against the above stipulated problems of fraudulent democratization as executed by the Nigerian state that this study intends to explore closely the subject matter by addressing itself to answering the following research questions: What are the various theoretical underpinning attempting a vivid elucidation of the concept of state and democratic governance as it borders on the subject matter? What are the historical and contemporary features of the Nigerian post colonial state? Have the Nigerian state been embroiled in political instability that have engendered an orchestra of democratic misgovernance? Have the Nigerian state been able to conduct a credible democratic election that is free and fair. What panacea could be proffered as a way out of the political crisis experienced by the Nigerian state in evolving an effective democratic government?

The answers to the above stated questions and many more will form the objectives of this study. It is now to the conceptual discourse section of the study, that focus will be turned to.

## **Conceptual Discourse**

### **Democratic Governance:**

The concept of democratic governance stems from the underlying variables of democracy and government. The two concepts borders on the issue of the necessary factors that must be put in place in attempt to ensure that societies within the governance context attain good lives through their governance structures. In other words, democratic governance can not be conceived outside the boundaries of the transformation of the reality of people's life through effective and strategic representation in governance into positive decisions that advance humanity.

From the United Nation's (1948 & 2001) point of view, it has been observed through the universal declaration of human rights and other declarations that democracy and its concomitant governance structures involves that, the will of the people shall be the basis of authority of government. It guarantees that every citizen enjoys the

right to effective political participation, which implies that democratic governance is not attainable until civil and political rights of individuals, constitute the conduct of public affairs.

The democratic governance dynamics also should involved the fact that the people's participating right and freedoms are to be effectively guaranteed and jealously protected. A significant element of democratic governance is expected to ensure governance mechanisms that are transparent, accountable, respect for pluralistic ideas, promotion of gender and social equality, freedom of choice, associations, movement, worship, speech etc. From World Bank (1999) and UNDP (1997) perspectives, democratic governance envisages the exercise of political authority in terms of the use of public resources to attend to society's problems and affairs which include political governance, economic governance and social governance.

For the purposes of this inquiry however, democratic governance involves the relationship between the state governance structures and the society in which necessary norms, values, procedures and institutions are adopted, that emphasizes free and equitable opportunities for all citizens, to contribute to societal growth, empowerment and administration. In its implementation, it is expected to revolve around variables denoting the guaranteeing of people's socio-economic and political rights, avoidance of corruption and protection of minority and majority rights. All these are within the dictates of responsive and inclusive governance, devoid of poverty squalor in society. This concept of democratic governances advocated by this study tallies with non-bourgeois democratism in which Lenin Says:

*At all costs we must break the old, absurd, savage, despicable and disgusting prejudice that only the so-called "upper classes" only the rich, and those who have gone through the school of rich, are capable of administering the state and directing the organizational development of ...society.*

For Lawan (2008) democratic governance in Nigeria (especially during the Obasanjo's administration 1999-2007) has not achieved the objectives of it tenets. Some of the areas that the Obasanjo administration has not achieve the objectives of democratic governance borders on the following:

- Inability to implement good social policy bordering on support for social infrastructural development and evolvment of people

friendly policies. This has created inequality among the various social classes in Nigeria given rise to unemployment, poverty and disease among the Nigerian masses.

- Poor transparency and accountability administration. This is demonstrated in accountability and transparency governance posturing appearing in more of official propaganda than in reality. This has given rise to massive corruption in government which was very visible during the Obasanjo years in office.
- Failure to adhere to rule of law. The federal government in Nigeria between 1999-2007 was allergic to issues of rule of law and its procedures. There was open disregard for judgments that emanated from Nigerian Court of law given rise to illegality in government and trampling on human and civil rights of the citizens.
- Poor consensus building strategies. One major aspect of democratic governance is the adoption of popular participation in the implementation of governmental policies. The Obasanjo government 1999-2007 disregarded the implementation of this popular participation taking unilateral decisions on such critical policies like the conceding of the Nigerian Bakassi peninsula to Cameroon

**State:** The concept of state has a very long history with the word **–state**|| being a derivative of the Latin word **stare** and **status** connoting standing position or condition. According to Andrew (2004:39) the use of the word status refers to the context of the ruler possessing stability or variables necessitating stability. Status then is achieved through profession, family, sex and most importantly property. Continuing, he equally traced the concept from the French vocabulary **–estat.**” from where the English word **–state**” and **“estate**” were conceived. The **–estate of the realm**” which denotes citizens with rank, property and good social standing are predominantly the custodian of the highest public authority and power, ensuring societal order and welfare.

In the course of the history and practice of **–statism**” in social parlance, social scientists have noted commonality of features and characteristics associated with the nature of the state. Commenting further on this, Christopher (2006:6) and Andrew (2004:40) discussed these intrinsic forms in details. According to them, the state has geographically demarcated territory with its own citizen. It lay claims to authority over these citizens and groups within its sphere of

jurisdiction and embodies more comprehensive aims than other



associations under it. The state's authority is accepted as legally binding and its laws are procedural rules that are generally recognized above all other rules. The state operates through impersonal power and trained bureaucries and embodies the use of maximal control of resources and force within its area of control. However, the states' monopoly of control is not consistently based on force since most states make attempt to lay claim to legitimacy from its citizens. The state is seen as the custodian of sovereignty within its area of control and externally as an equal member of the international comity of states. Finally, to be a member of a state, involves specific civil disposition which involve public power play, distinct from the rulers and the subjects.

It is the consensus view of scholars from diverse ideological callings, that it is important for the state to maintain peace, order and harmony in society. Collaborating on this, Hobbes (1968:186) regarded as one of the first theorist of modern state, argued that it is, in the best interest of individuals to surrender most of their natural liberties to the public sovereign or the great Leviathan. This will assist them to avoid war of all, against all in which life would be solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short. In the same vein, Weber (1978a:54) postulated that the modern state is:

*A compulsory political organization with continuous operations, insofar as its administrative staff successfully upholds the claims to the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force in the enforcement of its order.*

However, the Marxist theory of the nature of state is that, in as much as it concurs with the phenomenon of the state being the great Leviathan, it argues that, resolution of these conflicts and oppositions are executed in the context of class relations, with one social class dominating other classes. Social classes as conceptualized by one of the leading Marxist proponent, Lenin (1960:45) states that:

*Classes, are large groups of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in the historically determined system of social production, by their relations to the means of production, by their role in the social organization of labour, and, consequently, by the dimension of the share of social wealth of which they dispose and the mode of acquiring it. Classes are groups of people one of which can appropriate the labour of*

*another owing to the different places they occupy in a definite system of social economy.*

From the above definition, it can be proposed that, one major dimension of class identification is the group one belongs to. The appropriator or the appropriated, or in other words, the exploiter or the exploited. While the appropriators transforms into the propertied social rank called the bourgeoisie and engages in process of social exploitation, the exploited constitute themselves into the subordinate class experiencing all forms of social domination most especially ruler-ship or governance from the bourgeoisie.

Explaining the above class relation further Nicos Poulantzas (1936-1979), following the insights of Gramsci (1891-1937) developed the Marxist theory of –relationship between politics, classes and state power||. The state is in the analysis, conceptualized by Ibeanu (1988) as an absolute manifestation of bourgeoisie political domination of other classes, demonstrated in various forms.

One of the forms is the governmental apparatus- the legislative, the executive and the judiciary. Another form is the coercive apparatus consisting of the system of norms, values, mores and belief system acceptable to the dominant class in a given epoch. Ibeanu concluded that most of these forms of bourgeoisie subjugation in the form of state are carried out by its extensive bureaucracy.

In concluding this thesis on the nature and features of the states, we stress once again that state features cannot be conceptualized outside their historical context. But whatever historical period that is at stake, this paper align itself with Igwe (2002:416) that defined the state as a –creature of the basis, and most decisive element of the superstructure of society, with class and politics among its major attributes, and government its primary agency||.

However, Ake (1976) stressed that in the analysis of state, it is recommended that, it should not be understood in abstract definitions. He asserted that unlike Igwe’s abstract conceptualization, the definition have to be given concreteness, by locating them in particular socio-economic formations. It is now to the historical specifically of the post colonial state of Nigeria, and its dynamic effects on democratization, that this paper henceforth preoccupies itself with.

### **The Nigerian Post Colonial State:**

The Nigeria post colonial state is a direct product of the colonial state of Nigeria that was established in 1900. It originated as a result of

the intense trading competition in the West African sub region between several European countries especially Britain, Germany and French mercantile companies. The arrow-head of Britain's trading activities in the region was the Royal Niger Company (RNC) chartered in 1886 as an amalgam of smaller British trading companies, with the objectives of minimizing the cut-throat competition among British companies. With these mergers, Britain's RNC out-competed other European trading agencies in the lower Niger areas, and constituted itself into a kind of proto-colonial state. Explaining this empowerment further, Obaro (1977:33) stated that:

*The obtaining of a charter meant that the company was not just a trading concern: it had conferred on it, certain powers of government and law making, as well as powers to raise and maintain an armed force for the effective pursuit of its trade as well as for the maintenance of law and order. The appearance on the scene, of the Royal Niger Company, was to have momentous consequences for the Southern Nigeria.*

As above predicted, the consequences of this royal Niger activities gave rise to the imposition of the colonial state of Nigeria in 1914 by Lord Lugard. The interest of the colonial state was essentially to maintain order and stability and pursuit of policies, which served more the interest of foreign companies and Britain, than on developing the primary interest of the Africans. (Eme Ekekwe 1986:26).

The emergent ruling class in the post colonial state that started after independence of 1960 resulted from elements of local bourgeoisie that got their capital from compradorial and commercial activities, mainly distributive trading. Also, another group of petty bourgeoisie emerged from those employed in the expanding bureaucracy of both foreign companies and the colonial administration. From this class emerged professionals like doctors, lawyers and highly educated elites that later turned into elements of political leaders that took over power from the colonialist after independence, constituting themselves into the post colonial ruling elites and its state correlates. Though, these educated elites and their petty bourgeoisie collaborators are in the minority, they assumed that they were qualified by natural rights to assume state power and governance (Awo 1947:64).

In further defense of the inevitability of their ruler ship over others, Awo (1947:63) noted:

*It must be realized now and for all times that these articulate minorities are destined to rule the country. It is their heritage. It is they, who must be trained in the art of government so as to enable them to take over complete control of the affairs of their country. Their regime may be delayed, but it cannot be precluded.*

And to scorn the political ineptitude and naivety of the broad masses of Nigerians outside their petty bourgeoisie class, he stated; *They are ignorant and will not be bothered by politics. Their sole preoccupation is the search for food, clothing and shelter of a wretched type. To them, it does not seem to matter who rules the country, so long as in the process, they are allowed to live their lives in peace and crude comfort. If they bestir themselves at all, as they do occasionally, it is because they have been, unduly oppressed by a tribal chieftain or outraged by the blunders of an administrative officer (Awo 1947:31).*

In similar views, Azikwe (1968:312-13) collaborated Awo's postulations that such educated Africans are –mentally emancipated and politically resurgent|| while their peasant counterparts were men and women who did not survive the Darwinian struggle.

Social science researchers have contributed immense ideas on the nature of this emerged post colonial ruling elites and the post colonial state. Ake's contribution (1981:128) argued that what African state formations had at the independence era was a state which was (a) particularly developed i.e. the apparatuses of the state were developed more than the society it is controlling (2) the state were involved in class struggle instead of rising above it. Explaining in details, he avers that, even though these two characteristics of the post colonial state were also features of the colonial state, the emerging indigenous bourgeoisie who lacked secure material base, used their new political power for capital accumulation. The consequences of this phenomenon in the political realities of the post colonial states in Africa, is the colossal bitter struggle to gain control of the government as a formal access to state power.

This struggle results in the social scenario where –those in office do all they can to perpetuate their hold on it, while those out of office do all thy can to get in. In the course of this political

contestation, the picture of the post colonial state in Africa as stated by Ake (1981:12) becomes that:

*The boundary between the state, government and the ruling class is very blurred; a government tangentially used by the hegemonic faction of the bourgeoisie to manipulate state power, a state with limited potential for mediating the class struggle, and endemic political instability arising from too high a premium on political power.*

Consequent on the aforementioned endemic political instability and too high a premium on political power in the post colonial Nigerian state are these questions: What nature of political instability and crisis are generated by this type of state system in Nigeria? How does the high premium placed on political power acquisition and perpetuation by the operators of the state shortchange the broad masses of Nigerians in getting their democratic dividends? Are there free and fair elections in the Nigerian state by which the Nigerian citizens freely give their consent to their representatives? And finally, what is the way forward in attempting to wriggle ourselves out of this discomfoting statuesque? Are there prospects? The answers to these questions will form the crux of the next and last segment of this paper.

### **The State and Political Instability in Nigeria:**

The polity in Nigeria since independence is characterized, by instability that have reached a democratic crises pitch. The parliamentary system of governance that was inaugurated immediately after the British Union jack was lowered, become enmeshed in political crisis caused by ruling class leadership tussle. According to Ake (1973:358), Ake (1991) and Ake (1992), each contender for power whether at national or regional level was desperate to retain or gain office. Those who were in office used their power with little or no restraint, to maintain their privilege and to repress those out of power, who want to replace them, and all these without minding the rules of the game. This lead to the quick termination of the Tafawa Belewa led administration by the military coup d' etat of major Nzeogwu and his cohorts in January 1966. In advancing reason for their overthrow of government Nzeogu and his group blamed excessive political and economic corruption. He stated this specifically in the following terms:

*“Our enemies are the political profiteers, soldiers, the men in high and low places that seek bribes and demand*

*ten percent, those that seek to keep the country divided permanently so that they can remain in office as ministers and V.I.Ps of waste; the tribalists, the nepotists, those that make the country look big for nothing before international circles, those that have corrupted our society and put the Nigeria political calendar back by their words and deeds”.*

Though General Aguiyi Ironsi came to power through this coup d'etat, his regime was abruptly ended within six months of its inception, by another counter coup d'etat, that brought Yakubu Gowon into rulership in the country.

Gowon's regime, which lasted from 1966-1975 was a continuation of the same political intra-class struggle among the ruling class. The consequence of this was the three years civil war that cost the country several million of lives especially among the South Eastern region of Nigeria. At the end of the war, the Federal Government of Nigeria declared the war no victor, no vanquished even though the ruling class of the Igbo ethnic group is till today, outside the core power circle in the country.

General Murtala Mohammed overthrew Gowon's regime in 1975 but barely six months after, was he murdered in an unsuccessful coup. This brought in General Olusegun Obasanjo who lead Nigeria till 1979 and returned the country to democracy.

In all these frequent political changes with its associated crisis, one would wonder whether something is wrong with the Nigerian masses. As in an answer to the question, Achebe (1983:1) opines that:

*There is nothing wrong with the Nigerian land or water nor air or anything else. The trouble with Nigeria is simply or squarely a failure of leadership.*

The presidential elections of 1979, which brought in Alhaji Shehu Shagari to power, were not without the same intra-class bourgeoisie struggles. The climax of this was the overthrow of this regime by General Buhari in 1983, who also was overthrown, by General Babangida by 1984. General Babangida's regime hegemonised Nigerians for eight years, with his –maradonic|| democratic transition programmes, that ended up in the annulment of the June 12 1993 presidential election, in which M. K.O Abiola won.

As a result of public outcry over the cancellation of the June 12 presidential election, and the associated intensive pressure from other

members of the Nigerian state and the international community, Babangida –stepped aside|| which resulted in the formation of Ernest Shonekan’s interim government that was removed by Sanni Abacha in 1995. General Sanni Abacha’s regime, that was judged the most autocratic government since the history of Nigeria, traumatized and brutalized Nigerians in the course of his administration. While many Nigerians were killed, others went into self exile and this power play continued until he died in office in 1998.

General Abdulsalami Abubakar took over power from 1998, and returned Nigeria once more to democracy in 1999. In the same year, President Olusegun Obasanjo emerged as the winner of the presidential election of that year under the umbrella party of People Democratic Party. In 2003, Obasanjo recontested for his second tenure in office, and won but failed in his attempt to amend the constitution in 2005/2006, that would have allowed him contest for a third tenure in office.

From the above summarized history of leadership changes at the federal level since independence, one can actually glean that, within a period of 40 years, Nigeria has had about thirteen leaders in row. These constant political changes in leadership has not demonstrated to positively benefit the masses of Nigeria, but a demonstration of squabbles for power among the bourgeoisie class for primitive accumulation of the resources of Nigeria.

### **The Nigerian State and Conduct of Democratic Elections in Nigeria:**

Democratic practice and the need for the conduct of regular free and fair election are so intertwined that one can hardly be discussed without the other. Nwankwo (2006:181) avers that since democracy is defined as contestation that is open to participation, election is the core value of democratic process. In his further defense of the significance of democratic elections as formalized in the voting process, Sartori (1987:86) solidly supported Nwankwo by asserting that:

*It is the only form of democratic political participation in which over 50% of adult populace usually takes part. Above all, election embodies the two criteria of participation and contestation, so that the democratic process can be considered to be indeed encapsulated in elections.*

However, Nwankwo (2006:182) qualified the nature of elections expected of democratic norms, by emphasizing that, the defining characteristics of democratic elections, are their freeness and fairness and therefore, political systems are only seen as democratic, to the extent that political authority, is determined through open, free, fair and competitive elections. And to the extent that these qualities are lacking in democratic elections, to that extent, it leads to political crises in society, resulting in poor democratic governability.

From the above discussion, it is pertinent to ask these questions. To what extent have the Nigerian state conducted free, fair, open and competitive election? Are the elections conducted in such procedures are to encourage ordinary citizens outside the bourgeoisie class to participate? What have been the implications of non compliance with these free and fair tenets of Nigerian elections if any?

Elections in Nigeria started in 1923, and have continued till the last election of April 2007. From the study of political elections in Nigeria, it is generally accepted that elections in Nigeria have always fallen short of expectations of free, fair, open and competitive requirements. Ezeani (2004:144) amply supported this notion when he opined that:

*Regrettably, the history of elections in Nigeria has shown that Nigerians cannot rely on them as veritable means of installing the kind of leaders they want and by implication in changing the material conditions of their existence. This is because elections in Nigeria have been marred by the ugly incidents of electoral malpractice.*

In further collaboration with the above views, Obadene O. (1981:3) in his study of elections in Nigeria from 1959-1979, averred that the highly emotional and vindictive features of Nigerian politics traces its origin to the pre-independence era, which revolved around grafted ethnic opportunism, and the bourgeois class use of their intellectually and socially backward followers, as cannon fodders in the politician's bizarre and desperate struggle to capture power, and have the lion share of what they saw as the national cake. This phenomenon was operationalized in the first federal elections of December 31<sup>st</sup> 1964 which –provoked destabilizing rancor and acrimony, boycotted by United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA), and was massively rigged by all the parties that participated in the election. This resulted in national widespread rioting, looting and arson, and persistent regime of



terror, causing the army to topple the civilian government and the eventuality of civil war of 1967-70.

The 1979 elections, which signed the demise of 13 years of military rule, also witnessed controversial FEDECO announced results, leading to –distracting litigations, acrimony|| and political bickering among the parties. The 1983 election were even worse off, in terms of electoral malpractice. Chief Obafemi Awolowo, one of the presidential candidates as quoted in Vaughan and J. Ihonvbere (1985) protested the electoral fraud of the 1983 elections stating that:

*“There are rigging in the 1983 election ... This time ... the rigging was so massive; it would have taken a month just to prepare the case; to collect the facts and figures”.*

Confirming the opinion of chief Awolowo, the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLG) according to (Vaughan and Ihonvbere 1985) agreed that, the 1983 election were seriously rigged averring that:

*“We know what democracy means. It goes beyond voting and campaigns. The 1983 elections were badly done. Only a fool will say we had an election. The ruling National Party of Nigeria (NPN) employed Gestapo and mafia tactics to win its landslide victory.*

The 1993, 1999 and 2003 elections according to Ushie (2005:179) were mostly problematic in scope and content. For instance, the 1993 electoral fraud started right from the party primaries that were conducted September 14<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of 1992 in preparation for the 1993 polls. In an 18 page report, on electoral frauds committed by the political parties during these party primaries, a total of thirteen electoral sins were identified. This report, submitted to Babangida’s AFRC consisted of use of wealth by aspirants to buy votes or achieve undue advantages; threats and intimidation; favouritism on the part of party executive committees; and use of state government machinery by some governors in favour of some aspirants; falsification of figures and allocation of votes where elections did not take place; non-serialization of accreditation slips; late arrival of pre-accreditation material; non conduct of primary election as scheduled, and arbitrary cancellation of results by returning officers, to favour candidates. There are mutilation of election results; issuance of fake accreditation slip and voting by non-accredited persons; as well as voting by under-aged and nonparty members. Apart from the above electoral frauds at the party primaries,

the 1993 elections itself was later cancelled by Babangida, after wasting the Nations time and resources, organizing the longest and most expensive political transition programme, which by August 27, 1993 had gulped over ₦30 billion.

During the 1999 election, Ushie (2005:180) had reports of continuation of this electoral fraud and manipulation at intra-party level. The tactics this time was the practice of monumental monetization of party position by means of high level charges against candidates wishing to contest election. He states that:

*Candidates who cannot pay the bidding of the party hierarchy were left out of the race. In this case, suitable candidates who should have better represented the interest of the rural people are left out for candidates who can pay the piper ... Causing decay of democracy at the grass root.*

In summing up the vicissitudes of electoral malpractice impinging on expected free, fair and open elections in Nigeria, especially from the second Republic till 2007 elections, it is our submission here as Ushie (2005:179) also did agree, that our elections have never attained that electoral standard of freeness and fairness. In general, the various elections are characterized by: Ushie (2005)

- Illegal compilation of separate voter's lists;
- Abuse of the revision exercise
- Illegal printing of voters cards
- Illegal possession of ballot boxes,
- Stuffing of ballot boxes with ballot papers and falsification of election results
- Thumb-printing of ballot papers in advance
- Voting by under-aged children
- Illegal printing of result returning forms
- Deliberate refusal to supply election materials
- Announcing results where no election were held
- Unauthorized announcement of election results and harassment of candidates, agents and voters.
- Changes in list of electoral officers
- Box shifting and inflation of figures and
- Thuggery, resulting to obstruction of normal processes of election by violent means by stakeholders and their agents etc.

## **Recommendations:**

The details of above analysis on the issue of fraudulent electoral process and other political crisis in Nigeria, caused by the mis-governance of the Nigerian state, have shown that the Nigerian state is demonstrating the phenomenon of a lame leviathan paradox, in the exercise of its societal democratization functions. Therefore, to tackle the aforementioned crisis of democratic governance in Nigeria by the exploitative and oppressive nature of the Nigerian post colonial state, the following are recommended:

- a. That the Nigerian state and society should be sufficiently democratized to ensure massive participation in politics, ensuring the sovereignty of popular will in governance, thereby ending democratic crisis.
- b. That the concept of democratic dividends should be operationalized beyond mere electoral voting, formation of the government and legislation of laws and enforcement. It should involve development of the entire country, consisting of improving the quality of food, water and health services, the processes of government and administration, equity and concern for the less fortunate and the poor, ecological sustainability and overall improvement in moral standards etc.
- c. That the practice of primitive accumulation in the form of corruption, by the bourgeoisie class of the Nigerian state, should be cured. This could be done by instilling transparency in governance and sanctioning culprits to long term imprisonment, including the confiscation of the primitively accumulated wealth.
- d. That the need for strong, articulate, proactive and well informed civil society be stressed as a matter of urgency. This suggested civil society mechanism, should be prepared at anytime, to tackle the hegemonising features of the Nigerian state, and its apparatuses, for purposes of mental, political, and economic liberation of the down-trodden, and general socio-economic development.

### **Conclusion:**

This paper has been an attempt to critically examine the role of the Nigerian state, in the implementation of basic democratic configurations that will enhance the material and political aspirations and development of the Nigerian masses. The paper featured discussion on the nature and definitions of the concepts of the state, and narrowed the conceptualization down to the essential features of the present

Nigerian post-colonial state, stressing mainly on the bourgeoisie class character of it, and its implications on democratic governability in Nigeria. The paper further discovered that, the cut-throat intra class bourgeoisie political squabbles for political office and its concomitant objectives of primitive accumulation has so far generated democratic crisis in Nigerian political scene, since independence of 1960, leading to political instability and monumental corruption in the society. This has caused massive political disenfranchisement and deprivation of political rights, political domination, dehumanization, poverty, diseases and societal underdevelopment. It finally discovered that, the same Nigeria state member's clash over political power contest has become obstacle to free, fair and competitive election in Nigeria, thereby subverting the democratic process, rendering the electorates irrelevant in democratization and engendering political –misrepresentation || of the people. It is the postulation of the study that urgent attention should be directed at alleviating these governance and democratic impasse for socio-economic development to emerge in Nigeria.

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